

SPECTRUM

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"The love that dares to speak its name"

by Terry Richard

"Homosexuality is not all self-hate, or guilt feelings or love, or domination or submission, or any one thing, it's a many-branching path, down which we are all walking." Samuel Steward

Recently Claude Olivier, president of the New Brunswick Coalition for Human Rights went before a provincial legislature committee recommending protection for lesbians and gays from discrimination. During these public hearings on February 6 and 7 Liberal member Danny Gay was concerned that changing the law as it now stands would lead lesbians and gays to flaunt their lifestyle in places like malls and restaurants which would ultimately lead to a

clash of "family values as opposed to homosexual values". The bottom line is that homosexuals are from families. If anything my family's acceptance of who I am as a gay man, as well as having them accept my lover for who he is has strengthened my family, not torn it apart. The same goes for my lover's family.

The New Brunswick Human Rights Coalition began with a small group of people (who are not all gay) in Fredericton a couple of years ago. Its main goal was to figure out a way to persuade protection for lesbians and gays under the NB Human Rights Act.

Things began to get under way when the Liberal government appointed Charles Ferris a lawyer from the provincial ombudsman's office to complete a review of New Brunswick's human rights laws and make recommendations for im-

provements and changes. Eventually the Human Rights coalition made a brief to Ferris. The brief included a survey of gays and lesbians that took place last summer. The results were startling: 50% of those surveyed had experienced some kind of discrimination; 17% had at sometime been denied access to public services like a bar or a restaurant; and over 80% reported having been verbally or physically abused. Many individual cases of discrimination were also reported in the survey. For example when a lesbian publicly fought for the custody of her children, she was fired from her job.

On November 9th of last year after more than 150 recommendations, Charles Ferris called for a ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation. However the provincial government has decided to send the recommendations to a

legislative committee for more study and public input.

The provincial government must understand that the gay community cannot afford to wait any longer for politicians to wonder whether the Human Rights Act should or should not be amended. It should be amended. Everyone else in society is protected by law. If you are straight and fired from a job for no simple reason you can fight back because the law stands behind you. However, if you are gay and the same thing happens to you no law will protect you. We call this a fair society? Our only advantage in this battle is that we are in our own community closely knit and combined to fight for our rights.

If anything the gay community is very similar to the Jewish community. Up until 1960 it was very common to find Jews with their

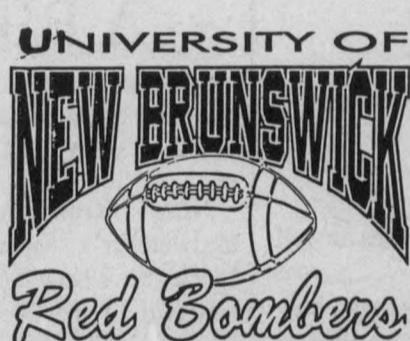
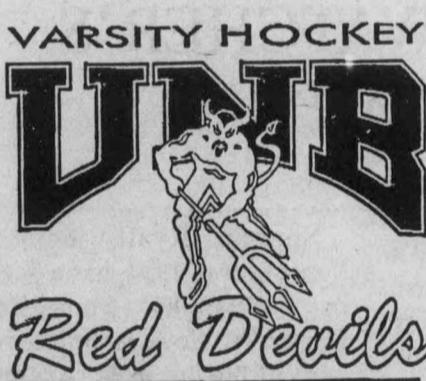
own bars, restaurants, and beaches, mainly because they were "limited" from joining the rest of society. That was back in the '40's and 50's. However, look what is going on in the well-educated 1990's. Lesbians and gays also have their own bars, restaurants, and beaches all because we too are "limited" from joining the rest of society. There is one thing to keep in mind: the Jewish Community arose out of those prisons by uniting and fighting for their rights. We as lesbians and gays are doing just that.

The New Brunswick Liberal government has all the information it needs to decide on amending the Human Rights Act for lesbians and gays. All we have to do now is wait.

Elections are coming: VOTE!

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Coming Attractions

Friday, March 15th

Grad Class Party
Afternoon in the Club

Saturday March 23rd

Midnight Ramblers
(Rolling Stones - Cover Band)
Ballroom Event

Wednesday, March 27th

Summer Fashion 91'
The CHSC Summer Fashion Show

Thursday March 28th

PARTY FOR THE PLANET
(Environmental Fundraiser)

Friday, April 12th

Last Class Bash
The Northern Pikes
(opener to be announced)
Ballroom Event

Members and Guests Only

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