

NORTHERN LAMBDA NORD COMMUNIQUE

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▼ LESBIAN-GAY RIGHTS BILL IN MAINE LEGISLATURE ▼

For the third year in a row, a bill to protect lesbians and gaymen from discrimination in employment, credit, housing, and public accommodation has been introduced into the Maine Legislature. This bill (LD-961), which would include the term "sexual orientation" in the non-discriminatory section of Maine's Human Rights Act, is being co-sponsored by four Portland Democrats: Representatives Lawrence E. Connolly, Harlan Baker, Sharon B. Benoit, and Senator Gerard P. Conley.

The statewide effort to solicit support for this bill is being spearheaded by Melody Chadborn, legislative coordinator of Maine-NOW (National Organization for Women). She is calling on all lesbians and gaymen in Maine to urge their representatives to support this important legislation.

The bill will proceed through the legislature as follows: At the end of March or early April, Senator Conley will present LD-961 to the Judiciary Committee. This committee of 13 members, both state Senators and state Representatives, is responsible for reviewing the pros and cons of legal legislation. They will hear testimony, read written statements which are submitted, and react to letters they receive from Maine citizens. They conclude their hearings by voting the bill out of committee with a favorable or unfavorable recommendation to the Legislature as a whole. Last year, the Committee voted 9-4 against the bill; this year, however, it appears that they will vote 7-6 in favor of LD-961, recommending to the legislature that they accept this amendment to the Human Rights Charter.

But nothing is guaranteed; success in the Judiciary Committee depends upon input from us. Between now and the Committee hearings, we want to get each NLN member to write a letter stating simply that you support LD-961, which would provide legal protection for lesbians and gaymen in Maine. We will collect these letters and, during the two weeks immediately prior to the hearings, send them to Senator Dana Devoe, Chairperson of the Judiciary Committee. If hundreds of supportive letters are received from throughout Maine, we should get a favorable recommendation from the Committee.

In addition, the bill's chief sponsor, Senator Conley

is asking lesbians and gaymen to send to him UNSIGNED "testimonies" -- describing your job situation and what would happen to you if they found out you were gay -- that you would probably lose your job, not because you weren't a good worker, but because you were gay, thus pointing out the need for protective legislation. Since these would be anonymous letters, everyone should be able to send one to Senator Conley (Maine State Senate, Augusta 04333) as soon as you can! (Please send a copy to NLN for our files.)

NOW is beginning to circulate petitions throughout Maine to gain support for LD-961. These will also be presented to the Judiciary Committee.

After the Committee is bombarded with our letters, testimonies, and petitions, and they recommend adoption of the bill to the whole legislature, then our work begins. There are 14 Representatives and 3 Senators from Aroostook. We MUST let them know that we want them to vote for this bill; we'll tell them to vote "yes" by the large number of letters we send. The more mail they receive in support of our full legal rights, the better our chances are of gaining our full legal rights.

No one is going to push for passage of lesbian-gay rights bills if lesbians and gaymen don't do it. So get off your ass and DO SOMETHING, TODAY!!! Let the Judiciary Committee and your Aroostook legislators hear from you! ---If you want more information, call 532-7931.

"The liberation of homosexuals can only be the work of homosexuals themselves." --Kurt Hiller, 1921

▼ TORONTO BATHS RAIDED ▼

On Thursday, February 5, 1981, Toronto police raided four gay bathhouses and charged 20 men with keeping a common bawdy house, 253 as found-ins in a bawdy house, and 14 with various drug offenses. This was the largest mass arrest in Canada since the round-up of political radicals during the October Crisis of 1970.

Lesbians and gaymen in Toronto and across Canada reacted with anger. NLN, among other gay organizations, sent telegrams of protest, one to the Mayor of Toronto and a second to the Attorney General of Ontario. (see text at end of story.)

About 3000 protestors demonstrated in Toronto on Saturday, February 7, blocking traffic as they marched to police headquarters. They then moved on to Queen's Park (provincial legislature).

The Thursday night police action was carried out by 150 officers who smashed locked cubicles with crowbars, ripped paintings from the walls, and ridiculed and insulted the frightened patrons at four well-known baths: the Barracks, the Romans II Health Spa, the Richmond Street Health Emporium, and the Club Baths. It was later reported on CBC-Radio's "Sunday Morning" that the owner of one of the establishments offered the police the use of keys to open doors, but the police refused.

Everyone on the premises was arrested, including an employee of the Hassle Free Clinic who was giving free VD tests. A police spokesperson claimed that the Crown Attorney had asked them to lay charges against anyone found on the premises, "although some could lose their jobs or have family problems" as a result.

Gay activists claimed that the raid was a political ploy to win anti-gay votes, coming as it did during the provincial election only recently called by the minority Conservative government in Ontario.

But even Rev. Ken Campbell, founder of Renaissance International, an evangelical group which has fought gay rights and so-called gay influence in the schools, also condemned the police raids and questioned "the appropriateness of laws which result in an intrusion in what is going on between consenting adults in private."

The Toronto Globe and Mail, Canada's most respected newspaper, denounced the raid in a tough editorial as "an ugly action". The paper pointed out that in the recent past, there have been no such raids on heterosexual houses of prostitution and that rarely in such cases had found-ins been charged.

Gay rights activists believe that these incidents in Toronto prove the need for protection of gays in the new charter of rights in Canada. This makes parliament's recent rejection of such protection all the more regrettable. (see accompanying story)

---reprinted in part from FLAGMAG and Gay Community News

▼ TELEGRAM SENT TO TORONTO ▼

"To Mayor Arthur Eggleton and Attorney General Roy McMurtry: The Executive Committee and members of Northern Lambda Nord, the lesbian and gay male organization in Northern New Brunswick, strongly condemn the indiscriminate raid by Toronto police of four bath houses. This frontal assault and attempt at

harrassment of gaymen is unacceptable. We request an immediate halt to such actions and a public condemnation of those police officials responsible."

NOTE: FLAG-Fredericton, GAE-Halifax, and the AGA (Atlantic Gay Alliance) also sent telegrams of protest to Toronto.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH ** "It's too bad the showers weren't hooked up for gas instead of water." --Unidentified police officer to a group of men found in a shower room during the raids on four Toronto baths. Quoted by Rev. Brent Hawkes, pastor of the Toronto Metropolitan Community Church, in the Toronto Star, February 7, 1981.

▼ GAY RIGHTS DEFEATED ▼

Protection for homosexuals will not be part of Canada's new constitutional package. On January 29, 1981, Parliament's Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada rejected an amendment to include sexual orientation in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights by a vote of 22 to 2. Only the NDP members voted in favor of the amendment, proposed by Svend Robinson (NDP, Burnaby, BC). Members of the Canadian Association of Lesbians and Gay Men (CALGM) addressed the Committee.

George Hislop (CALGM) pointed out that "a recent Gallup poll showed that 52% of Canadians support what is colloquially called gay rights, whereas only 30% said no. The rest were undecided...We are asking for the right to say without fear: 'I am not a heterosexual'."

Jake Epp, a member of the Progressive Conservative party, voiced his concern that a gay rights amendment would allow teachers "to promote your lifestyle as an acceptable lifestyle to their students." Peter Maloney (CALGM) responded that "sexual orientation is not a lifestyle...Heterosexuality is not a lifestyle. There may be a variety of lifestyles that flow out of a person's heterosexuality,...as many of you are aware. Similarly with homosexuals and lesbians, (sic) there are a tremendous variety of lifestyles that flow out of that. What we believe in regards to children and education, I think, is that the good of the children is paramount and the good of the children involves information and education and the best education should be available to all children." On this same subject, Christine Bearchell (CALGM) remarked: "Many children in the school system have lesbian mothers or gay fathers or gay brothers and sisters. They need to learn about homosexuality as it really is, not as the myths and stereotypes say it is."

With this defeat in Parliament's Charter of Human Rights amendments, the future of the inclusion of legal protection for lesbians and gaymen in Canada is uncertain.

---reprinted in part from FLAGMAG

▼ DEAR LAMBDA ▼

I've been wanting to write to you many times but preferred to let myself talk myself out of doing so.

I am a type of person, like many gays, lonely at times, scared, and feeling an injustice of being gay. Although I've done very well for myself in getting by mentally and working out physically, I've realized a great change in my mental attitude towards being a gay person among a majority of straights. I've joined a group of other gays -- or should I say other human beings -- who are filled with compassion and understanding, and who not only share their lives with you, but they allow you to grow within yourself, to be more aware of your abilities, and allow you plenty of your own space.

I will do as much as I possibly can to help this group grow and become a foundation for a support group to other gays like myself, for I feel like I've never felt -- and it's a good feeling to say that I am among many others who feel as I do about our rights as human beings.

--- Peter K.

▼ NLN 1981 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE ▼

During February, NLN sent renewal forms and membership blanks to those lesbians and gaymen who were members of NLN during 1980, or who wrote to the organization for information about the group last year. We hope that you will all feel that by joining NLN you are not only helping the lesbian/gay male community of our region to maintain an on-going support group, but that you will help yourself as well.

NLN provides a focus of support for the countless gay women and men who feel that they are the only one -- but they're not alone. We are here to help you feel good about yourself.

If you haven't joined us yet, we hope you will. If you haven't renewed your 1980 membership, please do so soon. Membership lists are confidential, and all mailings are in plain envelopes.

We hope to hear from you before our next newsletter.

Join us today!

▼ ATLANTIC GAY ALLIANCE FORMED ▼

At a regional meeting in Fredericton last month, NLN, FLAG-Fredericton, and GAE-Halifax agreed to affiliate to form the Atlantic Gay Alliance/Association des Gai(e)s de l'Atlantique (AGA). The AGA will act as an umbrella organization for all lesbian and gay male groups in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland-Labrador. The AGA will coordinate activities of the member associations, not supplant them. The Directorate (executive body) of the AGA consists of the executive officers of member organizations. Membership in AGA is voluntary; AGA members are organizations, not individuals.

Four common goals were adopted: (1) Promote social contacts among lesbians and gaymen in the Atlantic region; (2) provide counselling and social services for the gay community; (3) strive, through education of the public, to change negative social attitudes towards homosexuality; (4) work for the protection of the rights of lesbians and gaymen at all levels of government.

A program "Operation Outreach" was undertaken by the AGA. This program is aimed at making contact with lesbians and gay men in other areas of the Atlantic Provinces. There are currently no gay groups in either the two large urban areas of Moncton or St-John, nor is there a single gay organization in PEI or Newfoundland. The AGA will attempt to offer support and information to these areas to help them organize. A similar program was undertaken in rural Ontario; the AGA will use this program as a possible model for outreach to our region.

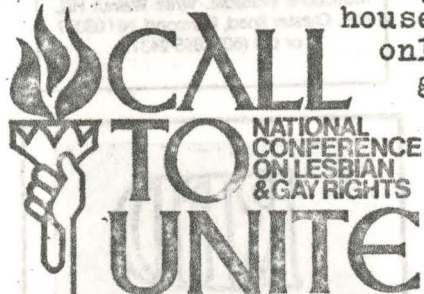
One new area of the Atlantic region which is developing an organization is the Acadian peninsula of New Brunswick, in the northeast corner of the province. Through the aid of NLN, gay people in the Lamèque-Shippegan area have begun to organize -- the first success of our outreach program. We are aware of how difficult it is to organize a functioning gay group, and we wish our consocuers et confrères in that region success -- we will do all we can to help them.

▼ NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN LOS ANGELES ▼

On April 24, 25, and 26, 1981, there will be a National Conference on Lesbian and Gay Rights held on the campus of UCLA. This is a delegated conference, with approximately 224 representatives from throughout the US. Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, which comprise the Northern New England region, have chosen 4 delegates to speak on behalf of our rural lesbian

gay male community. NLN is fortunate that one of these four delegates (2 women and 2 men) is a member of our organization. He will be the only male delegate from Maine, and because of his involvement in both NLN and the AGA, will be able to address issues of interest to the gay community in the Maine-Maritimes area.

The primary goal of the Conference in Los Angeles is to form a national network of lesbian/gay groups, to provide a communications network, and to provide a central clearing house for information. This network can only be accomplished by fostering local, grass-roots organizing, a personal goal of our delegate. From this conference, he will be able to better help our local outreach program which has begun in Atlantic Canada, through the AGA, and to aid in the development of a similar program in Maine.



LOS ANGELES APRIL 24-26, 1981

But in order to send our delegation to this important conference, money must be raised to pay for transportation across the continent. Our Maine delegate is attempting to raise \$300 to cover the cost of his plane fare from Boston to LA and return. This money will not include transportation costs to cover the 800-mile round-trip from northern Maine to Boston -- he will have to pay for that himself. He is asking for YOUR help to send him to the Conference. ANY amount of money you can afford to donate will be greatly appreciated. Please send donations to "NLN-Los Angeles", at our Caribou address. There are less than 2 months left to raise this money. Please send what you can. Thank you. Merci.

▼ NLN MONTHLY MEETINGS ▼

As reported last month, NLN has changed our monthly meeting schedule. Every other month will continue to be a Sunday afternoon business meeting followed by a pot-luck supper. But, beginning in February, we have planned a bi-monthly Saturday night party...and our February party was a roaring success. We invited members of FLAG to join us. The turn-out was overwhelming -- many new faces were there from Aroostook, and we even got a few new members! We look forward to our March meeting in Caribou, and our next party in April.

▼ ROOMMATE WANTED ▼

Gay woman looking for same to share 3-bedroom apartment in Fort Fairfield; share of rent, \$110. Write c/o NLN, Caribou.

*** In last month's issue, the suggestion was made to donate 5-10% of your income tax refund to NLN, to help the organization financially. As of March 4th, six people have donated a total of \$87. We hope to receive more as April 15th comes around. Thanks to those who gave!

*** Two symbols form NLN's logo: a lambda and a triangle. There is gay significance to both. Lambda, a Greek letter, has been adopted by the international lesbian-gay liberation movement and is recognized world-wide by lesbians and gaymen as the symbol of homosexual love.

The triangle was used by the Nazis, colored pink, and sewn to the concentration camp garb of the half-million homosexuals interred and slaughtered by Hitler's Germany. Prisoners of the Nazis would rather wear the yellow Star of David of the Jews than to carry the pink triangle of the homosexual. Lest we forget those slain by the Nazis, we commemorate their sacrifice by wearing the pink triangle -- with pride.

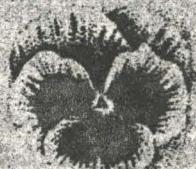
*** Off-campus housing available for gay students at Univ. of Maine, Orono. Write to R. Leland, 90 Pine St., Orono.

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**GAY TEACHERS
WEEKEND RETREAT
MARCH 13, 14, 15**

Join other male and female school personnel in exploring issues, problems, strategies at private conference center in southern New Hampshire. \$50 tuition and \$35 room and board. Limited tuition reductions available. Write Walnut Hill, Rt 4, Chester Road, Raymond, NH 03077 or call (603) 895-2437.

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