

NORTHERN LAMBDA NORD COMMUNIQUE ▼▼▼

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▼ WISCONSIN ADOPTS LESBIAN-GAY RIGHTS LAW!!! ▼

The U.S.'s Dairyland state has become the first-in-the-nation to pass a statewide, anti-discrimination law for lesbians and gaymen. The bill was passed by the State Assembly in November, and a slightly amended version was approved on a voice vote in the Wisconsin Senate on February 17. The following day, the Assembly approved the amended version, and it now awaits Governor Lee Dreyfus' signature. Dreyfus, a Republican, says he has "no problem" with the bill as long as it does not require affirmative action (requiring the hiring of gaymen and lesbians to compensate for past discrimination). The amended version states explicitly that affirmative action is not required.

The bill adds the words "sexual orientation" to an existing law prohibiting racial and other forms of discrimination. It outlaws discrimination in housing, public employment (civil service and government-type work), private sector employment, public accommodations (hotels, restaurants, retail businesses, etcetera), in the National Guard, and in administrative rules (formal operating policies of a governmental agency). Any firm having a contract with the state is also bound by the measure, whether or not the company is located in Wisconsin.

The bill defines "sexual orientation" as "heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual, having a preference or history for either one."

The proponents of the Wisconsin measure represented the mainstream of the religious community and civic groups. Among those endorsing the bill were bishops of the United Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Episcopal churches, the president of the United Church of Christ, the Catholic Archbishop of Milwaukee, and the American Baptist Church.

There are currently about 55 North American localities which have enacted lesbian-gay rights legislation. Québec and Wisconsin are the only Canadian and U.S. provinces/states to have passed such legal protection. The balance of the localities are cities and counties, including Boston, Hartford, Ottawa, Toronto, and Windsor (Ontario). (See COMMUNIQUE, Volume II: No. 4, April 1981, page 9, for a complete list.)

The State of Maine has a chance in 1983 to try (our 4th

attempt) to pass a similar piece of legislation. Hopefully, this issue will be addressed at the Symposium in Orono at the end of March. Non-discrimination provisions have not been introduced in the New Brunswick legislature. Yet.

UPDATE * UPDATE * UPDATE * UPDATE * UPDATE * UPDATE * UPDATE

As we go to press, Wisconsin Governor Dreyfus has signed into law the U.S.'s first statewide law banning discrimination against gaymen and lesbians.

▼ SUMMARY OF NLN'S FEBRUARY 28TH BUSINESS MEETING ▼

▼-Report on progress in organizing the Maine Symposium. Twelve of those NLN members present at the meeting indicated that they planned to attend. This dozen, plus another six or so people who have indicated interest in attending this year's statewide gathering, should make NLN a conspicuous group in Orono. Our plans for a group display in the exhibit/art show room at the Symposium include: (1) the NLN triptych which includes a map, locating our organization, plus a statement about the group, in both French and English; (2) a 2-panel wall display of the Bibliotheque Lambda collection; (3) a 5-panel wall display of newspaper items tracing NLN's print-media events; (4) photo-montage of our Caribou snow sculpture; (5) a "tribute" to the Bangor Daily News "Walls of Filth" editorial about the rest areas in Maine (6) information flyers - free to conference participants.



Because so many of us will be attending the Symposium, it was suggested, and it is planned, that we each wear some type of identifying "sign" upon our person, indicating that we are the Lambs of the North. Two members have volunteered to contribute the makings of tastefully-created corsages -- for both men and women. It's important that we know how many will be needed! So, PLEASE -- if you are going to the Symposium, PLEASE attend the March 21st meeting in Caribou (1pm Maine/2pm N-B). At that time, we will also arrange car-pools to save money on gasoline and to provide those without a vehicle a means of transportation to Orono. For those reasons alone, the March meeting is very important. Please try to attend. (If you are a member not in the area and are planning to go to the Symposium, drop us a line to let us know so we may prepare a corsage for you!)

▼-Discussion groups: Two have been held so far. Both successful. It was pointed out that one person, who will not participate, should facilitate the discussion. This will

keep the group's focus on the topic and allow more people a chance to speak. The topic for the next discussion (Saturday, March 20, 7pm Maine/8pm N-B) will be: being gay and lesbian and religious teachings. How do we resolve what organized religion and the bible say about us and what we know about ourselves to be true. The group discussion will be lead by Father Leo Grégoire, Catholic priest from Arthurette, N-B and a member and supporter of NLN. Please note that we will begin the group one hour earlier than usual. Enclosed in members' newsletters is a brochure, "Homosexuality - what the bible does and does not say", which relates directly to our topic of discussion.

▼-Snow sculpture: We did not even place in the competition. We discussed next year's entry a bit. More on that next winter. Our sculpture is the only one still standing (it should be around for quite some time!)

▼-A fund-raising supper will be held: One person is needed to volunteer his/her home as a "restaurant". Reservations will be taken in advance for a gayla feast. Several people are needed to prepare and serve the food. If you are interested in hosting and/or cooking, you must prepare a menu which will be published in COMMUNIQUE. Then, people may decide whether they wish to dine or not and make their reservations at the meeting following the publication of the menu.

▼-An afternoon of snowshoeing up and tobogganing down McDonald Mountain (in Castle Hill, west of Presque Isle) is scheduled for the weekend of April 3-4. Definite plans and details set at the March 21 meeting.

▼-NLN members: see enclosed Calendar for specific times and places of activities.

▼ A NIGHT ON THE TOWN ▼ by benj.

Saturday, March 6 was the Lamb's Night Out. Three full carloads of lamb-da-a-a-s made their way to Dégelis, Québec for an evening of dancing and fun at L'arc-en-ciel. This disco, 30 kilometres (about 20 miles) from Edmundston/Madawaska, is the only night-spot in the area where same-sex dancing can take place. (Since it's in Québec, their lesbian-gay rights bill protects our rights; and it's gay-owned, extra "points" for our side.) It was not an inexpensive evening -- \$2 cover at the door, 50¢ to check your coat, and beverages were \$2 for a Coke or a beer -- plus tip. But it was worth it.

L'arc-en-ciel is in a large old farmhouse in an isolated

spot off the Trans-Canada Highway. The interior is all mirrors and flashing lights -- a big city club in the boonies.

It's an interesting crowd at the 'rainbow'. Patrons are mostly from New Brunswick, some from Québec, and even one or two cars in the parking lot had Maine license plates. As with most public places, there are a lot of 'straight people' there, but this disco attracts many gays from the area -- including a few "wing nuts" from Loring AFB, and, of course, us Lambs. The disco does have a reputation; when I was teaching school, my principal remarked that L'arc-en-ciel was "not kosher". But in spite of the fact that there are a lot of gaymen there, all gathered in one area of the club, you don't see them dance with each other. When they do dance, it's usually with some of the lesbians there or with the straight women who hang around with the gaymen.

But last Saturday was interesting. The invasion of the Lambs left its mark on the minds and consciousnesses of everyone there. Without a moment's hesitation, we were up on the pulsating dance floor, moving to the beat, sometimes three men dancing together, sometimes two. You could feel the stares from the crowd -- is that what gays look like? And an interesting thing happened. When some of us were dancing, we'd find that pairs of women would come onto the floor and dance next to us -- this happened several times. We'd look around and there would be women dancing on both sides. But the gaymen would not do the same. It wasn't until late in the evening that we saw one or two couples of the regular local gaymen dancing -- and I'd like to think that our presence there had something to do with it.

At 3:30 a.m., after last call, the gay contingent from NLN made our way through a light snowfall back to Madawaska where we all spent the night. Merci beaucoup à Roger for his generous hospitality and for the Sunday morning repast which he prepared. The outing was a success and we will surely have another Lamb's Night Out! ♥

♥ "WHERE HAVE ALL THE PLANNERS GONE?" ♥ by Hilary H.

These past two months, and for some time before that, I and many of my gay friends around the state have been busily planning for the quickly approaching Maine Symposium IX. This year has gone exceptionally smoothly, in a planning sense, compared to other gatherings that I have worked on. There are, however, some things that are bothering me.

Where are the gay men and women from southern Maine?

Why haven't they been to any planning meetings? Where is any input from the rest of New England? This is supposed to be the Second Annual New England Conference of Lesbians and Gays. Last year in Boston, Maine was asked to host this year's conference. I wonder why. Although skeptical at first, we said we would, and now I know why I was intuitively hesitant. After having not even one word of communication from last year's conference organizers, I ask, Where are the NOLAG people? Does sponsoring a conference mean that you do all the work and then everyone comes to it, has a nice time, and then leaves? I didn't think it was supposed to be that way. Why call it a New England Conference? Why have a New England gathering if it's not supported by the lesbians and gays from all over New England? We have heard from nobody. It is frustrating, to say the least, when I remember all the times that we travelled the length of the state to go to planning sessions for last year's conference, not to have had anyone from the Portland area drive up even once to the many planning meetings that we have had in Orono. There hasn't even been an exchange through the mail. It will be interesting to see who appears at the upcoming planning meeting, and even more interesting to see who journeys to this year's Symposium at UMO. See you there? ▼

▼ A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF COMMUNIQUE ▼

It was warming to read the New Year's letters in the first issue of COMMUNIQUE for 1982. (Vol. III: No. 1) Besides thanking our fearless publishers of this fine newsletter, I also think many of our sisters and brothers deserve much praise.

Thank you to all the women who came to the great New Year's Eve party, and especially thanks to Reta, at whose home we gathered to ring in the gay new year. It was most refreshing to have you all there. It is understandably important that you participate in a group that is for both lesbians and gaymen. Your presence is very important and sorely missed. Please come.

Thank you also to all the people who travel from all ends of New Brunswick and from the far ends of Aroostook County to be with us at meetings and social functions. We are very lucky to have you here, we appreciate it, and we hope that you continue to make those seemingly endless treks to and fro. Merci! Tell your friends to come along, too.

Thank you to "Uncle Carl" for all the times he opens his heart and home, from us all. It is beautiful to glean

the wisdom of sages, as we dispell the myth that when you get older, if you're gay, you'll be alone. I'm sure he'll refute that in a minute. We cherish your patience and participation. Are there any other gay sages out there in Spudland?

Thank you as well to all those persons who continue to offer their homes for meetings and gatherings. May this year be rich for NLN, you, and your's. Be strong, proud, and pray for an early spring!

/s/ Jonathan

P.S. I know that everyone -- not just benj. and Hilary -- is capable of writing. Why don't you help prevent burnout (I smell smoke) by penning an article, poem, drawing, or something for this newsletter. ▼

BIBLIOTHÈQUE LAMBDA * NOUVELLES * NEWS * BIBLIOTHÈQUE LAMBDA

▼ Three recent additions to Bibliothèque Lambda, NLN's lending library, include: THE GAYELLOW PAGES, National Edition - 1982. A guide to bars, businesses, organizations, and various resources and mail order companies, for lesbians and gaymen -- includes all of USA and Canada. Reference book -- does not circulate.

THE JOY OF GAY SEX by Dr. Charles Silverstein and Edmund White. "An intimate guide for gay men to the pleasures of a gay lifestyle." Covers alphabetically such topics as androgyny, bondage, growing older, health, trade, wrestling -- and everything in between.

INTERWEAVE. Monthly newsletter of Maine religious liberals (sponsored by the Unitarian-Universalist Lesbian-Gay Caucus of Maine).

These additions bring our collection to 68 books and 42 periodicals -- ALL available for loan to NLN members. Take advantage of this resource -- the ONLY lesbian and gay library within the sound of my voice! ▼

▼ A MOVE IS UNDER WAY ▼

NLN's office, print shop, archives, and library are currently housed in two members' home. The house which they are renting has been sold. Therefore, they are looking for another place to rent. They'll need something accessible to both Loring and to McCain's/Easton. NEEDED ABOUT MAY 1st!: A two-bedroom house with basement or a three-bedroom house to rent (preferably outside of town in a somewhat private area). Please keep your eyes and ears open for a rental. May first will be here very soon. Merci beaucoup. ▼

▼MONTREAL: Bell Canada and the telephone communications workers have agreed to include a new clause in their union contract prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The contract already bans discrimination due to physical handicap, state of health, pregnancy, or union activities. Serge Gauthier, a member of Gais de l'Outaouais and a Bell Canada employee in the Ottawa area, requested that the union include protection for lesbians and gaymen in their contract. ▼

▼AUSTIN, Texas: The City Council of this city has approved an amendment adding gaymen and lesbians to those protected by law against discrimination in housing. This action comes one month after Austin voters soundly rejected an anti-gay ordinance which read, "It shall not be unlawful to deny housing on the basis of sexual orientation." The initiative was rejected by a 63% margin. ▼

▼OTTAWA: According to a survey requested by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the majority of Canadians is opposed to the inclusion of protection for lesbians and gaymen in the new constitution. Last June, nearly 2000 adults nationwide were surveyed, and 32% were in favor of protections while 60% were against them. Those surveyed in Québec responded more favorably than those in Canada as a whole; forty-five percent of the Québécois/e were in favor and 49% opposed to protections for homosexuals. ▼

▼SAN FRANCISCO: During the past few months, Coors beer, that famous Colorado brew, has shown up in grocery store coolers throughout Aroostook County. But were you aware of the 15-year old boycott of Coors? The purpose of this action is to call attention to the controversial labor practices and political associations of the family-owned company. The Coors company requires new employees to undergo lie detector tests; employees have often been asked questions about their sexual orientation during such tests. The company has long been condemned by labor and civil rights activists for its discriminatory policies with regards to the hiring of women and minorities and strong measures taken by management to prevent unionization of the company's workers. The Coors family is a major contributor to such right-wing groups as the John Birch Society and the Heritage Foundation. Coors is currently suing the groups in San Francisco which are instrumental in the boycott, claiming that the gay organization, Solidarity, and the Northern California Chapter of the AFL-CIO Coors Boycott Committee were trying to drive Coors out of

business. (The company's net income declined 76% in the first quarter of 1981.) The Coors company's practices and politics are anti-gay, anti-women, and anti-labor. You are urged to support this boycott by NOT purchasing Coors beer.▼

News items for this month's COMMUNIQUE were culled from Le BERDACHE, Montréal, and GAY COMMUNITY NEWS, Boston.

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regional lesbian-gay groups...

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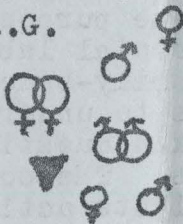
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