

# Amherst Daily News

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Wednesday, March 17, 2004

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## Amherst resident slams Casey on stance on gay marriage

Jason Smith

Lifestyles

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AMHERST – Amherst resident Gerard Veldhoven is hurt and angered to hear Cumberland-Colchester MP Bill Casey declare his continued opposition to same-sex marriage.

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Veldhoven has lived in Amherst with his partner Norman Carter since 1975. The couple will celebrate their 30th anniversary next February.

**Around Town**

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On Monday, Casey said he'd continue to oppose same-sex marriage despite supporting Conservative leadership hopeful Belinda Stronach, who supports allowing same-sex couples to marry.

Bus Routes

Movies

Veldhoven said homophobia continues to rear its ugly head in the Conservative Party of Canada.

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"They just won't change their minds and provide equal rights and in the end we'll just be second-class citizens," he said. "I don't like that and I know a lot of gay people in the area feel the same way."

Accommodations

No matter who the Conservatives choose as their next leader, Veldhoven is convinced the new party will never vote in support of same-sex marriage.

Restaurants

United Church minister and gay rights activist Eldon Hay said Casey has every right to voice his opinion, but in this case, his opinion is wrong.

Entertainment

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"I think he's against the provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I think he's on the side of the Neanderthals. I think the future of our country is a more tolerant society."

Comments

Despite Casey's opposition, Veldhoven said he and his partner have felt welcomed and accepted by the community.

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"The funny thing is within the Amherst community, most of our friends are straight and they're very close friends. We've been very accepted in this community. We've been very lucky that way."

History

Casey has voted against same-sex marriage twice and said he has no intention of changing his vote.

In 1999, Casey, along with majority of MPs, and former Prime Minister Jean