Northern Lambda Nord Communique, Vol.19, No.2 (March/April 1998)

Northern Lambda Nord

Dick Harrison

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From the Director's Pen

Is it Spring, yet?!
by Donald Weatherford, Director

Yes, it is Springtime! The birds are singing. The trees are growing and showing their leaves. The flowers are in bloom. The grass is almost ready for the lawnmower. Lest we forget, the shorts can now be removed from storage. Remove that quizzical look from your faces! It is this way, somewhere! You cannot blame a person for dreaming, can you? I believe that it will happen, soon. I mean, the Farmers' Almanac says we will have an early spring, and we all know that the almanac does not fib. Right?!

Just to bring you up-to-date on a few things: We lost the vote! I know that some may be shocked by this revelation, but it's true. But we can take solace in the fact that a few good things came out of the loss. Aroostook County is now known as the "Hate Capital" of Maine. Let us take pride in that fact! I mean, where else but in The County was there a 3-to-1 ratio in this vote? Yipee!! Another good thing that came from this is that we were not granted Special Rights. Come on, folks, what makes us think that we, being the Sexual Deviants and the slime of Society that we are, actually deserved Special Rights?! Come on -- let us be real. The majority of society saw through our guise of Equal Rights. We fooled nobody. We got what we deserved. Let us all slither back into our closets and shut the door. If we learned anything from this vote, let us learn that we have our place and we should not venture OUT!

With that defecation being said and spread, let us be real. The loss was indeed a blow. Using a war analogy, the battle was lost, but the WAR is far from being over. Let us lick our wounds and heal, but during this time prepare for the next battle. A few things that we should remember: Only 31 percent of the populus voted. That leaves 69 percent who felt that this was not an important issue. Why did we lose? We can blame and point the finger, but only a few factors are true. The vote was during the winter and it was a one-item ballot. But the primary reason for our loss was that our organizational methods were not as good as that of the religious right. Pure and simple. The time of the election and the one-item ballot were factors, but not the reason. Let us learn from this. For the next time that we meet on the battlefield, we will be prepared. One more thing, folks. Remember: 69 percent did not vote. That is a sign. I mean, "69" is our number! Let us remember that!

Let us take this time to unite and stand as One. Alone we will continue to lose the battles. Together, as One, we will be victorious. That is what this organization is all about. Without the support of you, the individual, we cannot be one. If you have ideas to share or complaints to lay on the table, please do just that. Without feedback from the community, we - the elected board - feel as if we're going in the right direction. If this is not true, and unless we hear from you, how are we to know? Right now, NLN is at its lowest membership ever, and attendance at functions is almost nonexistent. What's up with this? I can speculate and come up with all sorts of excuses, but I would like to know your ideas and thoughts. What can we do or not do to help in the task of uniting the community? Remember: alone, we can do nothing; together, we can indeed conquer the world. Drop me a line or give me a call or come to a board meeting. Let us know where to go from here. What can we do? We are your board. We are your voice. We are here to do whatever we can to make it easier for you all.

That is all for now. Just remember to keep your chin up and take pride in who you are.

Until next time, /s/ Donald

In Madawaska AND Van Buren

Two Gay Bars

In April 1997, Bob Bouchard of Van Buren, owner of the Wonder Bar in Madawaska, made a wise business decision: Saturday night at the bar was very, very slow. He knew there was a market of gay people out there with no place to go. Solution: offer the gay-lebian-biseexual-transgendered community a place to meet, to dance, and to be ourselves in a safe space. Thus, the weekly Saturday-is-gay-night at the Wonder Bar was born. It's been so successful, (drawing mostly Edmundston-area people, but also folks from Grand Falls area and central Aroostook) that Bob has decided to add a SECOND night, but this time at the other bar he owns, The Yacht Club in Van Buren. Every Friday night is now for us at The Yacht Club. (It's on Main Street at the corner of Bridge Street -- the road to the border crossing: use the side entrance on Bridge Street). The Yacht Club is a much nicer space, too, with pool
Welcome to The County from Northern we're in Stu Libby from Rentown in Presque we'll have an informational and fundraising "Fast last year, therefore, our address had changed, and now we also have changed our Internet Provider for several reasons, including price and features offered for expansion and growth.

Therefore, our address had changed, and now we also have an on-going Building Fund Drive, designed to raise money to purchase our own building. It grows, in part, from your bottle & can deposits. Please donate bottle & can money to the fund; either bring your empties to an NLN event or to the Community Center Office where there's a can for empties, or drink. If the Van Buren club gets enough support, let's bring in the money.

Advertising is welcome. NLN is an non-profit organization; all donations are U.S. tax deductible.

• FUNDRAISING - CAN YOU HELP? - We're always looking for ways to raise money, and here are some ways we're planning: for all of them WE NEED BODIES - people willing to help. (1) at the Aroostook Centre Mall in Presque Isle, the twice-yearly "community day" - Stu Libby from Rentown in Presque Isle has donated an RCA satellite dish to Lambda, and we'll be raffling it Thursday, April 23, from 9:30am-9pm. The money is to help our HIV/AIDS Prevention Project, which runs through our Gay & Lesbian Phoneline. (2) at the Maine State Democratic Convention (see article enclosed about the County Chair, Roger A. Roy, and his donation of a booth space to NLN) - we'll have an informational and fundraising booth Saturday, May 16, 9am-5pm, and Sunday, May 17, 9am-noon. Lambda's new brochures and business cards will be available, and we'll have some NLN t-shirts and rainbow flags for sale, too. In addition, Lambda is having 1500 lapel buttons made to distribute to every delegate. They will be black with a pink triangle and will read, "DAD - Democrats Against Discrimination - Welcome To The County from Northern Lambda Nord" (3) at the Phish Concert in August - we're in line for a vendor space. The vendor company provides all the stuff to sell - food, the booth set-up, everything. We'll need as many people as we can to staff the booth, 12 hours each day for two days. The potential for fundraising is great - last year, the Presque Isle High School French Club raised $2300 by staffing the Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream booth. It's also a great place to cruise! More on this Phish one later. IF YOU CAN HELP? with any of these, contact a board member today!

• TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS - "By The Way" is a bi-weekly newsletter for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and allied community in central Maine: the Augusta-Bangor Ellsworth-Belfast area, and is available at the bars in Bangor. Info from Johnathan Williams, 471-4490 or hezakiah@aol.com -- "Fast Times" is distributed twice monthly from Bangor to Portsmouth.

The province of British Columbia will give gays and lesbians the same privileges and obligations as heterosexual couples regarding custody access and support. • Washington State is the 27th in the U.S. to ban same-sex marriage. • Same-sex couples in Holland are now able to adopt children. • The London Tourist Board is promoting gay travel to that city.
**APRIL 98**

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<td>5</td>
<td>Spiritual Gathering EVERY SUN. at the COMMUNITY CENTER 658 Main St. Caribou 11am-M noon-N Everyone is welcome.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>NEW! &quot;Internet for Beginners&quot; EVERY 7 TUESDAY in April at the COMMUNITY CENTER 658 Main St. Caribou 6:30-ishM 7:30-ishN</td>
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<td>OPEN HOUSE EVERY WED. at the COMMUNITY CENTER 658 Main St. Caribou 7-9pmM 8-10pmN</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Community Day at the COMMUNITY CENTER 658 Main St. Caribou 7-9pmM 8-10pmN</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Monthly NLN Meeting at Community Center, 6:30pmM 7:30pmN Your Ideas &amp; Input welcome</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>HELP Fold &amp; Stuff newsletter &amp; calendar, plus an Open House at Community Center, 7pmM/8pmN</td>
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<td>OPEN HOUSE EVERY WED. at the COMMUNITY CENTER 658 Main St. Caribou 7-9pmM 8-10pmN</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>April 23 -- COMMUNITY DAY AT THE MALL in Presque Isle. NLN will raffle an RCA Satellite Dish to raise money for our HIV/AIDS Prevention Project. HELP STAFF the BOOTH and sell ticketel 9:30am-9pm</td>
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**MAY 98**

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**May 98 - May 2 - Democratic State Convention NLN has an info & fundraising booth at the Forum -- HELP! 9am-noon - followed by a MEETING with reps from Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance to discuss issues of concern to NLN and MLGPA - MEETING at Community Center (exact time is still pending)**

**May 16-17 - Democratic State Convention at the Forum, Presque Isle. HELP STAFF the NLN info & fundraising booth any time between 9am & 5pm**

**May 23-25 - 24th Annual Maine Lesbian & Gay Men's Symposium U of ME campus in Farmington - workshops, discussions, annual Town Meeting, films, dance, music, food. NOTE: NLN will host the 25th in Presque Isle in 1999**
Events at the Community Center
658 Main Street, Caribou
(M=Maine Time and N=N-B time)

✓ Every SUNDAY - Spiritual Gathering
   11amM/noonN

✓ Every TUESDAY in APRIL - "Internet for Beginners" with Terry White, master of the web, starts about 6:30-ish M/ 7:30-ish N. FREE - find out more about the mysteries of the Web!

✓ Every WEDNESDAY and FRIDAY - Open House 7-9pmM/8-10pmN

✓ Thursday, April 9 - NLN Meeting, 6:30pmM 7:30pmN

✓ Friday, April 24 - Fold & Stuff this calendar and newsletter, 7pmM/8pmN

UPCOMING EVENTS

NLN is still looking for a volunteer as Social Director, to seek out and capture exciting and fun-filled activities. CAN YOU HELP? (If the calendar seems a little "thin", it's because we need help!)

• ?? What would YOU like to see on this calendar??
  Can you host an event at your home? Would you host an event if someone else provided the location? Contact any Board Member with ideas & suggestions — your Board is Donald Weatherford (director), Phil Bushey (treasurer), Diana Campbell (secretary), Dick Harrison (newsletter), Julia Soloman, Wayne Morrow, Sheri-Lynn Gagnon and Walter Fournier (at-large members).

• NLN’s annual “Friends & Family Barbecue” will be in June, Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender PRIDE MONTH! - invite your friends and family to join us!
The First Lady has chosen for the theme of her millennium project “Remember the past, and imagine the future;” I wish to borrow that theme and apply it to Maine and civil rights.

In Maine’s past, it was socially acceptable to discriminate against blacks, Jews, Franco-Americans, Catholics, Native Americans, women, and gays. The history of the state, as is that of most states in our country, is replete with stories of bigotry, hatred, and violence. From the burning of a Catholic church and the tar and feathering of Father John Bapst in Ellsworth, to the Ku Klux Klan marches through Lewiston neighborhoods, to the murder of Charles Howard in Bangor, we have been witness to the so-called Christians of this state lashing out at anyone they perceive as different.

If we are to have a decent future, it is time for good people to stand up and say no to hatred and fear. By staying home, we voted yes to discrimination. We are saying that it is acceptable behavior to deny someone credit, housing, or work because that person is ...a Catholic, or Franco-American ...as long as we don’t admit that is why we are discriminating. All we have to do is claim we thought he or she was gay.

Have we come to a point where we are willing to condemn someone because of who they are? We have laws to regulate behavior, but should we be able to regulate creation. My sexual preference, as is my personal faith, is none of anyone else’s business. I have been created by God, and if the results of that creation are displeasing to you, your disgust is with God not with me.

If I engage in behavior that the community deems illegal, then I should be judged by the law and held accountable for my behavior. But what have we come to when you say you have the right to judge me based on who you think I am as a person? We all have personal preferences and inclinations, but we do not legislate what a person must think or how a person must feel. This is a slippery slope to fascism.

I am worried about the future. I am ashamed of the results of the vote on February 10, 1998. As a heterosexual, Catholic, Franco-American male, I need to embrace my gay brothers and lesbian sisters and express my feelings of pain and shame.

As a Christian, I am called to love even Michael Heath and Paul Volle. I can hate their lies and half-truths, but I must love them. I need prayer before I can do that. Jesus is the only one who can melt the hardness of their hearts. He can even forgive them for persecuting His gay brothers and lesbian sisters.

As for me, I can only deal with my own life. It is time for the straight community to reach out to the gay community and say we love them. We are all part of the same human family, and it is wrong for us to exclude anyone.

At the Democratic State Convention, I have decided to sponsor an informational booth for Northern Lambda Nord, the gay and lesbian service organization in Aroostook County. I hope this will increase awareness in Aroostook County that “those people” are our neighbors, and are really part of our communities and families. They are us.
SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1998 • 6:30PM
CARIBOU INN & CONVENTION CENTER U.S. ROUTE 1, JUST SOUTH OF CARIBOU

music, buffet dinner, entertainment by local performing artists, auction of original works of art created by County artists

PROCEEDS
benefit HIV & AIDS awareness and prevention education programs and services for people living with HIV & AIDS in Aroostook County

TICKETS
$15 each, two for $25, at ticket outlets throughout northern Maine, or by mail using the form below

RESERVATIONS
accepted until Monday, April 25, 1998
information from Cathy Bohls 768-3056

Ticket Reservation Form

NAME of each person reserving a ticket

mailing ADDRESS

daytime TELEPHONE

number of TICKETS reserved 1 0 2 0 other ______

TICKETS are $15 each, 2 for $25 AMOUNT ENCLOSED

Make checks payable to Artists for AIDS Awareness

MAIL this form with your check to:
Artists for AIDS Awareness, c/o Cathy Bohls
P.O. Box 1116, Presque Isle ME 04769-1116
Your tickets will be waiting for you at the door