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Northern Lambda Nord

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Caribou Unitarians' Answer To Gays & Lesbians

No! No! No! A Thousand Times No!

by Dick Harrison, New Sweden

At a recent meeting of the Church members, a decision was made to allow only church organizations to use the Church facilities. Therefore, you will not be able to conduct your meetings at the Church.

This was the terse response to a request from Northern Lambda Nord to hold our monthly meetings at the Caribou Unitarian Universalist Church building. This culminates what has been years of "education" and discussion between northern Maine's only gay-lesbian-bisexual organization and what is certainly the most - and perhaps the only - homophobic Unitarian-Universalist congregation in North America.

For some time, Lambda has been trying to establish at least one central, regular location for one of our activities. It had seemed logical to request support from what is the most gay-positive congregation in North America, the Unitarian-Universalists. For at least 20 years they have had an "Office of Lesbian-Gay Concerns" at their Boston headquarters; they welcome gay and lesbian clergy; they perform gay commitment ceremonies/weddings. Caribou's UUA congregation seemed a natural ally in the struggle for gay liberation, equality, and freedom.

In December 1991, a written request (not our first) was made to the Caribou UUA Board of Directors for use of a space for NLN's monthly Sunday afternoon meetings. In the January-February 1992 church bulletin, Rev. Sydney Wilde wrote that "a small minority [of the congregation] strongly opposed the use of our facilities by the Gay group. Some even threatened to leave the church and take their pledge with them... Another small minority would even question the appropriateness of the group meeting in our church. They were shocked that we would ignore our principles: 'to affirm and support the inherent worth and dignity of every person.'... The vast majority said, in effect, 'Any of those individuals are welcome to visit our church, participate in our programs and become members of our congregation, but I do not want the group to meet in our building for fear of community backlash, and possible harassment or vandalism.'"

In a February 29, 1992 letter to NLN, congregation president Philip Ring, and Rev. Sydney Wilde noted that the church "Board (out of concern for splitting the church) 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."

It was felt that after almost two years of "education" NLN should repeat our request for meeting space at the Caribou UUA Church. So in December 1993 we wrote again. Don Collins, former Maine state senator from central Aroostook and current congregation president, responded, asking for a meeting between Lambda representatives and the church Board to answer some of their questions.

So on Thursday, March 3, 1994, the NLN director and I sat with the 10 or so Board members and their current minister to assure them that they had nothing to fear from us. The meeting was truly an eye-opener. It was easy to tell the supportive Board members from the ignorant homophobes, even before they opened their mouths. Don Collins seemed very concerned that one of Maine's gay-lesbian newspapers, Community Pride Reporter, was actually available at Mr. Paperback, free of charge, right here in Caribou for anyone to pick up! And the question of youth involvement in NLN was raised, perhaps with more than a taint of fear of "recruitment". But I found the scariest question came...
inherent worth and dignity
of every person." ▼

**NLN Parties**

**Dances Every Month?**

There used to be a gay bar in this area. It was called Club Equality. It was run by a Lambda member in the tiny town of Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska, a community of only 2,500 people located between St-Léonard and Edmundston. Since the bar closed several years ago, the only gay places to dance have been the few events sponsored by EAGLE, a group based in Edmundston which has since folded, and parties hosted by Northern Lambda Nord. The NLN steering committee been discussing our options, and they are few. The most popular venue for our events is the Caribou Country Club, where our May anniversary and October membership drive parties are held. From 50-60 people usually attend those dances.

The steering committee is currently negotiating with the Caribou Country Club to hold a dance every month from June through October. If the price is right, and attendance covers the cost, it may be possible to have more dances during the winter, though not necessarily at the Country Club (they close from November through April). ▼

**Halifax To Host Regional Event**

**Atlantic Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual Conference**

The dates are October 7, 8 & 9, 1994, the Canadian Thanksgiving and U.S. Columbus Day weekend. The place is Halifax, Nova Scotia. The event is “We Are Everywhere ’94”, this year’s Atlantic regional conference. The planning began in December, and the steering committee is requesting workshop proposals and facilitators on a wild range of topics, including Coming Out, Exploring Our Sexualities, Queer Theatre/Performance, Humour, Censorship & Freedom of Expression, Youth, Rural Identity, People of Colour, Activism and You, a Queer Game Show, and Dating 101.

If you are interested or have suggestions, please submit your proposals by June 15th. You should contact the Programme Committee, We Are Everywhere ’94, 5280 Green Street, P.O. Box 27043, Halifax NS B3H 4M8. ▼

**Maine Conference Symposium 1995**

Initial planning has begun for the Maine Lesbian & Gaymen’s Symposium 1995. The first of what will be monthly meetings was held April 2nd in Presque Isle; the next planning meeting is April 30. This will be the fourth time Northern Lambda Nord has hosted this state’s annual conference.

**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 – in either U.S. or Canadian funds – are greatly appreciated. ▼
The first three were in 1986, 1989, and 1992. There has been a rotation among us in northern Maine, folks in the southern (Portland area) part of the state, and people in central/midcoast regions (Bangor-Orono-Unity). Symposium XX was at Unity College near Waterville in 1993; there still is no word whether anyone in southern Maine is hosting Symposium XXI this year.

If you are not already, put your name on the Symposium '95 mailing list by writing to Symposium, POB 990, Caribou, ME 04736-0990. You’ll receive registration information in early 1995.

Women’s Music in Maine

Two Festivals, One Weekend

Two events in June will offer music, dancing, and more for women. Springfest '94 and Mainely For You Women’s Music Festival are both scheduled for June 2-5.

Springfest '94 will feature Cris Williamson & Tret Fure and Pixie Lauer & Diana Hansen, all Friday, June 3. Saturday, June 4th’s headliner is Lucie Blue Tremblay. Organizers promise “music, comedy, arts, crafts center, workshops, dance, sports, games & much more.” The cost is $35 per person which includes all activities, concerts, and the dance; campsites and motel rooms are available, but space is limited. Concert tickets only are $15 each in advance; no tickets will be sold at the door. This event is at a private campground in Lincolnville Beach, near Camden, Maine. For more information: C.P.J. Productions, POB 188, Norway, ME 04268, 207/539-8619.

The Maine-ly For You Women’s Music Festival has these performers scheduled: Suede, The Lesbian Lounge Lizards, Leah Zicari, Erica Wheeler, Smith & Bakken, Laura Berkson, and DJ Deb. The four-day event will include “two concerts, two dances, workshops, two-step and line dancing, vendors, softball, volleyball, and an open mic stage.” Tickets are $40 per person; accommodations are extra. Camping, camping cabins, and housekeeping cabins are available. This concert will be at a private campground in western Maine. For more information before May 1st: Maine-ly For You, 114 Bennet Avenue, Auburn, ME 04210, 207/782-2275.

After May 1: Maine-ly For You, RR2 Box 745, Harrison ME 04040, 207/583-6980.

More Space

Northern Lambda Nord’s lending library, Nord’s lending library, has not received any new books since last month. Efforts continue to get the entire collection of nearly 1,000 volumes into the computer so that each member may have a listing of all the books which are available for check-out. Monthly “library days” are held to accomplish this. At the last library day, the shelving spaces were rearranged to make better use of the limited space in the library, i.e. have room for more than two people in the library at one time.

Wayne, who has volunteered to take over responsibilities as librarian, has taken charge and, with Ray’s help, moved the bookcases and rearranged the books. Meanwhile, four other volunteers sorted through the boxes of files and saved only the necessary and useful materials. Fewer than 100 books now remain to be catalogued in the computer.

A type of pocket card will be placed in each book
shares her experiences caring for her son who died of AIDS, at Yusef’s Restaurant, Caribou
• Sat, Apr 30, 3pm - Symposium ’95 Meeting session #2, Presque Isle
• Sat, May 7, 7pm-1am - NLN 14th Anniversary Party & Dance Caribou Country Club
• Sun, May 15, 3pm - NLN Meeting Lions Community Center, High Street, Caribou, across from Shop & Save
• Sat, May 21, 1pm/6pm - Library Time/Pot Luck Meal in New Sweden
• Wed, May 25, 7pm - Fold & Stuff the newsletter & calendar, at the Phone line in Caribou
• Sat, June 11 - ? Dance ? at the Caribou Country Club?
• Sun, June 12, 3pm - NLN Meeting ▼


NEW BRUNSWICK - MAINE - NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK

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THE RAGE 123 Franklin Street, downtown Bangor 947-1213


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Gay/Lesbian G-U-I-D-E
Lesbiennes/Gai

NORTHERN LAMBDA NORD (NLN), C/O POB 990, Campobello, Maine 04736 USA
GAY-LESBIAN PHONELINE 207-498-2088, Wednesdays 7-9pm (Maine time).
• Tues, Apr 26, 7pm - Guest Speaker Betty Denniston, author of “A Caregiver’s Guide; A Labor of Love”

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What’s Going On?

Calendar!

For more information on these and other NLN events, call the Gay-Lesbian Phone line, 207/498-2088, Wednesdays 7-9pm (Maine time).

• Tues, Apr 26, 7pm - Guest Speaker Betty Denniston, author of “A Caregiver’s Guide; A Labor of Love”