

OUTWORDS



CLGRO

Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario
Coalition pour les droits des lesbiennes et des personnes gais en Ontario



HEALTH

Rainbow Health Network Holds First Annual General Meeting

The Rainbow Health Network (RHN), an advisory group of CLGRO, held its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in October. After five years of existence, the group is now looking to become more formalized. At the AGM, an Annual General Report was presented, finances reviewed, a budget proposed for the 2006-2007 year and a Steering Committee elected. Nick Mulé continues as chairperson, Richard Hudler becomes treasurer switching his post of secretary with Phyllis Waugh, and Masina Wright continues as member at large. An additional member at large position remains vacant.

Also in October, RHN in collaboration with the Sherbourne Health Centre submitted a letter of intent for seed funding regarding the Interprofessional Health Education and Innovation Fund being administered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The seed funding, if granted, would allow for the development of a full-fledged proposal that will focus on developing and implementing formal education of the health professions at both the college and university levels throughout the province on gender and sexual diversity health and wellbeing issues. We are expected to hear back in December.

A revised version of a joint proposal between RHN, CLGRO and the Sherbourne Health Centre regarding the establishment of an Ontario Rainbow Health Resource Centre was re-submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term

Care as requested. We are awaiting feedback on this latest review.

RHN meets the third Wednesday of the month in Seminar Room 222 at Ryerson University's School of Social Work in Toronto from 6:00 - 8:00 PM.

Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition (CRHC)

The Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition, which hosts the largest electronic clearinghouse of GLBT health materials in the world, promotes better health care practices, and pushes for GLBT curriculum materials and appropriate professional licensing standards, is facing some major challenges. Stephen Harper's Conservatives have frozen several streams of federal grant money under which CRHC has submitted proposals. And, of course, GLBT communities are *still not recognized* as having specific health issues and barriers like other minority communities.

Check out the website www.rainbowhealth.ca to find out what the CRHC has accomplished over the past four years, the work that lies ahead, and if you can help.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Arti Mehta, Tom Warner, Nick Mulé and Richard Hudler presented CLGRO's position at the hearings of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on November 15, 2006 regarding Bill 107, an Act to Amend the Ontario Human Rights Code. An announcement of planned amendments to the Bill was made by the government prior to the hearings but before CLGRO was able to see them and comment on them.

November 2006

LONDON ONTARIO

On October 22nd a major initiative in the London GLBT Community saw 80-90 members of the Community gather at the Aeolian Performing Arts Centre in London. The meeting was initiated by Clark Bryan, the owner of the Aeolian and a Board member of the Old East Village Business Improvement Area. Metropolitan Community Church London co-hosted the forum and it was facilitated by Clarence Crossman, MCC's Pastor.

The meeting came to a consensus that London needed as priorities a Community Centre for the GLBT population, and a better communications mechanism to reach out to Londoners. Task forces were established to research these two subjects, and a third group was

CLGRO

Steering Committee Meeting

January 27, 2007
Saturday, 12-5 pm

We will try to finish in one day, but may have to meet again on Sunday if we can't manage it!

Location: CLGRO office, #C15, 310 Danforth, Toronto (Chester subway).

Access: wheelchair-users need help (please let us know you are coming).

If you have any queries, please contact the office. We'll be glad to help.

set up to explore the possibility of an umbrella GLBT organization for London.

In a major coup for London, possibly enhanced by the upcoming municipal elections, the organisers were able to attract 30 of the candidates for municipal office in the November 13th election. The candidates in attendance were running for Mayor, Board of Control, and Councillors in many of the wards. While this was a non-media event, the civic politicians present were generally very supportive of the GLBT community and the aims of the group. Specific offers of help were received, regardless of the election outcome, and the meeting discussed the idea that the City could help fund some of the initiatives. We have to report none of the politicians in attendance refused to consider the idea. The political attendees were invited as observers, and were very respectful of the GLBT community's need to direct its own affairs.

The Old East Village Business Improvement Area and the Old East Village Community Association supported the forum and have been explicit in their welcome of more of the GLBT Community - both residents and businesses - to Old East Village.

A follow up meeting is planned for Sunday January 28th at 7 pm, again at the Aeolian Performing Arts Centre, 795 Dundas Street East, (at Rectory Street) London, Ontario. The organisers would welcome a healthy turnout for that event. If you are in the London or South Western Ontario areas, please consider attending.

CLGRO is anxious to receive information about what is going on in different cities around the province -- Editor

MINUTES SUMMARY

CLGRO Steering Committee Meeting,
September 9, 2006

There were no objections from the membership regarding the decisions made at the Annual General Meeting in May and those decisions were ratified. It was, however, necessary for us to change the date for the next meeting from January 20, 2007 to January 27, 2007. We agreed to be a sponsor of Bisexuality

Day planned for September 23, 2006. We participated in the Pride Parade and showed our support at the Dyke March in Toronto. We were sponsors of Anti-Homophobia Day in Toronto on May 17, 2006. Representatives from CLGRO attended part of a global Protest July 19 to commemorate the hanging of two Iranian teens and we let the Persian Gay and Lesbian Organization know of our support.

Three major issues we are currently working on are opposing aspects of the legislation to change the Ontario Human Rights Commission, trying to ensure that new legislation regarding police complaints are effective, and opposing federal legislation to raise the age of consent from 14 to 16. We continue to work with the Rainbow Health Network on dealing with health issues in Ontario and nationally. Education issues continue to be a serious concern to us and we hope to be able to attract more people to help work on this. At the meeting we heard horror stories that support other reports we have been receiving for some time around issues of immigration and refugees. Some preliminary research has been done to try to identify and possibly bring together resources to address with these issues. We also plan to become more active in the near future in dealing with concerns about charitable status for groups that are involved in non partisan political action. Fund raising continues to be an on-going concern.

The next meeting will be at the CLGRO office Saturday, January 27, 2007.

CANADIAN BLOOD SERVICES

Following is a petition which CLGRO has supported regarding Canadian Blood Services. More information about the can be found at: www.stopdiscrimination.net. To sign the petition: <http://petitiononline.com/hkia/petition/html>

To Canadian Blood Services:

A Canadian Blood Services policy explicitly states: "all men who have had sex with another man, even once, since 1977 are indefinitely deferred [from donating blood]." The organization's

rationale for adopting this policy is allegedly based on information that suggests a higher risk of HIV/AIDS infection among men who have sex with men (MSM) compared to other groups. However, we are challenging Blood Services' practice of rejecting MSM blood donors for three reasons:

1. It is illegal under Section 5(a) of the Canadian Human Rights Act.
2. Assessing the overall proportion of HIV/AIDS infection among MSM is impossible, since the exact population of this group in Canada remains unknown.
3. Given that 54.3% of HIV positive tests in 2004 were attributed to causes other than MSM activity, all Canadian blood donors should be equally subject to rigorous testing and screening.

IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE ISSUES

On November 7, 2006, CLGRO hosted an initial meeting on immigrant and refugee service provision and rights. The meeting was prompted by a recent throng of emails and phone calls to CLGRO from immigrant, refugee and newcomer LGBT people who are fleeing homophobic and transphobic persecution from their homelands. Many of these people fear deportation to countries where they face assault or death due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Kar'en Feder, with the Rainbow Health Network Anti Racism Committee, and CLGRO collaborated to invite community stakeholders to share information and resources as well as discuss next steps. Over 40 community activists, newcomers, social service providers, lawyers and agency representatives arrived at the 519 Community Centre to discuss this important topic.

Several presenters were asked to speak about their personal and professional experiences with immigration and refugee issues. Lawyer El Faroukh Khaki spoke about barriers to making refugee claims, including the lack of an appeal process for those who are denied entry, medical inaccessibility restricting HIV positive refugees, and claimants' lack of documentation proving persecution. Peter Haber discussed the difficulty of the unlimited discretion of immigration

officers. Discriminatory immigration officers have been known to detain queer and trans people at the border and have full power to do so. Peter Bernier from the Lesbian and Gay Immigration Task Force spoke about the difficulty of same-sex partners to immigrate to Canada. Even though same-sex marriage is recognized in Canada, many same-sex partners are denied marital status in their home countries and are therefore may not be recognized as partners in Canada. Several people spoke about their own experiences crossing borders, facing detainment and harassment both in Canada and abroad.

Advocacy and education seemed to be the main lines of defence against Canada's oppressive immigration system. Immigration officers should be educated about trans issues and the homophobic violence that refugees experience. Travelers and immigrants need to be educated about how to navigate the complicated system, including contacting Foreign Affairs Canada when going abroad from Canada. Also, the general public needs to be more aware of the systemic discrimination of immigration through media outreach and by contacting our MPs. CLGRO's expertise in advocacy may prove useful on this front. We must also lobby to reinstate funding for the Court Challenges Program to ensure that newcomers who are being discriminated against have equal opportunity to appeal. Organizations can also sponsor refugees through the Sponsorship Holding Agreement.

This new committee will be starting up a listserv to further discuss next steps and share concerns. If you would like to be involved, please email CLGRO at clgro@web.ca.

AGE OF CONSENT

Bill C-22 on the Age of "Protection" was sent to the Justice Committee on October 30, 2006. At the second reading of the Bill, only queer MPs Libby Davies and Bill Siskay spoke out about the Bill's negative ramifications. Bill C-22 aims to increase the age of consent from 14 to 16 years of age, denying youth sexual autonomy and criminalizing consensual activity with older partners. In response, CLGRO has submitted a brief to every MP outlining the unnecessary and

potentially dangerous ramifications of the legislation.

CLGRO is concerned that the proposed amendments in the Bill could possibly deny young people sex education and safer sex provision in schools and social service agencies, reinforcing the Right wing swing in public policy. Instead of advocating safety through abstinence and criminalization, CLGRO suggests using education to teach young people about sex and sexuality so that they are better able to make informed decisions.

Importantly, many of the provisions in Bill-C22 are already covered in the criminal code, making Bill-C22 mostly ideological and unnecessary. CLGRO is particularly concerned because so-called child-protection legislation can be used to attack gay, bisexual and lesbian men and women by reinforcing the myth that we prey on children. CLGRO supports the reduction of the age of consent for anal sex, but does not support Bill C-22.

Supporting Iranian Lesbians & Gays

Tom Warner and Brent Southin represented CLGRO at the July 19, 2006 commemoration of the first anniversary of the execution of two gay teenagers in Mashhad, Iran. The event was organized by the Persian Gay and Lesbian Organization (PGLO) and attracted around sixty gay and lesbian activists and media reporters. The event focussed on problems and challenges faced by queer people in Iran, and ended with discussions of achievements and hopes.

PGLO's Secretary General, Arsham Parsi, gave a brief talk in memory of the two teenagers. Dr. Victoria Tahmsebi, a professor at the University of Toronto, spoke on the tragic situation of LGBT people in the homophobic society of Iran, who live in constant fear of imprisonment, torture and death. Ms. Niaz Salimi, President of the Canadian Muslim Congress, focussed on lesbian experiences of discrimination and the oppression of women in a patriarchal and heterosexist society. El-Farouk Khaki, President of Salaam Toronto, gave an overview of that group's origins and activities in raising awareness about issues of sexuality among Muslims, and challenging the often unquestioned presumptions about Quranic

condemnation of homosexuality. Glen Murray, the former mayor of Winnipeg, expressed his deep concern for millions of homosexual people who are under systematic oppression and discrimination, and subjected to violence and extermination. He also articulated the need for people in Canada to find ways to support Iranian LGBTs, including assisting those who seek refuge in Canada.

PGLO has been working for the past three years to assist Iranian LGBT asylum seekers and to protect their human rights. Like most LGBT groups, they are run by volunteers and desperately need financial and other assistance. They are presently attempting to obtain registered charitable status and are seeking support in securing a room or cubicle in an office to establish a registered address. If you can help in that regard, please contact them. More information, including how to make a donation to PGLO, can be found at <http://www.pglo.net> or by contacting them at pglo@pglo.net.

PLANNED GIVING

Have you considered planned giving to CLGRO? Planned giving means leaving a bequest in your will for a donation to be made from the proceeds of your estate once you have passed on. It's an easy and effective way of ensuring that a group and a cause you have supported during your lifetime can continue to thrive. Including CLGRO in your planned giving would be a tangible way for you to leave a lasting legacy and to ensure that the movement to advance the liberation of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals will continue. The amount you choose to leave as a gift would be up to you - and you should talk to a lawyer or financial advisor about that. As for CLGRO, we would be enormously grateful to receive a bequest of any amount and would be certain to put it to good use!

FROM THE MAILBAG

Tenure track positions currently available in the Schulich School of Business at York University effective July 1, 2007

Reelout 8th annual queer film & video festival January 25th -February 4th, 2007
see www.reelout.com.

Canadian Mental Health Association,
Toronto Branch, Education and Training
program 2006-2007

www.toronto.cmah.ca.

Call For Papers for a Special Issue of
Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist
Philosophy Transgender Studies and
Feminism: Theory, Politics, and
Gendered Realities, Edited by Talia Mae
Bettcher and Ann Garry. See
http://www.msu.edu/~hypatica/

Wellspring Gay Men & Partners Cancer
Support & Networking Group. Contact:
1-877-499-9904 www.wellspring.ca

Volunteers/Help Sought

CLGRO is seeking a volunteer to help
with revamping and updating our
website, at http://www.web.ca/clgro/. If
you're interested in queer activism, and
know a thing or two about websites,
please email Arti at
arti.mehta@utoronto.ca.

We are looking for participants over the
age of 50 who have been in a same sex
relationship for 10 years or more. Contact
the research office at glstudy@umn.edu
or 1-800-SSW-UOFM (779-8636) (ask
for Jean Quam), or contact Gary directly
at Holeford@earthlink.net.

A doctoral student at Regis College,
University of Toronto is doing research
for a dissertation on bisexual women's
choices between polyamorous and
monogamous relationships. For
information contact Margaret Robinson
c/o Regis College 15 St. Mary St.
Toronto ON M4Y 2R5,
margaret.robinson@utoronto.ca 416-977-
0571

Research Participants Wanted: "Queering
Bathrooms Project"

A York University research team is
looking for interviewees for a project
entitled "Public Toilets: Geographies of
Gender and Queer Desires." We are
interviewing queer, gay, lesbian,
bisexual, transgendered, transsexual
and/or
intersexed people about their experiences
in public toilets and about access
issues more generally. This research
project is being headed by Dr. Sheila
Cavanagh, Assistant Professor of Gender
and Sexuality Studies, York U and has

been reviewed and approved by the
Human Participants Review Sub-
Committee. If
you are interested in being interviewed
contact: dgibaldi@yorku.ca

We are currently recruiting participants
for a research study being conducted in
the Department of Psychology at Queen's
University on Married and cohabiting
couples. Please contact Caroline Pukall at
(613) 533-3200 or
pukallc@post.queensu.ca.
https://post.queensu.ca/mail/src/compose.
php?send_to=pukallc%40post.queensu.ca

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About the newsletter

Outwords is published three times a year by CLGRO, the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario. Except for editorials, the views expressed in *Outwords* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of CLGRO or its member organizations. Articles may be accepted at the discretion of the editor. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep the membership informed about CLGRO activities and other matters of interest.

Newsletters are mailed free to CLGRO members. Join CLGRO by completing the membership form below!

About CLGRO

CLGRO is an organization composed of groups and individuals committed to working towards feminism and lesbian, gay, and bisexual liberation by engaging in public struggle for full human rights, by promoting diversity and access within our communities, and by strengthening cooperative networks for feminism and lesbian, gay, and bisexual activism.

CLGRO – the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay rights in Ontario, Box 822, Station A, Toronto Ont. M5W 1G3, Canada, phone (416) 405-8253, e-mail clgro@web.ca, website: www.web.ca/clgro

I want to be part of CLGRO!

Enrol me as a member right away!

- Here's my 40.00 one-year membership fee.
- I'm a student or unwaged so here's my \$20 membership
- I'd like to donate\$ _____ to CLGRO
- I'd like to donate \$ _____ to CLGRO's trustfund.*
- I'd like to join CLGRO's monthly giving program and donate \$

_____ each month by postdated cheques (enclosed) or credit card.

Please charge to visa mastercard

Number _____ Expiry date _____

Signature _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Town/Province/Country _____ Postcode _____

E-mail _____

*interest only is used for operating expenses.