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Northern Lambda Nord

Dick Harrison

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The Fourth R

by Jim Fatter, Director

“Look both ways before crossing the street!” “Put your coat on; you’ll catch pneumonia.” “Don’t talk to strangers!” “Wait an hour after you eat before you go swimming.” These are but a few of the messages with which many of us are familiar. Having heard these things from our parents, I suspect some of us may have used them on our own children or on children whom we know. Most of these cautions were given to protect us from some real or imagined injury or hurt.

In school, many of us learned lessons beyond the “three-Rs.” Perhaps some of us were scolded for failing to conform when coloring the apples green and the leaves red, or for coloring “outside the lines.” Some of us may have been laughed at by classmates for giving a wrong answer. Others may have experienced harsh retribution for daring to challenge authority. We quickly learned the Fourth R: Any action where we assert our individuality is a risk that will jeopardize our safety.

As adults, we hear a new set of messages that are supposed to protect our well-being: “Wear Your Safety Belt!” “Don’t Drink and Drive.” “Practice Safe Sex!” In the workplace we are told, “Don’t Rock the Boat.” While many of these messages are practical and indeed critical to our continued survival, we sometimes also assume that it is better to take no risks and thus remain safe.

I’ll wager that few of us forget the visual image of ABC’s Wide World of Sports where the opening scene graphically portrays the skier tumbling down the ski jump with the accompanying phrase, “the agony of defeat.” None of us felt compelled to cheer the skier for having the courage to risk going down the ramp in the first place; he was labeled a failure. It’s easier to applaud risk-takers when they succeed than when they fail.

I don’t need to tell you the risks that we face as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people. Many of the choices we face appear to be a lose-lose situation. By coming out to family, friends, and the workplace, we risk the loss of acceptance, the ability to earn a living, and most importantly, love. We risk the very real danger of physical harm. But by failing to come out we risk being placed in a situation where we are unable to have fulfilled relationships or to experience intimacy. We risk the passage of an anti-gay initiative because of the danger associated with “being political.” So, many of us choose to do nothing and are — in effect — paralyzed by inaction as the apparent best of worst-case scenarios. Yet we may also learn that risk-taking can mean an opportunity to grow.

We are making individual and group victories on a daily basis. Some of you have risked coming out to yourselves (a very big step) and to others who are important in your lives. Because of our collective risks, we have a Community Center, the only one of its kind in Maine. One of our members recently risked exposure by talking publicly about the danger of hatred and gay-bashing in our communities. (Article follows - ed.)

I’d like to propose that each of us takes a step in breaking the cycle of risk paralysis. Symposium XXI will be held at the University of Maine at Presque Isle from May 26-29, Memorial Day Weekend. Take a risk and attend all or part of the conference. Your participation will help all of us grow individually and as a family! Hope to see you there! Be well!

Jim
I Testified in Augusta
by Randy Ireland

On Monday, May 1, I received a phone call from Karen Geraghty, President of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance. Hearings before the Maine Legislature’s Judiciary Committee were scheduled for the next afternoon, May 2. Committee members would listen to presentations about the pending bill to limit civil rights protections in Maine to those groups who are already included, which would mean prohibiting passage of any future non-discrimination protection for gays and lesbians. Karen said they had had someone scheduled to testify about being a victim of a hate crime, but that person had backed out at the last minute. She knew I had been bashed at Aroostook County, so this was going to be quite an experience! I started by introducing myself and what school I attended. Then I named my attacker and briefly told of my injuries I sustained as a result of the assault, and about the lawsuit that was filed on my behalf by the Attorney General’s Office. I then said that I thought that L.D. 310 should not be passed.

While I was up there talking, I didn’t hear a sound. I was so nervous I had to stop talking twice and try to calm down. When I finished talking and turned around to go back to my seat, I was on the verge of tears. Then I noticed that everybody (on our side) was standing up and applauding. Then a reporter set up in front of us, and I was waiting until we actually arrived in Augusta. Then I thought that nobody from Aroostook County would be there. I thought if I would have seen someone I knew that I would die.

When I got inside the Augusta Civic Center I was amazed. I had never seen a place so big before, and I had never seen so many gay and lesbian people before in my entire life. I found Karen, and she told me I was the fourth speaker for our side, but it would be at least an hour before I was scheduled to speak. I became even more nervous as the time to speak got closer.

Finally, it was my turn to speak. (Complete text of Randy’s speech follows - ed.) I couldn’t believe I was actually going up to the podium and telling my story. I started by introducing myself and what school I attended. Then I named my attacker and briefly told of my attack. Then I told about the injuries I sustained as a result of the assault, and about the lawsuit that was filed on my behalf by the Attorney General’s Office. I then said that I thought that L.D. 310 should not be passed.

While I was up there talking, I didn’t hear a sound. I was so nervous I had to stop talking twice and try to calm down. When I finished talking and turned around to go back to my seat, I was on the verge of tears. Then I noticed that everybody (on our side) was standing up and applauding. Then a reporter
came over and asked for my last name and what school I went to.

The person who spoke after me was Steve Wessler of the Attorney General's Office. He was the one who handled my lawsuit. He even mentioned me during his speech. Even I was impressed by that. Right after he spoke, I had to leave for Bangor to catch the bus back to Presque Isle. I would say that this had not anticipated the large Canadian turn-out. At the following meeting in February, the name of Mr. Tozier's friends had made threats against me. Other things that have happened as a result of my assault are that I will not go out at night off campus if I have to walk somewhere. April 15th was the first time I tried and I got very nervous and scared after about five minutes outside alone. I also went out and bought pepper spray the next day and I carry it with me everywhere I go, even during the daytime.

On February 7th, a lawsuit was filed on my behalf by the Maine Attorney General's Office against my attacker, Robert Tozier. He was tried and convicted of a hate crime in early February. I would feel less safe in the State of Maine if the current law were not in place. I think the entire gay and lesbian community in the State of Maine should have the same opportunity I did to sue their attacker and ensure their rights are protected.

I urge you to send L.D. 310 to the Legislature with a strong "ought not to pass" recommendation so that Hate Crimes protections will not be repealed.

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First Meeting Was January 1980

Lambda is 15.3 Years Old

by Dick Harrison, editor, Communiqué

Northern Lambda Nord is Maine's oldest, and New Brunswick's second-oldest community-based organization for lesbians, gaymen, bisexuals, transgendered people — for anyone and everyone who supports the purposes and goals of the group as stated in the constitution.

A small news item was placed in the Bangor Daily News and in the St. John Valley Times in their January 3, 1980 editions. The notice elicited several responses, and 13 people were at the first meeting in Van Buren: 12 men and one woman. Half of those in attendance were francophone bilingual New Brunswickers. The group had initially been called "Aroostook Lambda"; the three organizers — one man from Van Buren and two from Fort Kent — had not anticipated the large Canadian turn-out. At the following meeting in February, the name was changed to better reflect the geographic location and linguistic diversity of the participants.

NLN is officially a bilingual and international organization. The constitution is in both English and French. This newsletter includes notices and articles (when someone submits them) in both languages. Who else accepts Canadian money at par?

Yet as reflected by the first meeting, Northern Lambda Nord does not have many women members. This seems the opposite of groups in the southern part of Maine, where the women are the activists. The Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance was founded by Dale McCormick who was their first president. Maine Won't Discriminate is lead by a woman attorney from the Maine Civil Liberties Union (Pat Peard); another woman attorney from Boston (Mary Bonauto) leads Maine Won't’s court battles against the anti-gay referendum; and another woman (Jessica Maurer) is Maine Won't’s interim coordinator; the 1993 Symposium organizing committee was predominantly women from the mid-coast area.

Is it something in the air that creates this north-south difference? Or are the men in the south and the women in the north not very interested in joining these groups? Here in the north NLN has offered opportunities for all people, both women and men, to become involved in the activities. Any comments?
Calendrier Northern Lambda Nord Calendar

Lesbian-Gay GUIDE Lesbienne-Gai
NEW BRUNSWICK • MAINE • NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK

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-LESBIAN 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 REGIONAL
FREDERICTON LESBIANS & GAYS (FLAG) POB 1556, Station A, E3B 5G2, 506.457-2156 (Mon & Thurs 6-9pm)
GAIS & LESBIENNES DE MONCTON/GAYS & LESBIENS DE MONCTON (GLM) CP/POB 1072, Riverview E1B 1VD, 506.835-8064
GAIS.E.S, NOR GAYS (NGN) CP/POB 983, Bathurst E4A 4H8
GAYLESBIAN COMMUNITY NETWORK POB 212, Bangor 04401, 207.862-5907, 207.941-2189
HARBOR MASTERS, INC. leather-levi group, POB 4044, Portland 04104
NO BORDERS/SAINS FRONTIERES CP/POB 461, Campbellton E3N 3G4
TIME OUT outdoor activities, monthly calendar, POB 11502, Portland 04104
WOMYN'S GROUP POB 20082, Fredericton E3B 6Y8, 506.457-2156
• HEALTH/SANTE
AIDS New Brunswick 800.561-4009
AIDSLine/Maine 800.851-AIDS - Mon-Sat 9am-5pm, Mon & Wed till 7:30pm

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GAY-LESBIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES
CENTER of Northern Maine 398 South Main Street, Caribou, across from the Nulander Museum, 207.498-2088 (Maine time, N=New Brunswick time)

• SECOND SUNDAY of the month: NLN Meetings - June 11, July 9 3-5pm(N)/4-6pm(N)
• EVERY TUESDAY: Gay & Lesbian AA Meeting 7:30-9:30pm(N) (No meeting May 23; Summer break starts June 20; meetings resume Sept 12)
• EVERY WEDNESDAY: Community Center Drop-In & Open House 7-9pm(M) 8-10pm(N)
• FIRST FRIDAY of the month: First Friday Film Festival Beginning 9pm(N)/June 2: To Be Announced
• THIRD FRIDAY of the month: Women's Night 7pm(M)/8pm(N) - May 19, June 16; no summer events; resumes Sept 15

THE FOLLOWING EVENTS ARE HELD AT OTHER LOCATIONS
• Maine Lesbian & Gaymen's Symposium XXI May 26-29, 1995, University of Maine at Presque Isle
• Concert featuring comedy Karen Williams, plus The Mantones, 8 voices of the Maine Gay Men's Chorus, Sat, May 27, 7:30pm(M) 8:30pm(N); Weiden Auditorium, U of Maine at Presque Isle, 75 admission
• NLN 15th Anniversary DANCE Sat, May 27, 9pm(M)/10pm(N), Campus Center, U of Maine at Presque Isle, cash bar, 15 admission
• Casino Night Sun May 28, 8pm(M)/9pm(N) Campus Center, U of Maine at Presque Isle, prizes; 15 admission
• Volleyball & BBQ Sat, June 10, 4pm(M)/5pm(N), in Caribou

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- ATLANTIC FIRST NATIONS AIDS TASK FORCE POB 47049, Halifax B3K 2B8 506.457-4255, 506.492-4255
- EASTERN MAINE AIDS NETWORK POB 2038, Bangor 04401-2038, 207.990-EMAN
- 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, 506.859-9616
- SIDA Nouveau-Bruswick 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, 207.879-1342
- 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 14090, Scotia Square, Halifax NS B3J 3SJ
- 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, 1.800.339.4042
- OUTRIGHT/Pearl Island POB 5077, Portland 04101, 207.774-TALK or 207.774-Help
- OUTRIGHT TOO Bangor area, ages 16-22, 207.285-7180
- UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITE GAY & LESBIAN ALLIANCE University of New Brunswick, c/o Help Centre, UNB SUB, POB 4400, Fredericton E3B 5A3, 506.457-2156

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Editor: Dick Harrison