
Dick Harrison

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FROM THE NLN DIRECTOR
Shame: Give It Up

by Jim Potter, Director

Some of you may have heard that two local ministers wrote a piece condemning the creation of the NLN Community Center. They recited the common Biblical “clobber” verses as a means to support their point of view. With a heightened attempt at dramatics, they even attempted to describe the center as, “...more traumatic than the closing of Loring Air Force Base.” At last week’s NLN meeting, the Steering Committee decided to take no formal collective action, for a variety of reasons. Primarily, we believed that we would never win a war of words in the Aroostook-Republican. A few of us did take individual actions. Bill Wingert wrote an excellent letter to the editor noting the outreach efforts of the Center, including forming an AA group and other support services. Another member chose to research the issue from a theological point of view (article in this newsletter - ed.) I decided to call one of the ministers last week. I identified myself as the director of NLN and as a Christian. He told me that I couldn’t be a Christian and “choose” that type of lifestyle. I told him that this wasn’t a choice, and that reducing my life to a “habit” was demeaning. That was about all he had to offer to the dialogue. Then he was back to the memorized phrase, “God hates the sin, not the sinner.” This incident caused me to reflect on my range of coming out experiences which commenced when I told my wife (Sunday, March 7, 1993, 9:30pm Mountain Standard Time) and continues on a daily basis. I have had many people ask me why I waited so long to tell anyone. My standard reply is that shame is a powerful weapon. Think of all the energy that the institutions of family, government, church and community expend on making us feel shame for who we are. In fact, the issue of shame was a cover story on Newsweek just a few weeks ago.

Just about every lesbian, gay or bisexual person tells me that they knew from a very young age that they were somehow different — and they learned just as young that it wasn’t safe to tell. We have been barraged by name-calling, physical attacks, fear of rejection, and discrimination. Carolyn Cosby has gone so far as to suggest that it’s OK to discriminate against us because we are just a wealthy interest group — the same argument was offered by Hitler against the Jews.

So I was thinking about this letter thing when my mother called. She wanted to know what I was giving up for Lent. She told me she was giving up alcohol and chocolate. I didn’t have an answer for her that day, but I’ve decided to give up shame. Further, I’ve decided that rather than trying to change someone else’s belief system (i.e., Baptist ministers), perhaps I need to value my own. Many of us are at a variety of stages regarding coming out issues. As a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community, we, too, need to respect and understand the individual struggles faced around coming out. I have a good friend who is “totally out.” She talks about her first experiences with her family when she was told, “Don’t tell your father; it will kill him.” Now she fantasizes herself as the “Lethal Lesbian” going around annihilating homophobic people: “Hi, did you know that I’m a Lesbian?” ZAP-P-P-P!!!

A closing thought: The next time you hear a Jesse Helms-type shake a fist and refer to someone as a “shameless homosexual,” perhaps you can smile and think, “Congratulations!” I hope to see you in Van Buren on Saturday, April 1st. Rumor has it that there will be plenty of shameless dancing!

Be well! /sl Jim

Jim Potter, Director
**Volunteers Needed!**

*by Dick Harrison, Symposium XXI committee member*

The planning committee for the Maine Lesbian & Gaymen's Symposium XXI is composed of only three people. We have done most of the organizing work so far, but more help is needed. Some help is needed to make preliminary arrangements, some is to make sure things go smoothly during the conference weekend, some is doing both. This is the fourth time since 1986 that Northern Lambda Nord has hosted Symposium, the state's conference for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities of Maine and Atlantic Canada. The dates are Friday through Monday, May 26-29, 1995 (Memorial Day weekend) on the campus of the University of Maine at Presque Isle. We want to make sure that someone to take responsibility for the weekend (day, time, room); with the help of other volunteers make sure the films are shown at the proper time; and be responsible for returning the tapes to the rental places.

**BOOKSTORE** "Gulf of Maine Books" of Brunswick is shipping us a large selection of titles which will be set up in a room in the Campus Center as a weekend bookstore. Needed: Someone to set out all the books on display; with help from other volunteers make sure the bookstore is staffed; accept responsibility for the money and receipts; keep track of inventory; pack and return books to the Gulf of Maine Bookstore.

**HOUSING** People will be requesting room assignments according to the weekend "plan" they choose. Needed: Someone to take responsibility for assigning rooms in Emerson Hall according to the needs of the participants (number of...
nights stay, male/female, and alcohol-free dorm space). You must have these completed in advance; you'll need to be at the sign-in registration table Friday evening, Saturday morning, and Saturday noontime; this is not a simple task but extremely important and can be fun: you'll meet every person as they arrive.

**DANCE** Saturday evening in the Campus Center is NLN's 15th Anniversary Celebration Dance. Needed: Someone to arrange for a sound system; make sure the DJ has everything he needs; arrange for the bartender; with the help of volunteers make sure the entrance door is staffed, checking admission tickets and collecting money if necessary.

The next Symposium meeting is Sunday, April 2 at 4pm (Maine)/5pm (N-B). This is when we'll be taking the 1800 pre-registration forms which the University has already printed, folded, inserted into envelopes, and sealed. We'll affix mailing labels to the envelopes, then sort them according to US or Canadian mail, and then within the US according to ZIP code. **FREE PIZZA** will be served to everyone helping. (How's that for an incentive?!) If you've never been to Symposium, the ones in Presque Isle are rated the best. This is a good chance to meet people from other parts of Maine and eastern Canada, to be in a safe environment, to get rid of some "shame", to relax with "family" and to make new friends.

**Symposium registration** includes admission to all events - workshops, films, panel discussion/town meeting, opening and closing sessions, the Saturday night dance and concert, and all other special activities during Symposium weekend.

**Costs to attend** You have the choice from among several weekend packages or "plans". Prices are in U.S. funds; registrations received after May 1 will cost more. Plan A: three nights lodging, six meals, registration, $109. Plan B: two nights lodging, five meals, registration, $95. Plan C: one night lodging, four meals, registration, $80. Plan D if you don't want to stay on campus - meals and registration only, $65. Plan E is just registration, $25. Plan X Saturday night banquet, concert & dance only, $20. Plan Y admission to the dance, $5. Plan Z admission to just the workshops, $5/day. Pre-registration is required if you want on-campus housing and/or meals (Plans A, B, C or D). ▼

**TWO CARIBOU CLERGYMEN WRITE**

G&L Center opening is devastating

by an NLN member, name withheld by request

Evidently it was bound to happen: the first written objection to the existence of NLN's Gay & Lesbian Community Services Center of Northern Maine in Caribou. In the "Letters to the editor" column in the March 8, 1995 Caribou Aroostook-Republican & News, and under the heading, "Two clergymen object to presence of gay and lesbian center in Caribou," Rev. (Dr.) Linwood Welch of the United Baptist Church (denomination: American Baptist) and Rev. Ronald B. Sullivan of the Caribou Assembly of God, pastors of two of the largest and most influential Protestant churches in Caribou, signed the letter. Names of their churches and/or denominations were not mentioned; evidently they were writing as individual pastors.

The letter began in a rather bizarre and unrelated manner, noting the closure of Loring Air Force Base as a disappointment for local citizens and churches. It continued, "Yet we believe this happening is not so devastating to our area as the opening of a lesbian and homosexual office." They go on, "Please do not misunderstand. This letter is not being written from bigotry, bias

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**SIDA**

**LES NIVEAUX DE RISQUE**

**LE BAISER** avec échange de salive (french-kiss) ne comportent aucun risque.

**LES CARESES ET LA MASTURBATION** ne constituent aucun risque de transmission du VIH. **LE SEXE ORAL** Il est peu probable que cette pratique sexuelle puisse transmettre le VIH. **LA PÉNÉTRATION ANALE ET VAGINALE** non protégée par un condom constitue un haut risque de transmission du VIH, qu'il y ait éjaculation ou non. **LES JOUETS SEXUELS** (ex.: vibrateur, godemiché) non partagés ne constituent aucun risque de transmission du virus. **LÉCHER L'ANUS** ne constitue pas un mode de transmission du VIH. Cependant, elle ne vous protège aucunement de l'hépatite B ou des autres MTS. **ACTIVITÉS SADO-MASOCHISTES** qui ne causent pas de saignements et qui n'incluent aucune autre activité à risque ne favorisent pas la transmission du VIH.

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**AIDS**

**THE SAFER THE SEX, THE BETTER**

**CONSIDERED SAFE:** Mutual masturbation, Hugging/body rubbing, Massage, Social (dry) kissing, Fantasy, Light S/M (without bleeding or bruising), Sex toys (when used only on yourself)

**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

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or hate. It is written from a biblical standpoint. While loving the person, God condemns the lifestyle of the lesbian and homosexual. He calls it sin. We regret that good people have allowed themselves to be drawn into this habit."

Reference is then made to Old Testament accounts of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as Romans, Chapter 1 in the New Testament, which the pastors suggest "helps us to understand the cause and sin of this behavior."

Needless to say, at least some portion of their views concerning gay and lesbian individuals stems from their interpretation of the Bible, and their interpretations are greatly influenced by their own (subjective) presuppositions, theologies, and/or denominational traditions or guidelines. These pastors and other conservative and/or Fundamentalist bigots choose not to dwell on references to other biblical rules or traditions or prejudices which are not taken or understood literally today by most Christians. They always seem to home in on or prooftext with Bible text and verses they feel condemn "homosexuals."

Further, and strangely enough, each of these pastors is extremely well-educated and holds the highest of pastoral/ministerial credentials for Protestant ministers: Rev. Welch holds a Doctor of Divinity degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts; Rev. Sullivan holds the Doctorate in Pastoral/Christian) Counseling from Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Missouri.

These pastors refuse to recognize or understand that gaymen and women did not choose or will to have a sexual orientation/psychosexual orientation different from the majority, whether the causes for the difference are genetic/biological or environmental, or a combination of both.

Some present and former NLN members know that there are closeted gay and/or bisexual men, as well as young men, who are prominent members of at least one of the congregations of these ministers.

It is possible that the wording of this letter to the editor could incite local zealots, members of their churches or not, to acts of vandalism and/or intimidation against the Community Center and/or those of us who visit the Center. Some members of NLN are "people of faith" and/or consider themselves Protestant or Roman Catholic Christians.

It is truly sad that these pastors and their congregations, as well as other local churches of an even more liberal theology and tradition, have not been "welcoming congregations" to and for gaymen and lesbians. It is also sad that they are unable or unwilling to accept all individuals "Just As I Am"/just as they are . . .

In conclusion, it is our wish that these pastors and the members of their congregations would read, meditate upon, and try to live out the following two admonitions from the Letters of Saint Paul: in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. (I Corin 14:20, KJV)

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, not any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38, 39, NIV) 

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Do more than belong. 
participate

SYMPOSIUM XXI

Keynote Speakers

Mary Bonauto, counsel with the Boston-based law firm, GLAD - Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, will address Symposium at the opening plenary session. Mary is instrumental in the fight to defeat the pending anti-gay referendum on the November ballot.

Tuma Young, Mic Mac and activist, Tuma (pronounced "Duma") is with the Atlantic First Nations AIDS Task Force based in Halifax. He will speak on "The Fine Line Between Spirituality and Sexuality."

Live Entertainment

Karen Williams: "The funniest woman on the comedy stage today!"

The Maritones: 12 voices of the 55-member Maine Gay Men's Chorus

Casino Benefit

The Gay-Lesbian Phoneline of Maine serves the entire state from its home in the Gay-Lesbian Community Services Center in Caribou. Since 1982 its operation and funding has depended upon the abilities of Northern Lambda Nord to raise the necessary expenses. Lambda wants to expand the Phoneline's service capabilities by becoming a toll-free number. Proceeds from Sunday night's Casino will go towards establishing an 800 number.

Bookseller

For the second time in Presque Isle, Gulf of Maine Books of Brunswick will offer a wide selection of titles of interest to conference participants.

Workshops

Discussions and presentations will feature a wide variety topics.

Housing

Dormitory rooms are available on the UMPI campus. All rooms are double occupancy, and your linen, blanket, pillow, and towel are provided. Space is limited, first come, first served. Guaranteed reservations for housing MUST be received by May 1, 1995.
Meals
Six meals will be served on campus. The full meal plan includes Saturday's breakfast, lunch, and buffet supper, Sunday brunch and evening barbecue, and Monday breakfast. Menus include both meat and vegetarian selections. Please reserve your meal ticket by May 1, 1995.

Child Care
Free child care for ages 2½ and older is available on the UMPI campus but requests must be received by May 1, 1995.

Registration
Your fee includes admission to all events: opening & closing plenary sessions, keynote addresses, workshops, town meeting, films, concert and dance. Housing & meals are not included in the registration fee.

Pick-a-Plan
To simplify registration, we give you five choices. These prices reflect the Early Registration Discount, which ends May 1st. All fees are payable in U.S. funds only. Canadian money will not be accepted.

Plan A - “The Full Package” includes three nights lodging, six meals, and registration, all for $109 (requires a $50 non-refundable deposit).

Plan B - Two nights lodging, six meals, and registration for $95 (requires $50 non-refundable deposit).

Plan C - One night lodging, five meals, and registration for $80 (requires $50 non-refundable deposit).

Plan D - Includes six meals plus your registration for $65 (requires $50 non-refundable deposit).

Plan E - Registration only - $25 (no deposit required). You may also register for this plan at the door.

Please note: To qualify for the Early Registration Discount Prices, your non-refundable deposits must be postmarked by May 1, 1995. After May 1st, registration prices/deposits are: Plan A - $125/$50, Plan B - $110/$50, Plan C - $90/$50, Plan D - $75/$50, Plan E - $25/$0 (no change to Plan E).

Limited-income registrations
A number of registrations are available for limited-income persons who wish to help during Symposium in exchange for reduced fees; students are especially encouraged to apply. Check the appropriate box on the Pre-Registration form.

Symposium Info:
207/498-2088

Call Wednesdays, 7-9pm; leave a message at all other times

Early registration discount ends May 1st!

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I am registering by May 1st for (check one):

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Registrations postmarked after May 1st will cost:

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I will need on-campus Housing (which nights?):

- Friday night
- Saturday night
- Sunday night

I wish to have an Alcohol-free room

I will share a Room with_________________________

Please send me Hotel, Motel & Campground info

I request reduced-price Work Exchange registration

I request free Child Care - must be reserved by May 1

Number of children_________________________ Ages of children_________________________

Special Needs:

- Wheelchair accessibility
- Sight assistance
- Sign language
- Other_________________________

My non-refundable Deposit for the plan selected above is enclosed - U.S. funds only - Amount enclosed $________

Make checks payable to NLN-Symposium XXI

Mail this form and payment to:

SYMPOSIUM XXI
P.O. BOX 990
CARIBOU ME 04736-0990 USA
The following events are held at the Gay-Lesbian Community Services Center of Northern Maine, 398 South Main St., Caribou, across from the Nylander Museum, 207.498-2088 (M=Maine, N=New Brunswick time).

- SECOND SUNDAY of the month: NLN Meetings - Apr 9, May 14, 3-5pm(M) 4-6pm(N)
- EVERY TUESDAY: Gay & Lesbian AA Meeting 7:30-8:30pm (M) 8:30-9:30pm(N)
- EVERY WEDNESDAY: Community Center Drop-in & Open House 7-9pm(M) 8-10pm(N)
- FIRST FRIDAY of the month: First Friday Fabulous Film Night 8-11pm(M) 9pm-midnight (N) Apr 7: Woogie Goldberg’s first lesbian role in “The Color Purple”; May 5: TBA
- THIRD FRIDAY of the month: Women’s Night 7pm(M) 8pm(N) – Apr 21, May 19

The following events are held at other locations:

- April Fool’s Day Video Dance Sat, Apr 8 (M) 9pm(N) at a private home in Van Buren - BYO beverage; members free, guests $2 (US$=cnd$)
- FREE PIZZA at Symposium XXI Mall Sorting Meeting Sun, Apr 2, 4pm(M) 5pm(N) at a private home in Caribou; help label & sort 1800 Pre-Registration forms; BYO beverage
- Symposium XXI planning meeting Fri, Apr 14, 6:30pm(M) 7:30pm(N)

In addition, COMMUNIQUÉ welcomes the following:

- Pot Luck & Game Night Sat, Apr 15, 6pm(M) 7pm(N) at a private home in Presque Isle, BYO beverage, a dish to share, and your favorite game; free for everyone
- Maine Lesbian & Gaymen’s Symposium XXI May 26-29, 1995

COMMUNIQUÉ
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The following groups are available to the public:

- NORTHERN LAMBDA NORD (NLN), CP/POB 990, Caribou ME 04736-0990 USA 207.498-2088 TTY/Voice
- GAY-LESBIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER of Northern Maine 398 South Main Street, Caribou; mailing address: POB 990, Caribou 04736-0990; 207.498-2088 TTY/Voice
- GAY-LIBESIAN PHONELINE of Maine 207.498-2088 TTY/Voice - staffed Wed, 7-9pm (Maine), 8-10pm (N-B)
- GAY/LESBIAN AA meets Tuesdays, 7:30pm (Maine) / 8:30pm (N-B) at Gay-Lesbian Community Services Center of Northern Maine, 398 South Main Street, Caribou; Call 207.498-2088 to make contact

- REGIONAL GROUPS/GROUPES REGIONAUX
  - FEDERATION DES FEMMES ET DES GAYומS (FLAG) POB 1556, Station A, E3B SG2, 506.457-2156 (Mon & Thurs 6-9pm)
  - MAISONS ET LESBIENNES DE MONCTON/GAYS & LESBIENNES DE MONCTON (GLM) CP/POB 1072, Riverview E1B 1V0, 506.855-8064
  - GIESC. NORS GAYS (GNG) CP/POB 983, Bathurst E2A 4H8
- GAY/LESBIAN COMMUNITY NETWORK POB 212, Bangor 04401, 207.862-9307, 207.941-2189
- HARBOR MASTERS, INC., leather-levi group, POB 4044, Portland 04104
- NO BORDERS/SANS FRONTIÈRES CP/POB 461, Campbellton E1N 3G4
- TIME OUT outdoor activities, monthly calendar, POB 11502, Portland 04104
- WOMYN’S GROUP POB 20082, Fredericton E3B 6Y8, 506.457-2156
- HEALTH/SANTÉ
  - AIDS New Brunswick 800.561-4009
  - AIDSLine/Maine 800.851-AIDS - Mon-Sat 9am-5pm, Mon & Wed till 7:30pm
  - ATLANTIC FIRST NATIONS AIDS TASK FORCE POB 4704, Halifax B3K 2ayo, 506.492-4255
  - EASTERN MAINE AIDS NETWORK POB 2038, Bangor 04401-2038, 207.990-5214
  - NEWBRUNSWICK AIDS NETWORK (NLN) POB 2038, Bangor 04401-2038, 207.990-5214
  - PWA (People living with AIDS) COALITION OF MAINE 377 Cumberland Avenue, Portland 04101, 207.773-8500
  - HEALTH 1st Anonymous HIV testing 1.800.432-7881
  - SIDA/AIDS MONCTON 100 Arden Street, Suite 427, E1C 8R3, 506.859-9161
  - SIDA Nouveau-Brunswick 800.561-4009
  - MEDIA/MEDIAS
  - APEX: A Point of Departure, published monthly by Phoenix Press, POB 4743, Portland 04112
  - COMMUNITY PRIDE REPORTER: The newspaper for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community of Maine, published monthly, 142 High St, Suite 634, Portland 04101, 207.879-1194
  - FRUITS OF OUR LABORS monthly Lesbian-Gay-Bi events calendar, POB 125, Belfast 04915
  - GAZETTE for Lesbians & Gay Men in Atlantic Canada, 10 issues/year, POB 34090, Sambro Square, Halifax NS B3J 3S1
  - 10%: Maine’s monthly newspaper for lesbians & gay men, POB 10536, Portland 04104
  - YOUTH/JEUNESSE
  - DIAL KIDS, 207.774-TALK for lesbian, gay, bisexual & unsure youth under 19
  - OUTRIGHT/Central Maine age 22 and younger, 1.800.339-4404
  - OUTRIGHT/Portland POB 5077, 04101, 207.774-TALK or 207.774-HELP
  - OUTRIGHT TOO Bangor area, ages 16-22, 207.285-7180
  - UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITÉ
  - GAY & LESBIAN ALLIANCE University of New Brunswick, c/o Help Centre, UNB SUB, POB 4400, Fredericton E3B 5A3, 506.457-2156


Les Communiqués sont disponibles. Vos commentaires et contributions sont les bienvenus.

Rédacteur en chef: Dick Harrison

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Editor: Dick Harrison