

Northern Lambda Nord Communiqué

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Much has been happening during the past four weeks dealing with politics, our U.S. federal non-profit status, and health issues. This issue of Communiqué will try to cover all. It will begin with a report about AIDS.

☐ AIDS: A Summary of What is Known

The first case of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome was diagnosed in 1981. Since that time, AIDS cases have been reported in 46 of the 50 United States and eight of the ten Canadian provinces. Much of the primary research has been done in France and in the U.S. Dr. Luc Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute in France and Dr. Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute in the U.S. have been in "competition" to isolate the AIDS virus. Montagnier is credited with first publishing the results of his discovery of LAV (Lymphadenopathy Associated Virus), while Gallo discovered and named the HTLV-III virus (possibly the same virus?). Gallo continues to receive all the credit for the isolation of the virus which is always referred to by his designation of HTLV-III.

AIDS is a disorder of the immune system, a complex of specialized body cells that protect our bodies from disease. AIDS by itself is not fatal. AIDS disrupts the ratios of types of white blood cells that directly attack foreign materials in the body. These T-lymphocytes are either "helper" or "suppressor" cells. The helpers activate the immune system, the suppressors block the system. Normally, there are more helpers than suppressors. In people with AIDS the ratio is reversed, leaving them exposed to "opportunistic" infections, those which take advantage of the opportunity to attack the body. (Not all of the immune system is lost, however.) These infections include ARC or AIDS-Related Complex, PCP or *Pneumocystis Carinii* Pneumonia, PLS or Persistent Lymphadenopathy Syndrome, and KS or Kaposi's Sarcoma, a form of cancer.

The actual cause of AIDS is unknown. It is believed to be an infectious disease caused by a virus and transmitted by intimate contact or by exposure to infected body fluids, especially blood and semen. Other theories suggest that repeated infection by STDs (sexually-transmitted diseases), the use of nitrites ("poppers"), immune reactions to sperm, genetic susceptibility, or reactions to one's own cells (auto-immune reactions) may cause AIDS. It is likely that many factors are involved in the cause of AIDS.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, 72% of AIDS victims are gay and bisexual men, 17% are intravenous drug users, 3% are Haitian-born immigrants, 1% are hemophiliacs, 1% are transfusion recipients, and 6% fall into the "other" or "unknown" classification, which includes heterosexual partners of AIDS victims, and children exposed in the womb or through close physical contact with parents who have AIDS. As of December 31, '84, 7699 cases of AIDS have been reported in the US; 47% (3665) are dead. In Canada, as of January 24, 174 cases have been reported, 69% are gay or bisexual men, and there are 56 deaths (46%). Maine is now included in states with reported AIDS cases; no cases have yet been reported in New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island.

Because there are so many manifestations of AIDS, there are a variety of symptoms: *Periodic or regular low-grade fever, night sweats, shaking

chills lasting longer than several weeks

- * Increasing, persistent fatigue
- * Unexpected weight loss greater than 10 pounds in less than two months
- * Unexplained swollen glands in the neck or armpits
- * White patches or unusual blemishes in the mouth
- * Persistent dry cough, shortness of breath not related to a cold or

smoking

- * Periodic or constant anal itch
- * Prolonged diarrhea, blood in stool, or gastrointestinal discomfort
- * Pink/purple flat or raised blotches, on or under the skin, mouth, nose, eyelids, rectum, usually painless, resembling bruises that are harder than skin and don't go away

Last month's *Communiqué* sent to Lambs included the brochure "can we talk?" which covered, in very blunt terms, the safe and unsafe sex practices. Briefly, UNSAFE sex practices include: *rimming * fisting * blood contact * sharing sex toys * semen or urine in the mouth * anal intercourse without a condom. SAFE sex practices include: * massage * hugging * mutual masturbation * social kissing (dry) * body-to-body rubbing (frottage). POSSIBLY SAFE practices are: * French kissing (wet) * anal intercourse with a condom * sucking (stop before climax) * watersports (external only). RISK OF CONTRACTING AIDS INCREASES WITH MULTIPLE SEX PARTNERS.

Information for the above article was culled from the following sources:

Our Paper, Portland; The Body Politic, Toronto; Gay Community News, Boston; Both Sides Now newsletter, Hawaii; Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights, San Francisco.

☒ HTLV-III/LAV ANTIBODIES TEST - HOW DEPENDABLE?

Much has appeared in the media recently about the newly-licensed test for antibodies to the HTLV-III/LAV virus (Human T-cell Lymphotropic Virus Number III/ Lymphadenopathy Associated Virus). Margaret Heckler, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, announced March 2, 1985 that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had approved the test for use. The "ELISA" serum antibody test will be used to screen blood at blood donor sites in the U.S. There are conflicting and legitimate interests surrounding the test. As with all screening tests, the possibility of false positive or false negative test results cannot be overlooked.

According to Kathleen F. Gensheimer, M.D., Maine State Epidemiologist, "a confirmed positive test indicates a person has been exposed to virus and has mounted an immunologic response (serum antibodies) to HTLV-III/LAV. A confirmed positive test does not indicate whether a person currently harbors the virus (i.e. HTLV-III/LAV carrier) and is thus infectious to others. A positive test is NOT a test for AIDS! Likewise, a negative test is no guarantee that a person has not been exposed to HTLV-III/LAV. (editor's emphasis)

"It is important to continue to emphasize preventive measures to the homosexual community, the largest group considered to be at highest risk for AIDS in Maine. Safe sexual practices should be exercised. In addition, it is essential that potential blood donors (exercise) voluntary restraint from blood donations.

"Although there have only been three officially reported cases of AIDS (in Maine), reports indicate that there will be several others in the near future. Nationwide, it is estimated that 400,000 individuals are positive for HTLV-III/LAV."

☒ NATIONAL GAY/LESBIAN GROUPS RESPOND TO BLOOD TEST FOR HTLV-III/LAV

A coalition of U.S. gay/lesbian and AIDS service organizations recommend that gaymen NOT take the test for HTLV-III/LAV antibodies. The test does not diagnose AIDS or contagiousness; it merely indicates the presence of antibodies to the virus. The statement, released by the National Gay Task Force,

donations in order to help safeguard the nation's blood supply, and as part of research programs that guarantee strict confidentiality. It also emphasizes the need for gaymen at risk to AIDS to continue to avoid donating blood.

The coalition of gay/lesbian and AIDS groups points out that if a positive antibody test becomes part of an individual's permanent medical records, potential employers interested in screening out gaymen could conceivably use the test as an indicator for homosexuality, since more than 70% of reported AIDS cases are gaymen. Such discrimination would be both medically and socially indefensible, but would be difficult to prevent.

The press release emphasizes that the test will NOT provide answers to such questions as: am I healthy? do I have AIDS? am I a carrier of AIDS? have I been exposed to AIDS? can I give AIDS to someone else?

The complete text of the NGTF statement, dated January 11, 1985, is on file in the Lambda Office.

AIDS IN MAINE - STATE BUREAU OF HEALTH MEETS WITH OUR COMMUNITY

A meeting was held at the Maine Medical Center in Portland February 27 to discuss the HTLV-III/LAV antibody test. Present were representatives from the Maine Bureau of Health, the Red Cross, the private medical community and members of the gay male community in Maine. According to Jim Novotny, Maine Sexually Transmitted Disease Control Officer, "the test was discussed with emphasis on its main purpose: protecting the nation's blood supply. Members of the gay community overwhelmingly agreed that the test should NOT be used as an individual screening tool for people who want to find out if they have AIDS, because one cannot tell from the test results. The mental burden of knowing one had a positive test would be worse than not knowing, especially because a positive test could be false and not indicate AIDS at all.

"Concerns were voiced, particularly about the confidentiality of the test. Although virtually everyone is recommending that no individual take the test, we all realize that many people will do so anyway. Questions about the availability of the test results to insurance companies, to employers or to other official agencies were discussed. There was also an extended discussion about the health-seeking habits of the gay community. It was stated that a large proportion of the community has no family doctor, and that probably half of those who do not share their sexual orientation with their physician. (see article about local physician survey)

"We from the Bureau of Health felt that the meeting was a success, because we got the kinds of feedback we hoped for. The information gleaned helped us formulate a position on taking the test, and will help guide our policy in the future."

AIDS RESEARCH BUDGET CUT BY REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

The Reagan Administration's fiscal year 1986 budget includes a \$10 million cut in the Public Health Service's AIDS efforts as well as massive cuts in Medicaid and elimination of revenue sharing -- all important components of the fight against AIDS. According to a National Gay Task Force press release dated February 9, 1985, the administration's 1986 budget in AIDS-related programs is \$85.5 million, down from \$96M in 1985. Commenting on the budget figures, Virginia Apuzzo, NGTF Executive Director, said, "It is incredible that an Administration that considers AIDS to be its 'number one health priority' would reduce spending when we are still a long way from a cure and while the costs associated with AIDS are skyrocketing." The budget also calls for a general reduction in the number of research grants given by the National Institutes for Health from 6500 to 5000. It is not known how many AIDS-related grants will be affected.

Reducing the government's research and education efforts increases the burden on local governments which are trying to cope with the health care

and service costs of the AIDS crisis. Medicaid, which covers the health care costs of many AIDS victims, will be reduced, according to Reagan's budget. In addition, revenue sharing to local governments, who are attempting to meet local health care and service needs, will also be cut. The NGTF is lobbying to seek full funding of research, significant increases in the funds allocated for public education and prevention of AIDS, and restoration of Medicaid and revenue sharing cuts.

☐ LOCAL SURVEY ON HEALTH PROVIDERS SUGGESTED

How many physicians in Aroostook, Madawaska, Victoria and Carleton Counties are "gay-positive"? Do you feel you can tell your doctor that you are a gayman or a lesbian? Can you discuss openly your health needs, specific to gaymen and lesbians?

A couple of years ago, Leo G. suggested that Lambda survey our area physicians to compile a list of health care providers in our four-county region who are non-judgemental of our sexuality. Perhaps now, with health a newsworthy and timely issue, this survey will be accomplished.

Next month's *Communiqué* will have details on how such a survey will be conducted. It will include both physical and mental health care givers as well as legal aid services in the region. So in preparation, please think of the doctors and lawyers you know who you would put on this list.

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A
VOICE
FOR
LESBIANS
AND
GAY MEN
IN MAINE

☐ NORTHERN LAMBDA NORD RECEIVES FEDERAL TAX EXEMPT STATUS

BASED ON INFORMATION SUPPLIED, AND ASSUMING YOUR OPERATIONS WILL BE AS STATED IN YOUR APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF EXEMPTION, WE HAVE DETERMINED YOU ARE EXEMPT FROM FEDERAL INCOME TAX UNDER SECTION 501(c)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.

After more than six months of diligent work by Ben, who prepared the forms, and Phil, who compiled the financial records, Northern Lambda Nord, Inc., may legally accept the grant we received from the Chicago Resource Center and is a tax-exempt organization in the U.S. So from now on, any monies donated to Lambda may be deducted from your U.S. Federal income tax.

☐ POLITICIANS INVITED TO DISCUSS HUMAN RIGHTS ACT AMENDMENT

Twenty people were present Sunday, March 3 in New Sweden when we gathered to meet with our Aroostook County legislators to discuss the amendment to the Maine Human Rights Act, a bill to include the term "sexual orientation" in non-discrimination clauses covering housing, employment, public accommodation, and credit. Only one of our 15 Senators and House members attended, Senator James McBreaity, from Senate District 2 (central Aroostook). Others present were Martha Grant, Presque Isle attorney; Steve Puckett, Aroostook Mental

Health Center (Caribou office director); Judy Feinstein, Maine Civil Liberties Union; Marty Sabol, Secretary of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance.

The session began with a discussion among the Lambs, led by Marty, about the bill: the process of lobbying, the procedure which legislation takes in the Maine Legislature, the apparent outlook this year in regards to success of passing this bill. (not so good)

After our guests arrived and some informal chit-chat, we all sat down to a question-answer-discussion session. We attempted to focus our comments and questions on the specifics of the bill, addressing Senator McBreairty's concerns and our feelings about the need for this legislation.

An important discussion meeting will be held (see calendar enclosed in Lambs' newsletters) to talk about our meeting with Senator McBreairty and what efforts need to be made to lobby our Aroostook County legislators. Please make an effort to attend this meeting.

☐ MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE TO MEET IN BANGOR

All Lambs are urged to attend the next Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance meeting, scheduled for Saturday, March 16, 1pm in Bangor at the Unitarian Church downtown, diagonally across from the bus depot. Most Maine Lambs are members of the Alliance. Our input is important. Meeting locations rotate every month to allow members from different parts of the state to attend.

The agenda for the meeting includes discussion of the status of the bill to amend the Human Rights Act to include "sexual orientation." This Bangor meeting will include discussion of our meeting with Senator McBreairty. You may want to consider going to Bangor for the meeting, then returning to the County in time for our Saint Patrick's Day party in Houlton that evening. If you need transportation, contact Dick.

☐ ATTENTION ALL MAINE LAMBS!!!

A reminder: If you have not yet filled out and returned your membership form to the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance IT'S STILL NOT TOO LATE! NLN is paying the cost of all Maine Lambs' memberships, so fill out the form and mail it in today.

A second reminder: The MIGPA and the Maine Anti-Gay/Lesbian Violence Project is still collecting surveys. If you received your survey and have not yet mailed it in, PLEASE do so today! (a stamped, self-addressed envelope should have been included in your mailing with the survey) Results of the survey will be used to document violence directed against members of our community state-wide. Your input is important. Surveys do not ask for your name, only your town of residence.

If you need a Political Alliance membership form or a copy of the survey, contact the Lambda Office by mail or call the Phoneline and leave a message ---896-5888.

☐ LESBIAN OFFICER SUES U.S. AIR FORCE

The American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California and the Lesbian Rights Project have sued the USAF on behalf of Lt. Julise Johnson, a California Air National Guard officer who was involuntarily discharged because she wrote a letter to her commanding officer stating that she was a lesbian. The lawsuit charges that her discharge for unfitness violates First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and association as well as violating a California law prohibiting the termination of government employees solely on the basis of their sexual orientation. This case is believed to be the fourth in the nation which challenges the military's policy of discharging people for identifying themselves as gay, as opposed to engaging in homosexual activity. (Civil Liberties, American Civil Liberties Union newsletter, Winter 85)

☐ IN THE CONTINUING CASE OF DIANE MATTHEWS v THE U.S. ARMY...

In 1981, Diane Matthews was discharged from the Reserve Officer Training Course (ROTC) at the University of Maine at Orono when she told a superior officer she was a lesbian. In April 1984 the Federal District Court in Portland ruled that her discharge was improper because there was no proof she engaged in homosexual activity. This decision was the first in a federal court to conclude that homosexuality alone is not grounds for military discharge.

However, Matthews has since said in an army re-enlistment application that she has engaged in homosexual acts "numerous times". Now a federal appeals court has ruled that the district court must reconsider whether Diane may remain in the ROTC program. Her Maine Civil Liberties Union attorney will argue that "It is okay if she engaged in homosexual activity, as long as it was not done in the service." Meanwhile, Diane will remain in the ROTC until her status is reviewed by the federal magistrate.

☐ MAINE CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION - A SUPPORTER OF OUR RIGHTS

The Maine Civil Liberties Union (MCLU) is currently defending the rights of gay people in the courts. The Diane Matthews case (story this issue) involves the rights of lesbians and gaymen to serve in the military. The Madison "Tolerance" Day case (see last month's *Communiqué*) deals with the right of a lesbian, Dale McCormick, to speak to high school students. The MCLU is absorbing the costs of these two cases. They support us. They could use our financial support to help them. If you can, send donations to the MCLU; you may designate the money to be earmarked specifically for one or both of these cases. MCLU, 97A Exchange Street, Portland 04101

☐ INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN TORONTO, JUNE 30-JULY 7, 1985

The January, 1985 issue of *Communiqué* gave a brief report on the upcoming 7th Annual International Gay Association Conference planned for this summer in Toronto. Since that time NLN has received more details on the conference.

Every year the IGA convenes in a different country for its Annual Conference. This is the second time they have met in North America. This year's theme is "Smashing Borders -- Opening Spaces". For six days delegates and interested individuals who want to participate will be attending a variety of workshops, special panel discussions, viewing an international selection of gay and lesbian films and videos, and watching one or two variety performances. Lesbian and gay historians from several countries will present papers discussing our heritage. Four or five major slide shows will be featured. Numerous social events, lesbian and gay art exhibits, music, youth and women's events, a dance, a major concert and a massive lesbian and gay picnic and/or beach party will round out the week, which begins June 30 with a gayla Lesbian-Gay Pride celebration. Gaymen and lesbians from 30 nations are expected.

Free housing accommodations with local gaymen and lesbians will be arranged. Registration fees received before June 1 are: (prices in Canadian funds) - * delegates or representatives of IGA member organizations, \$40 each for the entire conference and festival. * Individuals, \$25 * Students, seniors, and unemployed, \$15. Selected major social events will have an additional ticket price.

Further information is available at the Lambda Office or you may write to the IGA Conference Committee, 105 Carlton Street, 4th floor, Toronto, M5B 1M2. Contact telephone: Gillian Rodgers, 416/364-6320

☐ GAY CUBANS, GAY CANADIANS, AND IMMIGRATION

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has formally assured that Cuban refugees who entered the States as part of the Mariel Boatlift and were identified as gay or lesbian will not be excluded from this country based on that initial information alone. U.S. immigration law forbids the entry of gaymen and lesbians into this country. Gay Cubans were singled out by their country for expulsion.

Current INS regulation remains - gay and lesbian foreigners may be excluded from entering the U.S. Canadians are reminded that when crossing into Maine, if you identify yourself as a gayman or a lesbian, the Customs people may bar you from entry.

In 1983, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (five Pacific states) ruled that the INS could no longer deny entry to gay and lesbian foreigners. The court ruled that only legally-defined medical exclusions were proper in its jurisdiction. But then the Reagan Administration, through its Justice Department, ordered the Centers for Disease Control to issue a medical quarantine on psychological grounds for all "self-professed homosexuals" to counteract the Court of Appeals' ruling. The American Psychiatric Association, which has long maintained that homosexuality is not a medical condition, has asked that this quarantine against gay people be withdrawn. In a letter to the *New York Times*, National Gay Task Force Director Virginia Apuzzo wrote, "The White House is...trying to avoid the judgment of medicine...The Justice Department apparently believes it knows more about psychiatry than psychiatrists do. It is not only misapplying the law, but also making a mockery of the country's medical community."

☐ WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT GAYS

It has long been held that Jesus never said anything in support or condemnation of homosexuality and homosexuals. But according to an article in the Winter/Spring issue of *The Cabirson*, published by the Gay Academic Union of New York, during his Sermon on the Mount (King James version, Matthew 5:22), Jesus strongly disapproved of abusing someone who is a *racha*, a Hebrew word that was a contemptuous term for effeminate gaymen. The GAU article is entitled, "Whosoever Shall Say to His Brother, 'Racha'", by Dr. Warren Johansson. (*Gaudeamus*, newsletter of Dignity/Providence, the Catholic lesbian-gay organization in Rhode Island)

☐ BOWDOIN COLLEGE GAY AND LESBIAN ALUMNI ORGANIZE

Gay and Lesbian Alumni of Bowdoin College (Brunswick) have organized to act as a support group for the Bowdoin Gay-Straight Alliance on campus. Other activities may be initiated in response to the needs and wishes of the membership. Bowdoin alumnus/alumna interested in joining may contact: J.Peter Prins, 510 East 20th Street, Apartment 8-D, New York City 10009.

☐ GAY MEN'S CHORUS IN MAINE

The Boston Gay Men's Chorus will give two performances in Maine. The first is Saturday, May 18 at 8pm in the South Parish Congregational Church, 9 Church Street, Augusta. Their fifty voices will sing a second time on Sunday, May 19 at 3pm at the Portland Unitarian-Universalist Church, (either the Allen Avenue UU Church or the First Parish UU Church -- next month's *Communiqué* will give the exact location.) This is the same weekend as the 12th Maine Symposium in Portland.

Maine's human service professionals are invited to learn more about the special needs of gay people and our families at the first statewide Conference on Professional Work with Lesbians and Gaymen, Thursday, May 2, 1985, at the Saint Paul Center, Oblate Retreat House, 136 State Street, Augusta, from 8:30am-4:30pm. The Conference, sponsored by the Maine Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, Inc. (NASW), has been endorsed by the Maine Council of Community Mental Health Centers.

Typically, professionals have lacked up-to-date knowledge for serving lesbian and gay clients. Usually they find it difficult to address this topic with colleagues and clients in a manner free of stereotypes and myths. These barriers place increased burdens both upon clients and on staff. This conference is designed for a broad, interdisciplinary audience: clergy, educators, journalists, lawyers, nurses, physicians (both osteopaths and MDs), the police, psychologists, as well as social workers and other occupations which relate to gay people. Students of these professions are also welcome to attend.

More information about this important conference is available at the Lambda Office or by writing: NASW Secretary, c/o University of Southern Maine, Social Welfare Department, 96 Falmouth Street, Portland 04103; 780-4120, 772-0498, or 772-4741. Pre-registration is required; seating is limited.

Gay/Lesbian GUIDE Lesbienne/Gai

FREDERICTON: Fredericton Lesbians and Gays (FLAG), POB 1556, Sta. A., E3B 5G2 - FLAGline, 506/457-2156

ORONO: Wilde-Stein Club, Memorial Union, Univ. of Maine 04469 - meets at 7pm Sundays, South Bangor Lounge, Memorial Union

BANGOR: Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition (BAGLS), POB 1805, 04401, meets every other Monday, 7:30pm, 126 Union Street

INTERWEAVE: POB 8008, Bangor 04401. Holds pot-luck suppers at the Unitarian Church, 126 Union Street, on the first & third Saturdays, 6pm

QUÉBEC: Centre homophile d'aide et de libération (CHAL), 175, Prince-Edouard, G1K 2M2, 418/523-4997

Groupe gai de l'Université Laval (GGUL) et Groupe des femmes gaies de l'Université Laval (GFGUL), CP 2500, Pavillon Lemieux, Cité Universitaire, Ste-Foy G1K 7P4

SAINT JOHN: Lesbian and Gay Organization (LAGO-SJ), POB 6494, Sta. A., E2L 4R9

MONCTON: Gais et lesbiennes de Moncton (GLM), CP 7102, Riverview E1B 1V0

PORTLAND: Gay People's Alliance, Univ. of Southern Maine, 92 Bedford Street, 04102, 207/780-4085

HALIFAX: Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE), Box 3611, So. Postal Sta., B3J 3K6, 902/429-6969

NEWFOUNDLAND: Gay Association in Newfoundland (GAIN), Box 1364, Sta. C., St. John's A1C 5N5

WEBWORK: women's correspondence club, New England & Maritimes, Box 131-N, Calais, Maine 04619

ARCHIVES FOR THE PROTECTION OF GAY HISTORY AND LITERATURE: Box 6368, Sta. A, Saint John E2L 4R8

OUR PAPER: A Voice for Lesbians and Gaymen in Maine - monthly newspaper, \$12 for one year, POB 10744, Portland 04104

MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE: POB 108, Yarmouth 04096

NORTHERN MAINE & NEW BRUNSWICK: Northern Lambda Nord, CP/POB 990, Caribou, Maine 04736-0990 USA. Gay-Lesbian Phoneline/Télégai - 207/ 896-5888,

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