



COMMUNIQUE

VOLUME XIX: NO. 5
OCT-NOV 1998

From the Director's Pen

Anti-Gay Attack, Aroostook County-style

by Donald Weatherford, Director

Hello to all. Well it seems by the chill in the air that it is time to pull out those long johns, seal up those windows and buckle down for another long winter. Was summer really here? Did I miss it? I must have blinked. No, really we cannot complain this year. We have had nice weather since April, and I suppose it is time to welcome winter back. Mother Nature has been good to us this year. But being the greedy people that we can be, we want more!

It has been such a long time since last I spoke to you. I would like to tell you a story. So sit back, put your feet up, grab your cup of cocoa and enjoy.

It is a beautiful Sunday fall afternoon. The temperatures have reached 61 degrees. Your day has been dampened by the inconsistency of others, but it is not a total bust. You figure that it is too beautiful a day to stay in the house, so you load up your dog and off you go, heading north. The only thing on your mind is enjoying the scenery and taking in one heck of a day. As is routine, being an HIV Peer Outreach worker, you stop at all the Public Sex Areas (PSAs) along the way. In Van Buren, you speak to a married couple in their mid-twenties. You are glad you brought your dog along. She is such a good icebreaker. You spend about 25 minutes talking to this lovely French couple and offer all the information that you have available. You think to yourself, as much information that is out there, so many people do not have a clue. You would think that you would get tired of the same old questions, How do two men...? How do two women...? I have been curious, does that mean that I am...? How do you meet...? And yes, Can you get AIDS from mosquitos? (That is one of your favorite questions!) But you do not tire from these questions. You answer them gladly and feel good about the information that you have given. As you and your dog drive further north, you are amused that this lovely couple invited you over for dinner. People are something else, you think to yourself.

You hit Madawaska. You go to where your car has been many times before. You step out and there is no activity. Your dog is glad you stopped; she had to go #2. You are thankful you remembered the poop bags. Your dog enjoys this stop and after a while you decide to head further north. Fort Kent, here you come.

You enter Fort Kent and marvel at the beauty of this little town. Since you first came to Maine and Aroostook County you have always thought that Fort Kent is one of the loveliest little spots on the map. You drive downtown and "cruise" the area. The people, the town, the weather, what a great day to be alive. You head out of town towards the little PSA that handles this part of the state. You pull in and you and your dog get out of the car. There is a man looking out over the scenic view. He turns to stare at you. You have seen this look before

You smile inside. Your dog is such a friendly animal. Off she darts towards this man. He is in his mid 50s, perhaps even 60. A conversation ensues. You find out that the man is from Canada. Grand Falls. Married man, but has always known that he was gay but, hey, you did what you had to do in those days. He loves his wife and kids, but he needs more. Did you know where he could get more? You smile. He smiles. You know something that he doesn't. He hasn't a chance, but hey, a person can hope. You talk to this man for almost an hour. You are enjoying listening to this man's story. Everybody in the Universe has a story to share, if only someone would listen. You graciously decline his offer to visit his motel room, but you feel good that his man will walk away with a better understanding of HIV risk reduction. The man smiles, thanks you for listening, gets in his car and drives away. You feel good about the events that have taken place thus far. Your dog is pulling you towards the bathrooms. Oh great, she wants to explore, you think. Down the path you go. You spot what it was your dog was after. A woman, sitting on the ground, crying. Before you can get a grip on your dog, off she goes. She laps at the woman's face, causing this woman to laugh and cry at the same time. It really is an amusing scene. You apologize for your dog and try to pull the dog away, but you notice that the woman has a hold of the dog. She is crying and hugging your dog. You ask her if she is all right. She laughs and sarcastically states; "I'm fine." You feel as if you have invaded her space and you apologize again for your dog's behavior. You go to leave and she asks: "Are you married?" Thus, the conversation begins. She is a handsome woman, in her mid-thirties. You sit down next to her as she tells you her tale. She has been beaten. You can still see the dried blood on her blouse. The black and blue marks have not made themselves known, but they will. You console her the best that you can. Telling her that she does not have to tolerate this sort of behavior. You spend a great deal of time with her and she hugs you and your dog and thanks you for listening. You have given her all the numbers that you can and you hope that she calls someone for help. She walks away with a smile on her face and perhaps a little more self-assured. You are sad and pleased at the same time. You give your dog a hug and you head back towards your car. It is time to go. You have someplace to be at 7:00.

You leave the PSA emotionally drained. You are happy to be heading home but thankful that you were a part of this experience. You are on the road, about a half a mile away from the PSA and out of no where a car is on your tail flashing its lights and honking its horn. You start to pull off the road to let the car pass, and the car pulls up along side of you with three, maybe four men yelling obscenities. "Fucking faggot" "We're going to kill you, you fucking faggot!" As you let off

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Gay & Lesbian Phonenumber of Maine established/fondée 1982 • 207.498-2088 • 800.468-2088 • (TTY/Voice • Vox)

Centre communautaire gai & lesbienne • Gay & Lesbian Community Services Center of Northern Maine established/fondée 1995 • 658 Main St, Caribou (mail to POBox)
Depuis 1980, desservant le nord-ouest du Nouveau-Brunswick et le nord du Maine • Serving northern Maine and northwestern New Brunswick since 1980

the gas you are stupefied. The car pulls in front of you causing you to swerve, and off into a ditch you go. Your dog hits the floorboard; you hit your head on the steering column. You look up and see taillights. Are they coming back? You quickly make sure that your dog is all right and you reach into the back seat for your baseball club. Your dog is in the front seat, not a very happy camper, barking her head off. She is serious, and you fear that the car full of men are too. Whether it be the dog or the sight of you getting out of your car with a baseball bat, the car speeds off. You are besides yourself. What type of car was that? You do not know. Hell, you do not even know what state the license plate was from. You pull yourself together and back out of the ditch. Thank God you did not get stuck. You turn back towards the PSA and you pull in. You check over your dog one more time, to make sure she is OK. The two of you get out of your car, and you fall to the ground and cry, with your dog kissing your face, trying to make it better.

Interesting story. Sad to say, it is a true story. It happened to me. Sunday, October 18th, 1998 All I could think about during this whole episode was Matthew Shepard. What that poor boy had to endure before he gave up the ghost. It took me a while before I got my bearings together and I felt like I could drive. All the way home, I thought about the incident, Matthew Shepard and his family, and the vandalism that occurred at the Synagogue in Presque Isle. I thought about going to the police and reporting this incident, but I had nothing to go on. I did not know what type of car it was, what the men looked like, or how many for that fact. I thought I saw three men. Was it a two door, four door? What color was it? I chastised myself for not being more observant, but hey, I was worried about my dog and my safety. What is the right thing to do in a situation such as that? Why does something like that have to occur?

I got home about a quarter till eight. I missed the Matthew Shepard vigil, but he was certainly on my mind. When I walked in the door I fell to my knees and thanked God that I was alive. I lit a candle for Matt, put on my headphones and turned on the music. I thought about what it was that I was doing, was it worth it, Am I an idiot? I have to admit there was a moment that I decided to chuck it all. Screw it, I thought. Why must this world be full of hate, intolerance and bigotry?

That being said, let me say that those feel-

ings left as quickly as they came. If nothing else, this episode strengthened my determination to see change occur. That is only going to occur with education and standing tall. There are those of us who choose to fight in the trenches and those of us who choose to fight in the background. We are all in this fight together. Straight, Gay, Black, White, religious, agnostic, whatever, we are in this fight together. swear to God, my Lord and to you all that as long as I am here I will do what I can to rid this world of hate and intolerance. We are not that far removed from Laramie, Wyoming. A Matthew Shepard could happen here. Who would have thought that anti-Semitism could happen in The County! It did, and without education and acceptance it will happen again.

Northern Lambda Nord is your voice in The County. Support it, utilize it, and be proud of it. We shall be victorious in this battle!

Until next time, take care and be safe
Donald ▼

Membership Drive Time

New membership year

by Dick Harrison, newsletter editor

It's October, and the annual Northern Lambda Nord membership drive is on. This year's "membership drive party and dance" will be combined with our annual Hallowe'en costume party, scheduled for Saturday, October 31st in Presque Isle. Costumes are encouraged (cash prizes for best costume and most original costume). Bring your own beverage; hors d'oeuvres and coffee will be provided. Admission is \$7^{US} per person, but if you purchase a 1999 NLN membership (\$25^{US}) you get in for free.

Dr. Eric Rofes, an instructor at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, was kind enough to come up to Caribou to facilitate a discussion about this organization and its future. About a dozen people, only one of whom is on this year's Board of Directors, attended, expressing their feelings that there is a need to keep NLN viable and active. Discussion focused on the types of programs we're doing, what people thought should be expanded, what should be eliminated. The conversation continued at the October Board meeting. Some of the ideas were: bring back the "women's nights" and "men's nights," have a "couple's night," reduce the number of dances we sponsor (go back to two or three each year in a rented hall), have fewer special events rather than the same stuff over and over; go snowtubing!; and

focus on more serious fundraising to pay the rent and phone bills, our major expenses.

In December 1979, three men — two from Fort Kent and one from Van Buren — met through an ad in the statewide magazine of the day, "Mainely Gay." They felt there was a need for a group to serve the needs of the isolated gay people in this region, and they placed a notice in the *Bangor Daily News*. At the first meeting in Van Buren in January 1980, 13 people attended: half were from Aroostook County, half were from New Brunswick; there were 12 men and 1 woman. At that time there were numerous closeted people in the region (not to say it's changed much today!) Over the past 18+ years, about 300 different people have been members of NLN. (The average annual paid membership is about 60.) That number does not include the dozens of community members who have stayed along the sidelines, attending gatherings, but never wanting to become a card-carrying "Lamb." Some of them said that they had no need for NLN but many others — finding support from NLN members and from the group's activities — came out, felt better about themselves, and became active in our community. But as the northern Maine economy headed downhill (with the closure of Loring AFB and general economic decline), many of these same activists moved away. The general influx of new people, which had given the group a regular "shot" of new ideas and new energy, also subsided. The out-migration left some of the same people who, as they said 18 years ago, still have no need for NLN. But there are many more who recognize the importance of this organization. A new campus group is meeting now at the University of Maine at Presque Isle. The need for support and outreach is there.

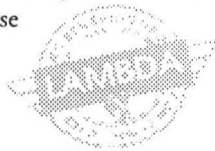
As we approach the beginning of NLN's 20th year, this group will be refocusing our energies on the things our members feel is most important. In order to KNOW what you feel is most important, SAY SOMETHING. Become involved, even to the smallest degree -- host a pot luck supper for example. Elections for the 1999 Board of Directors will be held at the New Year's Eve party (and by absentee ballot). A few people have already expressed interest in some of the positions, but we're looking for some important seats to fill: secretary, phoneline coordinator, and librarian. If you are interested in finding out more, talk with one of our current Board members at the Halloween party/membership drive dance (you'll be there, of course!?) ▼

Steering Committee / Comité d'organisation

NOMINATIONS/PROPOSITIONS

October-November 1998 / octobre-novembre 1998

It's time to choose the 1999 Board of Directors of Northern Lambda Nord, our Steering Committee. If you or someone you know is interested in helping "steer" this organization, please fill out this form and return it to our P.O. Box by December 9, 1998. If you are nominating someone other than yourself, please be sure they are willing to serve. Return to NLN, POB 990, Caribou ME 04736-0990 USA (elections are December 31)



DIRECTOR / DIRECTEUR / DIRECTRICE

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

TREASURER / TRÉSORIER

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

SECRETARY / SECRÉTAIRE

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

PHONELINE COORDINATOR / COORDINATEUR DU TÉLÉPHONE

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

NEWSLETTER EDITOR / RÉDACTEUR DU BULLETIN

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

SOCIAL CHAIR / COORDINATEUR DES ACTIVITÉS SOCIALES

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

LIBRARIAN / BIBLIOTHÉCAIRE

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Calendrier Northern Lambda Nord Calendar



sunday/dimanche

monday/lundi

tuesday/mardi

wednesday/mercredi

thursday/jeudi

friday/vendredi

saturday/samedi

TWO parties in ONE

HALLOWE'EN



Costume Party & NLN's annual Membership Drive Dance

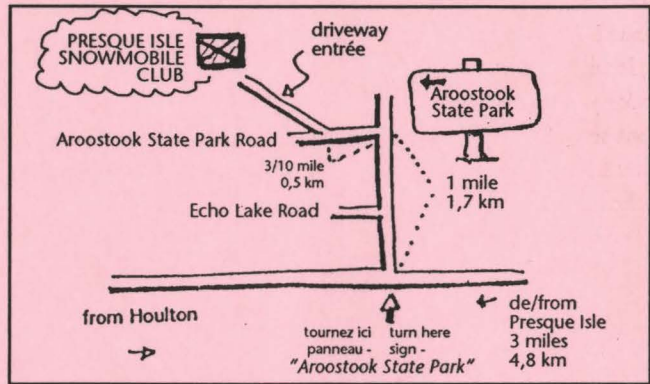
Saturday October 31, 1998, 8pm-1am (Maine time)

PRESQUE ISLE SNOWMOBILE CLUB - on the road to

Aroostook State Park, 5 miles south of Presque Isle

CASH PRIZES for • best costume • most original costume

ADMISSION is \$7 u.s. or FREE if you buy an NLN Membership (\$25 for one person, \$45 for two at the same mailing address, \$15 for students) • **BYO Beverage**



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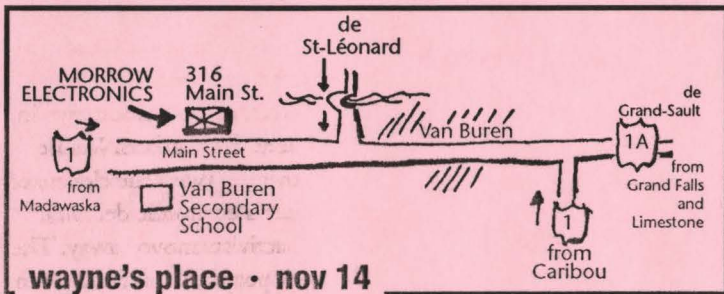
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wayne's place • nov 14

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Monthly NLN Meeting at Community Center, 6:30pmM 7:30pmN Your ideas & input are welcome

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HELP Fold & Stuff newsletter & calendar, at Community Center, 7pmM/8pmN

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Sat, Nov 14 POT LUCK & FILM "Love, Valor, Compassion" - at Wayne Morrow's home, Main Street, Van Buren (across from the high school) starts a 6pmM/7pmN. BYO beverage and FOOD according to your last name: A-Z salad, appetizer or bread; H-M dessert; N-Z main dish, hot or cold

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OPEN HOUSE EVERY WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY

at the COMMUNITY CENTER 658 Main St. Caribou • 7-9pmM • 8-10pmN

DEC 1998

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Monthly NLN Meeting at Community Center, 6:30pmM 7:30pmN Your ideas & input are welcome

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HELP Fold & Stuff newsletter & calendar, at Community Center, 7pmM/8pmN

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Sat, Dec 12 - CHRISTMAS PARTY "YANKEE SWAP" gift exchange -- location needed

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OTHER EVENTS

- November 15, Sunday, Bangor UU church, Park Street, 1-4pm - 3rd STATEWIDE MEETING to discuss the future of civil rights protections in Maine, sponsored by the Maine Lesbian-Gay Political Alliance
- NLN ELECTION of our Board of Directors, at the New Year's Eve Party, Dec. 31st (and by absentee ballot)
- SYMPOSIUM 25 The Maine Lesbian & Gaymen's Symposium XXV • Memorial Day weekend, May 1999, University of Maine at Presque Isle campus; hosted by Northern Lambda Nord

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Thurs, Dec 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY - location needed

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