

waynes

Free

May 2012



RAYMOND TAAVEL

9 JUNE 1962 – 17 APRIL 2012

Wayves

For Raymond, and for all of the Raymonds, which is to say: for everyone

There are words that spring to mind
like sadness
like violence
like senseless crime
like how this affects all of us
like how every tear in every eye falls from all of us
and today Halifax is an ocean of anguish
a sea of angry
beside the Atlantic.

And how do we handle this
what happens next
how do we manage the sorrow and the stress?
This afternoon I walked the sidewalks
not so different than the one where he met his death
where no person should ever have to lay their head
both concrete and Raymond were innocent.
I walked the sidewalk and every person I met
I tried to look into them

Do you know? Do *you* know?
Do you know what we're supposed to do now,
'cause I don't

I won't hate more
I won't love less
so many people—maybe even his killer—are loveless
not unloveable
maybe ignorant, definitely sick
and probably he shouldn't have been let out to walk around
and probably he was hateful and homophobic
but what's painful
besides this loss, besides all death
is the simple fact of it that remains:
this isn't over yet
— people left behind for every step we gain

I walked down the sidewalk that is in the city where I live and love
I look for eye contact
for allies in the right to live and love
I wore black and tough
as it is complicated stuff
how to protect oneself and yet open up

I stumble here
it isn't clear
I put my ear to the ground to listen for the sounds of people's fear
being taken down by other people's fear
who are guilty for their deeds but do not live in isolation here

There are systems failing us everywhere
prisons and education and mental health care
there is separation stark and severe
we reach out our hands to make connection
but some are all mixed up
bring death and destruction
it's all fucked up
like when he struck him, here

And, now, a being from the tribe of Love is gone
and we are one less strong
in a battle we are tired of fighting in the first place
lay down your arms
peace is your birthright

One more time we pick up the pieces and we keep loving
struggle for freedom
for all beings
Gottingen street gets another beating.

Well, we'll love it harder
reach our arms out further
to encircle all of our neighbours
'til we work through all of the hating
this is for all of you
this is for the pain in our city today
this is for Raymond

written by Tanya Davis on April 17th, for the death and life of Raymond Taavel and for the love of Halifax

Exit Raymond

by Cam MacLeod

Raymond Taavel, well-known member of the Halifax LGBT community and former Wayves editor, was killed in the early hours of Tuesday April 17, outside Halifax's Menz Bar on Gottingen Street. A witness described hearing an argument, and one man yelling "faggot" around 2:30 a.m.. As reported in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, Raymond Taavel stepped in to break up the fight, but one of the men then turned on Taavel and beat him to death. He died at the scene from his injuries.

A passing driver spotted an injured man in the street and called police around 3:00 a.m.. Police quickly found a suspect nearby, and took him into custody. It was later determined the man is mentally ill and was receiving treatment at the East Coast Forensic Hospital in Dartmouth. He was on an unsupervised community access pass, but had not returned at the scheduled time. Halifax police had been notified and were looking for him beginning about six hours earlier.

Andre Denny was charged with second-degree murder. The accused is undergoing a 30-day psychiatric assessment.

As news of the attack spread through the local community, social media brought the information throughout the country and within hours "Raymond Taavel" was trending on Twitter nationwide. Messages of grief and support for the Halifax community began to pour in, and the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project quickly organized a vigil for Raymond's memory that evening, attended by several hundred mourners.

The event received extensive national news media coverage, including national newspapers and CBC's *The National* newscast, reflecting widespread shock at such a violent, hate-filled attack in one of Canada's friendliest places.

A trust fund has been set up to help Taavel's mother and brother deal with funeral and other expenses. Donations to the Raymond Taavel Trust Fund can be made at any TD Canada Trust branch to the account number 0036-6399950.

Links to media reports and some of the vigil comments can be found online at gay.bfcm.org/RaymondTaavel.

Here the frailest leaves of me and yet my strongest lasting, Here I shade and hide my thoughts, I myself do not expose them, And yet they expose me more than all my other poems.
—Walt Whitman, "Here the Frailest Leaves of Me"

Letter to an Absent Friend

by Randall Perry

Dear Raymond,

I'm sorry I've not written for a while, but you know how it goes, living a few provinces away. It's easy to lose yourself in Toronto. At least there's Facebook and text messaging.

I'm heading to your neck of the woods mid-summer. Hopefully the Farmer's Market is doing well. I'm looking forward to seeing how the work is progressing on the new downtown library.

I've not forgotten you, trust me. And it's not going to be the same city now that you're not around.

I think everyone has a friend like you, at least I hope they do. Sometimes we'd not see each other for weeks, but then we'd run into each other in front of the library on Spring Garden Road and take up the last conversation like no time had passed. That's rare.

My best memories of you are the times I'd see you at a table in Paper Chase, laptop open, sections of newspaper spread around,

half-empty coffee on the go. There was always something interesting to talk about. Sometimes we'd just read and even in the silence there was understanding.

You had the ability to push all my buttons and frustrate me to the point where I'd throw my arms up in the air and say, okay, I get it, next topic! We'd have a lively, huffy disagreement on a Saturday afternoon and on Sunday morning we'd kick around the Farmer's Market, wander around the city for awhile, then go for drink or two at Tom's Little Havana.

You struck the perfect balance between trusted confidant and utter pain in the ass. You listened to me when I pissed and moaned and went on and on about the inequities of life. You let me wallow in it for awhile then you dumped the proverbial bucket of water on my head and shocked me back to reality.

We connected through writing and activism. There was always an easy, kindred-

spiritedness to our friendship, something I tested numerous times over the years yet you never kicked me to the curb.

In a very real way you saved my life. You know what I'm talking about.

Amid the storm of emotions right now, I choose to celebrate your life and think about all the fun times. Remember when we roamed the city taking pictures, hanging off the train at Pier 21, giggling like fools?

And then there was that day we celebrated Estonian Independence Day at the bar by trying to out-drink each other.

Those great afternoons spent talking about advocacy and justice and the importance of keeping track of our past struggles so we know how to make progress in the future.

A part of my world has gone quiet now because your trusted voice is gone, and our world is less beautiful now that you've left the room.

I will grieve for you for some time. I'm

going to cry angry, bitter tears for the senseless loss of a gentle spirit. I'm going to raise my voice and cry out why... why, Raymond? Why should I bother being the change I want to see in the world when my soul is coming apart at the seams?

Goddamn it!

In the end, you've always been right, you know. We must be the change. We must live it every day, on the good days and the bad ones. Especially the bad ones.

Oh, I'm going to miss you. We're all going to miss you. There's so much left to be said. There's still so much work to do.

I don't know what's out there, beyond this precarious human existence. I'm no expert on such things. If you're listening, keep a seat at the table warm for me and order up a brew, because we're going to have a lot of catching up to do.

See you around the universe, man.

Peace and love,

Randall

the416er@gmail.com

Gottingen Says Good-bye

by Kevin Kindred

It was an honour to serve as a sort of master of ceremonies for the vigil in memory of Raymond Taavel. The crowd that turned out was a testament to how many lives Raymond touched. It struck me especially that the speakers all, without any coordination, decided to speak of peace and love, on a day when everyone had the right to feel hate and frustration. For me, that may be the most meaningful way to capture his legacy.

I chose to read something that I had written years ago for an anti-

of what to do about the problem of homophobia and transphobia. I want to do this so that we can walk away with the message of hope, not desperation.

No matter how you encounter homophobia in your life, I can recommend three ways to address it. First, be out. If you're gay or lesbian, bi or trans, the most important thing you can do is grow comfortable enough in your own skin to be open about your life. Even those of us who think we've been out for years continue to find people and situations who make

arguments for gay marriage, know what's going on in the education system, learn about the realities of trans people's lives. Don't be forced to shy away from talking about it because you don't know the issues. The more we can clear away misinformation about the rainbow community, the harder it is for homophobia and transphobia to subsist.

And finally, be compassionate. This is something I've learned to value more and more with the more experience I get as an activist. The goal of the movement is not to label people

homophobes and then run away. That's a failure. The goal is to change people's minds, to broaden them. We do that by being reasonable, by opening dialogue. We know that the strongest weapon in the face of hate is love. If someone is influenced by homophobia or transphobia, try to listen to them. Understand them, see where they're coming from and how they formed their beliefs. Look for the beliefs you have in common before focusing on the differences. We need you to be open and welcoming to people influenced by homophobia and

transphobia, not closed and dismissive. Approach every conversation with compassion, and you'll learn so much more about where hatred comes from and how we can eliminate it.

So, that's the best I can recommend. Be out. Be informed. And above all, be compassionate. I hope you can each find ways in your everyday lives to take those recommendations to heart, and work to eliminate homophobia and transphobia.

Kevin Kindred is a Halifax lawyer, activist, NSRAP board member and chair of its Law and Legal Reform Committee. To find out more about NSRAP, visit nsrap.ca, facebook.com/nsrap or twitter.com/nsrap.



Some of the thousand who gathered in Gottingen Street for the vigil.

homophobia rally. I thought it was fitting to talk about homophobia, which almost certainly had some role to play in Raymond's death. As I told the gathering, this piece is one that Raymond encouraged me to write and publish, and helped me shape into its final form. I'm honoured for the chance to republish it, this time in memory of such a close friend of our community.

I don't like attending events like this and walking away depressed at the size of the problem. So I want to take a few minutes to focus on the question, "What can I do about it?" Whether we're lawyers, activists, policy makers, or just people trying to make a difference in our ordinary lives, I want us all to take away a sense



Once in a while, Raymond would watch from the sidelines. (photos by Anita Martinez)



Regular Columns



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Deadline for May issue: Friday, May 4: submissions@wayves.ca • Online: www.wayves.ca • Join us on Facebook: Wayves Magazine Rocks! ... and on Twitter: @WayvesMagazine

Raymond Remembered

Eldon Hay, Sackville NB: Shock and disbelief! How can this be? I met Raymond several times. He was always supportive. I knew he was in my corner, on my side, no matter what! A gentle person, one who supported and encouraged others, who looked to positives—gone, and so tragically. I am grateful that Raymond touched and affected and influenced me for good, for better, for best. I am sad that his life is ended. His influence will live on.

Al McNutt, Truro: The LGBTQ community has lost a great man and a wonderful spirit. Raymond was the most pleasant, happy go lucky guy I have ever met. He had a way of putting you at ease and he always seemed to smiling. Raymond stood up for the rights of the LGBTQ community and probably received very little recognition for what he had done—but isn't that always the way? No one is ever really missed until you realize you will never see them again. Our community has suffered many losses and endured immense grief and there are only a few like Raymond who stand up and try to make a difference. He will be missed terribly by those who really knew him and loved him. Raymond was a true advocate fighting for the well-being of all of us. Stand united during this terrible time.

Seth Levinson, Halifax: I worked with Raymond for ten years. When I was at my snippiest, that would be his signal to jump into action. Surfing down the hallways of the Shambhala Sun Foundation, he'd pause at my office door and with his inimitable gangly manner and endearing smile, he'd saunter over and we'd share a whoppin' ole hug. He'd smile that mischievous smile—knowing he'd just derailed my lousy mood—and leave. Raymond had one very big heart. His death is a testament to how relevant Pride still is. Lest we forget, intolerance, and particularly homophobia, is something the perpetrator of this crime learned from someone. So let's be vigilant about what we teach in word and deed. And in Raymond's memory, let's make sure the things we do teach include inquisitiveness, bravery and love.

Bob Fredrickson (Dr. Bob), Halifax: I am out of the country and will have missed the vigil for a longtime patient and friend—what a sweet man—who always saw the glass half full even when sometimes he was hit with the half empty glass—bright man, with positive attitude always—we, as a people, are less whole without him, but we'll heal with him in our memory, as he would have us not only endure, but prevail.

Wayves On Line!

Did you miss the last issue of Wayves? Or did your favourite distribution point run out of copies? Don't fret! Now you can visit www.wayves.ca, and download the current issue, and the archives too! We have lots of back issues on line too. If you'd like to be notified when the current issue is online- email us at submissions@wayves.ca!

Lisa Dawn Brine, Halifax: I have heard the **most disgusting news ever!!!!** An amazing man's life was taken—so senseless! **Why must this happen?** Raymond stood for equality, love, life and never turned down the chance to lend us his helping hand. He was the best dance partner I ever had! He was the greatest friend! I know you're dancing with the angels now Ray! I love you and I will always remember you! I just wish, I didn't have to remember you this way! My heart is with his family and friends! **Raymond, save me a dance on the other side babe!** I am so sorry Ray, and again: I love you xo

Kevin Bourassa and Joe Varnell, Toronto: Five minutes after you met Raymond, you felt you had known him your whole life. He was so warm, so charming and the cheeky grin he'd flash with that playful mischievous glint in his eyes made Raymond unforgettable. It's what makes the thought of a world without him so difficult. Raymond was always there. We were amazed at his boundless energy as he arranged and organized, while never losing his ability to smile. We've been to many Pride events and met countless dedicated people, but Raymond was someone special. Rest in peace Raymond. We will never forget the things you stood for or the help you gave us in pursuing marriage equality. The world has lost a voice for justice and we have lost a friend.

Gerard Veldhoven, New Glasgow: The murder of Raymond Taavel deeply saddens me and the shock of this horrific act once again proves the work that remains. Murders, suicides, beatings and day-to-day discriminatory acts are constantly in the news. We make an honest attempt to hold on to positive thoughts, but with Raymond's death we come to the realization that the light at the end of the tunnel is dim at best. In Raymond's memory and those that have suffered before him, I suggest we all come together and really emphasize positive education as a means to minimize and end the discrimination that remains

Our Cover

was designed by Wil Murray, and the centre spread was designed by Michael Davies-Cole

a huge issue in our community. Our sincere condolences to Raymond's family and friends.

Cathy Jones, Halifax: Ray is the perfect name for a sunbeam like Raymond. When I met him I only thought, "oh NO, don't tell me he's GAY!" He was so gorgeous, so loving and sensuous and sexy and fluid and sharp. What a generous wonderful

"Five minutes after you met Raymond, you felt you had known him your whole life. He was so warm, so charming and the cheeky grin he'd flash with that playful mischievous glint in his eyes made Raymond unforgettable."

man. His passing has an energy of losing a saint, someone who simply gave his energy selflessly. His death is a terrible loss. Very sad.

Val Windsor, St John's Nfld: I am thinking of you at this horribly sad time. The news of Raymond's murder is very hard to take. He was a great guy; he's going to be missed. The Halifax gay community lost a very dear soul. I hope that you are able to take some comfort from those around you.

Freeman A. Dryden, Terence Bay NS: The death of Ray Taavel at the hands of an on-the-loose psychopath has elicited an avalanche of bleeding heart excuses for his totally-avoidable death and almost as many righteous-indignation cries for the return of Capital Punishment. BOTH are sadly mistaken and fly in the face of thoughtful natural justice and common sense. Our so-called 'justice'

Important WAYVES Dates!

Issue Content Deadlines: Fridays: May 4, June 1, July 6: that is, the first Friday of each month (skipping January.) You can send your news, ideas, comments, criticisms, columns, cartoons and more to submissions@wayves.ca any time!

Production Meetings (Halifax): Mondays: May 7, June 4 July 9; help decide what goes in the next issue, 6:30 PM, at a Place to be announced in Halifax. All welcome, every meeting.

Magazine Layout (Halifax): May 20, June 10, July 15: help build the paper—no special skills required, just enthusiasm, and joining us even once, or for a few hours, helps a LOT! 9:30 AM. Email us for location.

We're on the stands, in the mail, and online on the fourth Friday of every month!

system is badly broken. The death penalty is NOT a proper answer, but the self-serving, cowardly, and inept minions continue to provide more than enough ammunition for the supporters of the return to Capital Punishment to make their equally-misguided clamour worthy of consideration.

Sara Mukherji, Halifax: Though I did not know Raymond as well as many of you, I remember him fondly. I met him many times when I sat in on my friend's CKDU radio show *Over the Rainbow*. Raymond was one of the most soft-spoken and

mild mannered individuals I've ever known. Some questions a radio show host asks can make people anxious. Raymond was not such a person. Despite the difficulty of the questions and their personal nature, Raymond kept his composure and did not show any signs of stress or nervousness while on air. He had a way of making a person feel at home and was able to help a person develop self-confidence and faith: Raymond helped me overcome my shyness and apprehension of being out in a major public gather-

ing. The Rainbow Community and Halifax in general have lost one of its great charismatic leaders. Raymond Taavel was the Martin Luther King of LGBT Activism.

Thom Fitzgerald, Halifax: Raymond lived a life of compassion and purpose. He maintained enthusiasm and diligence long after I would have given up. He was sweet and more than a little goofy. He was so supportive of the efforts of his friends and of his community, in the arts, in social justice, in reaching for quality of life. Raymond actually deserves to be a symbol, but a symbol of commitment and caring, of a life well spent making little improvements to our world. Raymond's favourite quote was "Be the change you want to see in the world" (it's on his Facebook info page which is worth a visit). The truth is that everyone who lives in our community lives a better life because Raymond was in it.

Maggie Lucas, Halifax: It hasn't even sunk in because of who did it. A whole community in Membertou must be in shock. The Harper government has failed the mental health community. And yet, I have been inspired by the love my Dad and his partner Sam have had for 36 years. Thirty-six years ago at the Lord Elgin Hotel in Ottawa my Dad is picking up the Sunday New York Times. On Elgin Street he sees this smashing
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Wayves

Wayves exists to inform Atlantic Canadian lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people of activities in their communities, to promote those activities and to support their aims and objectives.

Wayves is an independent publication, published every month except February by a non-profit collective. Anyone who contributes to Wayves is automatically considered to be a member of the collective and is welcome to participate in all meetings and discussions. Wayves reserves the right to refuse material that might be reasonably considered heterosexism, racism, sexism or an attack on individuals or communities. Opinions expressed in Wayves are not necessarily those of the editorial collective. The article submission deadlines are posted in the *Important Wayves Dates* section of this page. Articles should be a maximum of 1,000 words and may be edited for length. Submissions should be emailed in plain text to the address below. Articles and letters may be published with pseudonyms or anonymously, but Wayves must have contact information for the author. The copyright for all submissions remains the property of the original author/creator.

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Circulation: use the email address below. Subscriptions, per year, are in Canadian dollars: \$20 + 15% HST = \$23 in Canada, \$30 in the United States, and \$35 elsewhere. Send cheque or money order to the postal address below.

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Raymond Remembered

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looking fella and they catch each other's eye and Dad pulls over and they start talking and they haven't been apart in 36 years. I am so happy and proud of them.

Michele Rodgers, Windsor: Andre Denny has been reported to be a paranoid schizophrenic with a background of severe violence that was unpredictable. To me his behaviour on Monday evening was totally predictable and our friend Raymond was the victim. Sometime in his life Mr. Denny learned his homophobic attitudes; when combined with his mental illness he was like a loaded grenade. Yet someone felt it was important for him to be released on an unescorted pass. He was thrown into our midst and while Raymond was the immediate victim, we are all victims of this attack. We have all lost a such a kind soul and we have all lost any faith in a mental health system that basically throws grenades at innocent people.

Jim Genge, Glovertown, NL: This story is very tragic. A pallor of gloom befalls every one of us as we read and

listen to this awful tragedy. I didn't know Raymond, but I understand he was an outstanding and active member of the gay community in Halifax. I commend such people for their efforts to make our communities safer neighbourhoods for all people. As gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered people across this nation, we are really hurting and we offer our heartfelt and profound sympathy to his family and friends.

Denise Holliday, Upper Musquodoboit, NS: I had the pleasure to work with Raymond, the joy to disagree with him on occasion and the satisfaction of knowing he was a friend. We were not close as many are but that is more due to my location and circumstances. He never failed to supply my need if I spoke of one. I was devastated to learn of the circumstances leading to his death and reminded again of his strength and honour which were displayed by him in his last moments.

He will always be remembered in my heart as long as I am alive. May he rest in peace.

Jane Wilson, Halifax: I never had the privilege of meeting Raymond Taavel but I wish I had. Like so many people in our city (and across the

footsteps of truth and integrity. You awaited the day where goodness prevails and evil does not exist. You lived for your cause and you died for your cause. That, my friend, is courage second to none. I applaud your vision, your voice, your hope, your courage, and your fight. I laud your efforts, your tenacity, your warmth. A beautiful soul graced our Earth—cut down in the prime of his life.

Shannon Webb-Campbell, Toronto: Raymond Taavel was a soulful firecracker.

Funny, endearing, thoughtful, and loving. We crossed paths via Wayves and I remember he gave me a big hug the first time we met. Raymond was a leader in the truest sense, and made being queer in Halifax a better place. His writing, insight, and strength in our community will be remembered.

Kara Redden, Halifax: It saddens me to discuss the senseless death of man who was abruptly taken from this earth. I worked with Raymond as co-chair for Halifax Pride back in 2003. He was always willing to do what it took to get the job done. His passion for equality motivated all those who surrounded him. Raymond was a Shambhala Warrior. Raymond lived his life in goodness, fearlessness and with lots of humour. It is not how he died that should be remembered it is how he lived, and through those memories his legacy will live on. Go beyond what we cannot change and focus on what we all remember, Raymond's smile.

Kristi Anderson, Halifax: "I knew Raymond as a diligent arts supporter and theatre patron extraordinaire.

He was a long-time supporter and friend of DaPoPo Theatre, a local theatre company. Raymond attended numerous DaPoPo Cafes and always provided lots of encouragement. A few years ago members of DaPoPo sang an improvised birthday song to Raymond in one of the back rooms at Menz Bar. Raymond was so thrilled that he talked about the performance all evening and long after. Raymond's gratitude for such a small thing is a testament to the kind, generous and thoughtful person he was. He will be missed.

Bryn Jones-Vaillancourt, Dartmouth: It is with tears that I mark the loss of Raymond Taavel. He was such a light in our LBGQTQ community, and in Halifax. He was the kindest man, full of compassion, knowledge and understanding. I will always remember his kind words, encouragement and his warm, kind soul. I take solace in the fact that his last act on this earth was to help someone else. He was self-less, and a hero: a champion of compassion, understanding and always encouraging us to consider different perspectives. His death has inspired me to become more involved in my community. To carry on his legacy I will offer to better serve my community.

Shannon Pringle, Halifax: Raymond, how I loved seeing your beautiful gentle face coming through the doors of Venus Envy over the years. You were such an inclusive person, and I thank you for being so kind to my lover, and for greeting me with open arms. That the last words you heard on this earth were words of hate breaks my heart, but I know your brilliant spirit lives on in those whose lives you touched. I love you.

"Raymond's favourite quote was: 'Be the change you want to see in the world'"

country), I am reeling from the loss of a man I never even knew. I want to live in the society that Raymond believed in. Our generation and the ones to follow deserve no less. I hope it helps his family and friends to know what Raymond likely already did—his life made a difference.

Jayne Rowat, Halifax: Ray, you walked this Earth with a fearless heart. You believed in your soul that mankind would come around and walk

The Sanctuary Garden

by Bethana Sullivan

Angst, calm, love, anger: the feelings that fill me these days of growing light and welcome warmth. I find spring to be an unsettling season, a time of hope and expectation as I wait for the earth to heat up, the seeds to become seedlings, the buds to emerge, the crocuses to appear. And they do, all of it has happened and calmness returns. And then comes the news of Raymond's death, the shock, the anger, the confusion, the loss of a brave, loving human being to the chaos of the universe.

At the vigil we are reminded of Raymond's love, his energy, his persistence, and his refusal to use anger as a tool of change. For those of us for whom anger is the first response, it is not easy to step back, breathe and allow another approach. Maybe Raymond's anger was funnelled into his persistence—which is what the experts tell us is the thing to do with anger. Let it fuel our energy, our engagement, our passion for the change to happen. Despite the loving words of those who spoke at the vigil, it is too soon to really know the way into the future, though our wisdom voice will probably speak to the need to not rush into action or judgement. Leave the door open and the gateway clear so what needs to emerge will do so eventually.

Kevin Kindred left us with a guide as to how to move forward in a way that Raymond would probably approve. I deeply appreciated his words. He said: Be Out! He said: Be Informed! He said: Be Compassionate! Another prophet giving us a three-pronged way philosophy.

Raymond's death is a senseless loss in a chaotic universe full of love and anger, calmness, and angst. Maybe it is our purpose to make the most sense of it that we can with a guideline of do no harm. The chaos must have structure to be of use in creating the world, the community, the family, the self we want to be, share and live in.

Raymond's vigil has awoken me to something I wasn't aware I didn't know. It astounds me that the death of this loving, active man has spoken to me about disconnection and loss, reconnection and love, with Kindred's words as a guide.

Thank you Raymond for welcoming me to my first Wayves meeting. Your welcoming spirit brought me to the vigil to honour you and your death has changed me.



"The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true"

- James Branch Cabell

Leonard Preyra

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Jim Bain, Dan MacKay and Raymond putting Wayves together. (photo by Anita Martinez)



Raymond in a cage.

Crawford Hastie's
XIBITZ AND BITCH

Hi Tom,

By now you will have heard the sad news about the death of my friend, Raymond. I know you never met Raymond but you would have liked him. He was worth knowing: smart and funny and loving.

Raymond made time and space for people. One afternoon when I was feeling rather discouraged about some life choices I needed to make, I sent an email to Raymond and he replied, Are you home? I'll call you. And he did, and we talked for an hour and a half about the importance of change in one's life while he offered support and encouragement to me through the process. One of the last times I saw him in person was at the Farmer's Market. He stopped when he spied me, cocked his head slightly to one side with a big smile on his face and then opened his arms inviting me for a hug. He gave full-on hugs, you know, the kind with the soft rubbing of your back while his arms encircled you that made you feel that everything was going to be okay.

I was thinking about that as I listened to the news on the radio as I drove to work today but somehow the windshield kept getting blurry and the sunny skies sprouted dark clouds as images of Raymond lying in the street kept flashing into my mind.

I know it is unrealistic and illogical but somehow I want to travel back in time, if it's not possible to prevent the whole thing from happening, then at least I want to be able to sit beside him and cradle his head in my lap and stroke his bloody hair and, and give him back one of his everything-is-okay-hugs even though I know it isn't. It isn't ever going to be okay again, at least not in the way it was before Raymond was taken from us.

I feel like I have a kind of emotional jet lag. Things are familiar: this is my apartment, this is my car, I work at the same job, these are the same people I saw yesterday, and yet everything is different; the world is different without Raymond in it.

Self-indulgent, I know. I'm getting all maudlin and dramatic and making it about me, my loss and how I've suffered but somehow I don't care, Tom. Tonight I want to be sad, I want to cry and listen to Jane Siberry and k.d. lang sing Calling All Angels on the stereo and hope that if there are angels – and I pray there are – that they were with him when he was slammed out of this world.

Yet, lovely memories crowd these horrible images away. Like Raymond's wickedly bawdy sense of humour. In one of my emails to him, Raymond seized upon an inadvertent sexual double entendre and replied in kind, and then I replied to him and so it went for about a dozen emails, trying to outdo the other, every reply increasingly vulgar and foolish – and yet smart, Raymond was so sharp – both of us dissolved into giggles like silly children.

Yes, Raymond laughing, that's the memory I'll hold onto.

Love ya!

Whither Gottingen?

by Chris Parsons

Gottingen Street has been awash in rainbow flags and tears. Raymond Taavel was brutally murdered.

When the story first broke that Taavel was the victim of a brutal assault outside a gay bar and that homophobic slurs were heard during the attack, a reasonable assumption was that this was a hate crime.

Here's the thing straight folks like me need to keep in mind: Whether or not the real intent behind the murder had anything to do with sexuality, the fear that members of Halifax's queer community feel is real. Any time a member of the queer community is attacked there is a very real chance they were targeted because of their sexuality. For straights there is an almost nonexistent chance that they will ever be assaulted because of sexuality. Who they love does not put them in danger as it does their gay brothers and lesbian sisters.

The fear that the possibility of it being a homophobic assault has its own power. This is how homophobia (and racism, sexism and class oppression) actually works and gains power: It's not through a specific instance of violence that it gains its power, but rather through the omnipresent possibility of violence which hangs over every night out and every trip to the corner store for queer people; dismissing it as an overreaction is apologizing for the thousands of acts of homophobic violence that have occurred in this city over the years.

While Taavel's murderer may have been psychotic at the time, it does not remove serious political questions from the equation. We need to reflect on the role that the forced obscurity of queer social life played in this event: Menz Bar is not downtown. Had it been on Argyle Street there

might have been cops around during closing time. Likewise, had the Salvation Army's homophobia and the bizarre entitlement of condo owners not won out, Reflections may have been a couple blocks away, putting more people on the street and making it less possible for violent acts to happen under the cover of darkness.

This is a stark reminder that this is a dangerous neighbourhood. It's dangerous because of poverty and drug

“Whether or not the real intent behind the murder had anything to do with sexuality, the fear that members of Halifax's queer community feel is real.”

use. It's also dangerous for geographic reasons: long stretches of poorly lit, uninhabited lots. I feel less safe in Halifax at night than I did when I lived in Bed-Stuy in Brooklyn, because of the lack of eyes on the street here. Our bohemian dreams of a safe gentrified central North End need to be shaken up by this. Did jamming together middle class dwellings and extreme poverty play a role in this tragedy?

Many have praised the speed with which the Gottingen community put up rainbow flags and the hugs strangers have given to each other on the street, but we need to face a hard fact about Raymond's vigil: almost no members of the black community which makes up a larger part of our neighbourhood were there. That's a reflection of the divide between people like me--well meaning, middle class non-black folks who go see indie rock bands and foreign films--and our

neighbours. When we speak of “our community” we must recognize the spatial, economic, racial and political meanings that infuse that language. We also need to ask ourselves: next time a kid from the square ends up dead will 1,000 of us be out there with candles singing hymns?

Andre Noel Denny, the alleged murderer of Raymond Taavel, has a history of violent and severe mental illness. He has a history of violence against people and animals. He has a history of substance abuse problems. We suspect he is a homophobe. We know that the mental health system clearly failed to offer him the support and supervision needed to prevent him from re-offending. We know he's spent time in corrections facilities and mental health institutions.

Ultimately we know we have a victim who may be dead because he was queer, and we have a perpetrator who may be violent because we have prison and mental health systems which overwhelmingly fail to rehabilitate. This happened in front of a backdrop of gentrification, institutional failure, systemic racism, omnipresent cultural homophobia and economic injustice. It happened in a neighbourhood with conflicting identities and split communities.

Raymond Taavel's death is a brutal one and the singularity of his life and while his passing shouldn't be abstracted away his death is also like so many other acts of violence and tells a wider story about this neighbourhood; this province and the world we live in. Searching for the meaning in it can help us reduce the chances of more people breathing their last breaths on the sidewalks of our neighbourhoods.

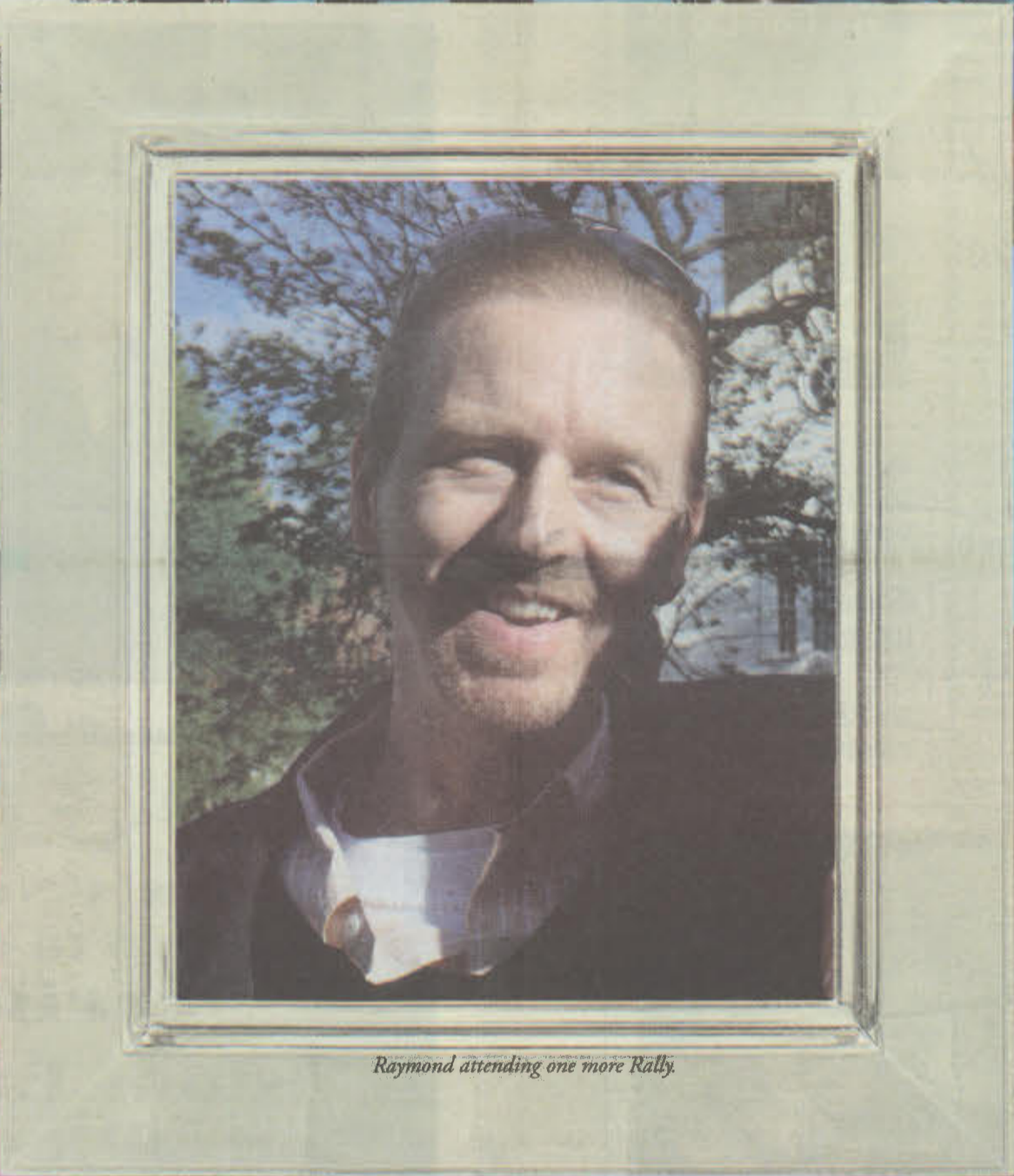
Chris Parsons blogs at acultureofdefeat.wordpress.com.

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Raymond & Friend at a PRIDE fundraiser.



All photos, except those without captions, are by Anita Martinez.



Raymond attending one more Rally.



Raymond and good friend Ramona Westgate.



Raymond and Dave MacKay attending a Pride Flag Rally.



Raymond and Catherine Meade At a Pride Function.



Raymond having a great time on the Pride Cruise 2009.





A final farewell at the impromptu shrine where Raymond died. (photo by Anita Martinez)

NSRAP Report

International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

by Kirk Furlotte

On Thursday, May 17, the queer communities of Halifax will mark the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia, in the Grand Parade in front of City Hall. This year's theme is "Reclaiming our space, reclaiming our rights," in an effort to ensure community members are comfortable being themselves in a variety of environments. At 6PM there will be a rally with speeches from a range of perspectives. Topics will include examples how shared/public space has been reclaimed as well as advice for how to reclaim space in your life. There will also be performances by local artists to highlight the struggle to be visible. During the rally, various community organizations will host "action stations" where people can sign petitions, get informed and

join those organizations. (If your organization would like to host an action station, contact nsrap@nsrap.ca before May 10.) Following the rally, there will be a "public display of affection" where participants will be encouraged to demonstrate that their love and the way they express it is normal and something that can and should be seen.

Further details and information can be found online at <http://nsrap.ca/may17>. That site will also host links to online petitions for those unable to attend on May 17.

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WAYVES GROUPS AND SERVICES

Atlantic Canada

Al-Anon/Alateen: for families & friends of problem drinkers. Does someone you know have a drinking problem? 466-7077 web: www.freewebs.com/alanonmaritimes
Atlantic Canadian Lesbians: Online Group For Lesbians from the Atlantic Provinces

AtlanticPoz: A new discussion group is for individuals living with HIV in Atlantic Canada. web: health.groups.yahoo.com/group/atlanticpoz/

Egale Canada - Atlantic: (888) 204-7777 email: egale.canada@egale.ca web: www.egale.ca

Healing Our Nations: Healing Our Nations is an Aboriginal HIV/AIDS service organization that serves the Atlantic region. 1.800.565.4255 email: ea@accesswave.ca (Training offered on request at no charge for Aboriginal peoples and/or organizations.) at 31 Gloster Court, Dartmouth, NS B3B 1X9

Maritime Transgender Workplace Solutions Project: Transgender Issues Workshops and information resource email: denisesined@ns.sympatico.ca web: www3.ns.sympatico.ca/winpapernews (No meetings, Workshops by arrangements, Information source when requested. Newsletter Odds & Sods bi-weekly)

Mr Atlantic Canada Leather Society: Dedicated to developing gay leather communities in the Atlantic region. email: waydo7@hotmail.com

Names Project (AIDS Memorial Quilt): panels - helping create, and lending. 902-454-5158 email: larrybaxter@ns.sympatico.ca web: www.quilt.ca (Call if interested in volunteering or making a panel) at 3544 Acadia St. Halifax, NS B3K 3P2

Narcotics Anonymous: a fellowship of recovering drug addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. 1-800-205-8402 web: centralnovaarea.ca at Call the phone number or visit the web page for meeting times and places.

Project E: Presentation for youth, on gender expression, myth busters, proper terminology and other facts web: www.freewebs.com/xprojecte/ at available via web page

Wayves Magazine: Atlantic Canada's queer news and lifestyle magazine! email: submissions@wayves.ca web: wayves.ca (Deadline: the first Friday of every month; Editorial meeting: the Monday following that; layout the Sunday following that. Email us to be put on our notification list!)

New Brunswick (506)

Fredericton

Fredericton Pride: Organizers of Fredericton Pride Week! web: frederictonpride.org

AIDS New Brunswick / SIDA Nouveau-Brunswick: committed to facilitating community-based responses to the issues of HIV/AIDS. Needle exchange located in office at 65 Brunswick Street Fred. E3B 1G5 459-7518 email: jennifer@aidnsb.com web: www.aidsnb.com (Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30AM to 12:30PM and 1:30PM to 4:30PM)

Fredericton Lesbians and Gays: Email listserv of events/news in the Fredericton for gblt men and women. email: jamesw@stu.ca

Integrity: Supports and encourages Gays and Lesbians in their spiritual lives. email: integrityfredericton@live.ca web: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=46207976587, meets 3rd Sunday (4:00pm) at Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton at 874 York Street

PFLAG: Support & education on issues of sexual orientation & gender identity (506) 455-7190 email: pflagfredericton@yahoo.ca web: www.geocities.com/Pflagfredericton/, meets 4th Tuesday (7-9 pm (except December: 2nd Tuesday)) at Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton 874 York St. Fredericton NB E3B 3R8

Spectrum: Spectrum is a social/support group celebrating the diversity of the GLBTQ community and gay-friendly peoples at UNB and STU. Weekly meetings are open for both students and non-students to attend, and may feature various "theme" nights from fun and games to more serious current event discussions impacting the GLBTQ community. email: spectrum@unb.ca web: <http://www.unb.ca/clubs/spectrum/> (Group Meets Fridays at 5:30 pm (subject to change, see webpage for

updates)) at University of New Brunswick - Fredericton Campus, Marshall D'Avry Hall, Room 235

UNB/STU Women's Collective: Women of all ages and orientations, meets every Monday at 5pm at the University Women's Centre at the SUB

Moncton

AIDS Moncton: offers support to people living with HIV and their families and friends, education and awareness 506-859-9616 email: sidaidsm@sida-aidsmoncton.com web: www.sida-aidsmoncton.com at (506-859-4726 fax) 80 Weldon St, Moncton, NB, E1C 5V8

PFLAG: Supporting all people with questions or concerns about sexual orientation and gender identity issues 382-7145 email: monctonnbpflagcanada.ca web: www.pflagcanada.ca/moncton.html, meets 3rd Monday (Occasionally on the 2nd Monday - please call) at YMCA, 30 War Veterans Avenue.

River of Pride-riviere de fierte INC. of Greater Moncton: The organization meets regularly, to discuss upcoming events and activities, everyone is welcome to attend. check out time / location posted on the website. Media and general inquiries, including registration of volunteers and parade participation, can be made from the website or by email. email: riverofpride@hotmail.com web: www.fiertemonctonpride.ca (See webpage for schedule.)

Transgendered Peer Support Group: Open to all M2F, F2M, Andro and trans-supporters from across Atlantic Canada. email: be_tgmoncton@live.com

Un sur Dix - University of Moncton Association for the LGBT community and their allies (not only for students): The mission is to ensure the well-being of the community and to end homophobia (mainly a french association, but also organizes some bilingual activities). For more information, please visit the website. email: unsurdix@umoncton.ca web: etudiants.umoncton.ca/umcm-unsurdix

Petit-Rocher (Bathurst area)

Gais.es Nor Gays Inc. (GNG): A bilingual volunteer association serving gay men, lesbians and bisexuals of northern New Brunswick. email: info@gngnb.ca web: www.gngnb.ca (Dances are held at GNG club every Saturday night. See www.gngnb.ca for a list of upcoming events.) at 702 rue Principale, Petit-Rocher NB. Look for rainbow flag and/or door with pink triangle at rear of parking lot.

Sackville NB/ Amherst NS

Catalyst: Catalyst, Mount Allison's Queer-Straight Alliance, provides support & information for all Mt. A students, staff, and faculty through meetings, seminars, and social events. Everyone is welcome. email: catalyst@mta.ca web: www.mta.ca/clubs/catalyst/ (Catalyst meets approximately every week from Sept-Dec and Jan-April. For meeting info contact the president at catalyst@mta.ca or the Students' Administrative Council at sae@mta.ca.)

PFLAG: Support and education for GLBTT2IQ persons, friends & family 506-536-4245 email: jhammock@mta.ca, meets 2nd Monday (7:30 to 9:30pm No meeting in July and August.) at Meeting location: United Church Parlours, 112 Main Street in Sackville, NB

Saint John

Affirming United Church - Centenary - Queen Square United Church: invites you to worship! 506-634-8288 email: cqsunited@nb.aibn.com web: www.cqsunited.ca, meets every Sunday (10:30am) at 215 Wentworth St, Saint John, NB

AIDS Saint John: To improve the quality of life for those infected & affected by HIV/AIDS, and to reduce the spread of HIV through education and a needle exchange program. Call the office for details. 652-2437 email: aidsj@nb.aibn.com web: www.aidsaintjohn.com

Gay Men, AOs Supper Club: web: www.portcityrainbowpride.com, meets 3rd Saturday (See webpage for more information) at 220 Germain St. Saint John New Brunswick

PFLAG: Provides support to anyone dealing with issues of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. (506)648-9700 or 648-9227 email: saintjohnnb@pflagcanada.ca web: www.pflagcanada.ca/saintjohn,

meets 1st Friday (1st Friday of each month September - June from 7:00- 9:00 p.m. No meeting in July & August.) at 116 Coburg Street in Saint John, New Brunswick in the Community Health Centre next to St. Joseph's Hospital.

Port City Rainbow Pride: Pride Celebrations Committee

Saint John LGBTQ Lending Library: over 300 fiction and non-fiction titles. 634-8288 email: cqsunited@nb.aibn.com (open Monday through Friday, 9 AM to noon.) at the office of Centenary Queen Square United Church at 215 Wentworth Street.

The UNBSJ Q-Collective: A social and support organisation for UNBSJ students, staff and faculty. 506-648-5737 web: www.unbsj.ca/clubs/qcollective (The UNBSJ Q-Collective is interested in hearing from other university LGBTQ organisations and would like to possibly meet or collaborate.) at Various locations; event particulars will be emailed to anyone who registers with the UNBSJ Q-Collective and/or who gets the UNBSJ weekly, AUE News, AUE. Past events include the annual Rainbow Peace March, guest speakers, movie nights, participation in Maritime Pride Parades, Supporters of PFLAG Canada's "Communities Encourage Campaign" and "Champions Against Homophobia".

Woodstock

Woodstock GLBT Youth Advocate and Family Outreach: Books, movies, advice, directions, contacts, and support etc. for the family. 328-4868 email: richardb@nbn.net web: nbn.net

Newfoundland & Lab (709)

Frontrunners Newfoundland and Labrador: Running/walking club. 722-5791 or 753-9529 email: tonybrathwaite@bellaliant.net, jennifer.mcreath@yahoo.com (meeting times can be flexible to accommodate new runners.)

St. John's

AIDS Committee of Newfoundland & Labrador: HIV/AIDS education and support for male/female/transgendered, all ages, Newfoundland and Labrador 579-8656 email: info@acnl.net web: www.acnl.net

Gay Urban Youth Zone Project: designed to increase HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and STI knowledge and awareness 579-8656 (ext. 28) web: www.acnl.net at Tommy Sexton Centre 47 Janeway Place Pleasantville, across from the old Janeway Hospital AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador

LBGT-MUN Resource Centre: LBGT-MUN is an information/resource, service, and peer support centre staffed by trained volunteers! 737-7619 email: lbgt@munsu.ca (Open Monday-Friday 9-4. Biweekly meetings for members and volunteers.) at Smallwood/University Center, UC-6022. Building located on Prince Phillip Drive. Call us! Get involved!

LBGTQ Youth Group: A monthly gathering for queer, allied, questioning, and any interested youth. We offer social events such as bowling, movie nights, and coffee houses. Contact group coordinator Rob Sinnott at the number listed, email, or visit the web page for more info. 699-0509 email: lbgtq@nlsexualhealthcentre.org web: nlsexualhealthcentre.org

PFLAG Canada - St. John's NL Chapter: Monthly Chapter meetings, support and information for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer and questioning persons and their parents, families and friends. 699-0509 email: stjohnsnl@pflagcanada.ca web: www.pflagcanada.ca (We will aim to hold Chapter Meetings on the third Thursday of each month. Please check www.pflagcanada.ca for schedule and any changes.) at Community Connections, 9 Cathedral Street, St. John's NL.

St. John's Pride Inc: The officially-registered non-profit Pride company for St. John's email: stjohnspride@yahoo.ca web: www.stjohnspride.org

Nova Scotia (902)

Hepatitis Outreach Society: Since 1999 the Hepatitis Outreach Society has been providing support, education and prevention information for those infected and affected by hepatitis in the province of Nova Scotia. 420-1767 in HRM or 1-800-521-0572 email: info@HepatitisOutreach.com web: www.HepatitisOutreach.com at Our office is located at 2973 Oxford Street,

between Liverpool and Cork streets. Please call to make an appointment or email Program@HepatitisOutreach.com.

SUNS GLB Constituency Committee: 494-6654 at c/o the Students' Union of NS

Venus Envy Bursary Society: An annual award open to all women studying in NS. web: www.venusenvy.ca/halifax

Amherst

Sexual Health Centre Cumberland County: Open and inclusive services: information, education, workshops, free condoms. 667-7500 email: shccc@ns.aliantzinc.ca web: cumberlandcounty.cfsh.info (9 - 5 drop-in or app) at 11 Elmwood Drive (Side entrance). Confidential, hassle-free. Free condoms.

Annapolis Valley

Valley Gay Men's Coffee House: Meets Thursday evenings at 7pm for coffee and socializing and host a gay/lesbian/bi and all genders 19+ dance on the first Saturday of each month from 9pm-1am.No.Dance in November in lieu of two dances held in October. 825-3197,363-2055 email: menembracingmen@hotmail.com (email or call for locations or special events or themes)

Antigonish

Rainbow Warriors: Rainbow Warriors is a youth-run support group for LGBTQ youth and allies in Antigonish. We hold social events such as picnics and game nights, have educational discussions around topics such as stereotypes/assumptions and transsexuality, and raise awareness in the surrounding community by participating in functions such as the Highland Games Parade and the Farmers' Market. While our group is youth-focused everyone is regardless of age, and gender identity or sexual orientation! Find our group on Facebook "Rainbow Warriors - AAHA!" email: antigonishrainbowwarriors@gmail.com, meets every Monday (3:00-5:00pm) at The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, located in the Kirk Building at 219 Main Street, Suite 204 (above Tim Hortons).

X-Pride: social & support group at X 867-5007 web: www.stfx.ca/people/xpride

Bridgewater

Sexual Health Centre for Lunenburg County: Confidential info, education & support for everyone. Safer sex supplies, library, pamphlets, workshops 527-2868 email: LunCo@NS-SexualHealth.ca web: www.theSHA.org (Hours vary. Open by appointment or by chance. Please call ahead.) at 4 Hillcrest Street Unit 8, Bridgewater. (On the corner of Dufferin and Hillcrest Streets). Closed during summers.

Halifax

Affirm United: GLBT & Friends support, action and worshipping community within the United Church 461-4528 email: alstew@eastlink.ca

AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia: non-profit, community-based AIDS organization, provincially mandated. Provides direct service and support for people living with HIV/AIDS and also offers various prevention programs across NS. You can reach us locally to HRM at 425-4882 or across the province at 1-800-566-2437. (902)425-4882 email: acns@acns.ns.ca web: www.acns.ns.ca

Alcoholics Anonymous: Live & Let Live AA Group for LGBT community (902) 425-8383/422-4972 email: courage449@yahoo.com, meets every Monday (at 8pm) at St Matthews United Church, 1479 Barrington St, Halifax (Use side door near Maritime Centre at bottom of stairs)

Anonymous HIV/AIDS Testing: 455-9656

Bedford United Church: An Affirming Ministry of the United Church of Canada - ALL welcome 835-8497 email: bedfordunited@eastlink.ca web: www.bedfordunited.com, meets every Sunday (9 am service: Casual and contemporary, with free coffee and muf -fins before church to take into this service. 11 am service: Quieter and more reverent in tone, coffee after service. During the summer months, we have one 10 am service but occasionally during the year we change our service times for special occasions, so please call to confirm service times) at 1200 Bedford Hwy at Sullivan's Hill, near Atlantic Gardens

BLT-Womyn of Halifax: Bi Sexauls, Lesbian, Transgender Womyn's Discussion Group Online Sue's # 499-0335 email:

sueandrews1964@hotmail.com web: ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/blt-womynof-halifax/ (No Meetings at Present! Please call if you have any questions, 499-0335 sue) at Dalhousie Women's Centre 6286 South Street (Beside Dalplex Driveway) Cancelled at the present time.

DalOUT: DalOUT is the award-winning LGBTQ society at Dalhousie University. We pride ourselves on hosting fun, engaging and educational events for the entire Halifax community. email: dalout@dal.ca web: www.dalout.ca, meets 2nd Thursday, and 4th Thursday (from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m.) at the Dalhousie Student Union Building (6136 University Ave., Room 321)

Frontrunners Halifax: Running/walking club 422-7579 email: Bruce.Greenfield@dal.ca web: www.frontrunners.org/clubs/index.php?club=Halifax, meets every Saturday, and every Tuesday, and every Thursday (Sat: 9:30am, Tue: 6:00 pm, Thu: 6:00pm) at Main gates of the Halifax Public Gardens, corner of Spring Garden Road and South Park Street.

Gay Men's Prostate Cancer Support Group: Prostate Cancer Canada Network is launching a support group for gay men and their families. Our meetings are informal and provide a forum for personal discussion with prostate cancer survivors, those newly diagnosed and their caregivers. For more information or to become a member contact Peter Mallette at 902-420-9449 or peter.mallette@prostatecancer.ca 902-420-9449 email: peter.mallette@prostatecancer.ca at Prostate Cancer Canada Atlantic 5121 Sackville Street Suite 101 Halifax B3J 1K1

GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL YOUTH GROUP AT Q.E.H.: Jeanie Buffet, Counsellor, at 421-6797

Get Out, Halifax! Recreation activities (team activities, cycling, running, rowing - you name it) for metro & beyond! web: www.getouthalifax.ca at Visit and get on the email list for more info.

Girl-ish Productions: Girl-ish puts on hot and heavy bi-monthly-ish dance parties for queer-ish folks and their friends. web: www.girl-ish.ca

Hal-Gal Mailing List: Low-traffic Yahoo group providing events and information for queer women in the Halifax area. email: hal-gal@yahoo.com web: groups.yahoo.com/group/hal-gal/ (Join the list to keep in touch or post your events.)

Halifax Sexual Health Centre: Anonymous HIV testing, open and inclusive sexual health clinical services, education and workshops. Everyone welcome. Confidential and non-judgmental. 455-9656 web: www.HSHC.ca

Imperial and Sovereign Court of Atlantic Nova Society: Fundraising 902-449-7612 web: www.imperialcourts.com, meets 1st Sunday, and 2nd Sunday (Executive Meetings Are Currently Held Every Second Sunday) at Meeting Locations Vary

Integrity: Integrity is an organization of GLBT Anglicans and their friends, to encourage Christian gay men and lesbians in their spiritual life; to support the Church in its commitment to seek and serve Christ in all people; and to reach out to the GLBT community in Christian love and service. (902) 425-8383 web: www.integrity-canada.org, meets 3rd Sunday (4:00pm) at All Saints Cathedral

Koinonia Ecumenical Church: Meaning ,Aðcommunity,Að. Koinonia is an ecumenical faith community offering open membership, equal marriage, practicing bible, church, religious and soul freedom, as well as open table communion. Koinonia offers Spiritual Care.Crisis support visitation and counselling for an honorarium. ALL are Welcome who celebrate God's Covenant to Love All of God's Creation. We are a registered charitable organization accepting donations from all who believe in the promotion of our all-inclusive community of faith. Contact Rev. Elaine @ 902-876-8771 for more information, or mail your contribution to 2410 St. Margaret's Bay Road Halifax N.S. B3T 1H1 with your name and address so we can issue your tax receipt. 876-8771 email: koinonia@eastlink.ca (we gather bi-weekly at 12:30pm - 1:30 followed by a time of fellowship) at Petrie's Halifax Feast Dinner Theatre, Maritime Centre - entrance on the corner of Barrington & Salter Streets

Manna For Health: A special needs referral food bank for those living with life threatening illness. 429-7670

MomSquared: CALLING ALL LESBIAN MOMS. I know you're out there! A group for lesbian moms to connect and provide support and friendship to each other as well as friendship and interaction

Groups & Services continued

for our children. email: ilovemy2moms@gmail.com web: momsquared.weebly.com
Mount Pride: LGBTQ group at Mount Saint Vincent University email: mountpride@mountstudents.ca, meets last Monday (at 2:00pm.) at Meetings in the Diversity Center in Roseria. Possible events that are being planned for the year include sexuality awareness, movies nights, social events, guest speakers, and many more. There are always LGBTQ community events to be involved with and events that are always fun. This group is open to anyone who would like to join. Also, join the "Mount Pride" Facebook group!

Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project: NSRAP, the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project: for 15 years the leading advocate for Nova Scotia's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community. Fostering change in our communities through education, outreach, and political action. 444.3206 email: nsrap@nsrap.ca web: www.nsrp.ca at TBA

Outlaw: GLBTQ & Allies Law Students Association at Dalhousie Law School email: chad.skinner@dal.ca web: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2416842853 (Meetings vary. Please email for further information or check out our Facebook group.) at Dalhousie Law School. 6061 University Avenue. Halifax, Nova Scotia.

PFLAG: Support & education on issues of sexual orientation & gender identity. These meetings are open to all. For more information please feel free to contact Michelle Malette by phone or email. Hope you'll join us! 431-8500 email: halifaxns@pflagcanada.ca, meets 1st Thursday (We meet on the 1st Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:30 pm 902-431-8500) at Youth Project, 2281 Brunswick St, Halifax

Play Group for Queer Families: 422-8780 (3-5pm) at Board Room (Play Room) at Needham Community Recreation Centre, 3372 Devonshire St (north end Halifax, near intersection of Duffins & Novalea, bus routes 7 & 9) Bring a snack for your child(ren). We will be collecting money from each family to cover the cost of the room rental, likely \$2-4 per week.

Pride Week: Producers of Atlantic Canada's largest LGBTQ cultural festival. 431-1194 email: info@halifaxpride.ca web: www.halifaxpride.ca

prideHealth: prideHealth is a program of Capital Health and the IWK Health Centre. If you are a member of the pride community and need support with any kind of health care call Anita our Clinical Nursing Specialist, number below. She is available free of charge, offers complete confidentiality, and can also give you support if you are experiencing homo or transphobia. prideHealth- improving safe access to health care. 220.0643

Quakers: Quakerism emphasizes that we all manifest the Divine. 429-2904 web: halifax.quaker.ca, meets every Sunday at Library at Atlantic School of Theology, Franklyn St. All very welcome.

Queer Play: A Queer performing arts group in Halifax NS email: queerplay@gmail.com

SMU-Q: A student-driven society that

provides positive support, advocacy, activities, and education through the dissemination of information to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersexual, and ally persons of Saint Mary's University and the LGBTQIA community at large. 902-496-8216 email: info@smuq.ca web: www.smuq.ca (See our facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/SaintMarysUniversityQ> and website for details on upcoming events) at Saint Mary's University
Spirituality For Lesbians: We seek to deepen our relationship with God, knowing that God loves us and calls us into life just as he has created us. Persons of every or no denomination are welcome. 459-2649, meets 2nd Wednesday (7:30-9PM, phone for meeting locations)

Team Halifax: All GLBT over 18, athletes and performance artists, as well as anyone willing to help out. 422-9510 web: www.teamhalifax.com (No fixed schedule at this time, look on website for further details.)

The Masculine & Gender Spectrum: Gender Spectrum is an online group for Halifax, Nova Scotia's transgender community. We can be found on Facebook.

The Youth Project: Support, education and social activities for youth 25 and under across Nova Scotia. Weekly events, plus a youth food bank and Health nurse on site. 429-5429 email: youthproject@youthproject.ns.ca web: www.youthproject.ns.ca (Please see our website for an up-to-date calendar of events.)

Trans Family Nova Scotia: Trans Family is an open & supportive space welcoming families, friends and allies as well as trans and genderqueer folk themselves. If you are unable to join us at a meeting for any reason, we can you help source resources and refer you to other appropriate organizations to help meet your needs. For more information, please feel free to call or email Michelle. 902-431-8500 email: transfamily@eastlink.ca, meets 3rd Monday (6:30 to 8:30 pm) at The Youth Project 2281 Brunswick St., Halifax

Universalist Unitarian Church: an inclusive liberal religious community 429-5500 email: uuchurch@eastlink.ca web: UUCH.ca, meets every Sunday (10:30; see website for special events) at 5500 Inglis St

Kentville

Red Door: Youth Health & Support Centre. Information and services for sexual health. Ages 13-30. 679-1411 web: thereddoor.ca (Monday to Friday 2pm to 6pm) at 150 Park Street

Lunenburg

Second Story Women's Centre: We offer a meeting space for women, support counselling, programs, and referrals. (902)640-3044 email: secstory@eastlink.ca web: www.secstory.com at Second Story Women's Centre is located at 22 King Street, Post Office Centre, Lunenburg.

Middleton

PFLAG: Information and support for GLBT community and their friends and families. 902-825-0548 email: middletonns@pflagcanada.ca web: www.pflagcanada.ca/middleton.html

(Check online for meeting times and locations- or phone 825-0548)

New Glasgow

Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health: Providing comprehensive and accessible sexual and reproductive health services in a safe, confidential and non-judgemental manner for women and men of all ages. PCCSH is affiliated with the Nova Scotia Association of Sexual Health and the Canadian Federation of Sexual Health. They are a pro-choice and GLBTQI friendly organization. 695-3366 email: pcsexualhealth@hotmail.com web: www.pictoucountysexualhealth.com

Pictou County Women's Centre: Offering Individual Support Counselling and Crisis Intervention, Information and Referral, Advocacy and Accompaniment, Programs and Community Education 755-4647 email: pcwc@womenscentre.ca

New Minas / Annapolis Valley

Valley Youth Project: Sexual Orientation. Gender Identity. Allies. Youth. email: valleyyouthproject@gmail.com (6-8:30 most Wednesdays through May) at New Minas Civic Center, 9209 Commercial St. Ages 25 & under. Free bus tickets available. Free food. Fun activities. Join us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Valley-Youth-Project/2241849495>

Sydney

AIDS Coalition of Cape Breton: Support, advocacy, prevention/education for those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Free condoms! Queer Advocacy and Education, Needle Distribution, Food Bank, Coffee, Safe Space for those infected or affected. (902) 567-1766 Toll Free 1-877-597-9255 email: christineporter@accb.ns.ca web: www.accb.ns.ca (Free Anonymous Testing 1-902-567-1123 Monday and Tuesday each week from 8:30 to 4:30 and Thursdays from 8:30 to Noon. Check our Website for events and updates.) at 150 Bentinck St, Sydney, N.S. B1P 1G6

Cape Breton University Sexual Diversity Centre: We provide a welcoming environment for GLBTQ people and their Allies. 902-563-1481 email: sd@cbu.ns.ca (Monday to Thursday 8:30-5 or by appointment) at the Students' Union Building, Cape Breton University.

PFLAG: Peer support & education on issues of sexual orientation & gender identity. email: sydneyns@pflagcanada.ca, meets last Sunday (of the month from 6:30-8:30pm. No meetings for June, July or August.) at Family Place Resource Centre, 714 Alexandra Street

Pride Cape Breton Society: Dances and Social Events. Monthly dances are Adults Only! Check website community events. (902) 539-4627 email: info@pridecapbreton.com web: www.pridecapbreton.com (Dances on the last Saturday of every month. Check website for dance and special event dates!) at Southend Community Centre. Maps are at our website.

Tatamagouche

Tatamagouche Centre: We are an affirming centre, welcoming all gay, lesbian, and transgendered people. 1.800.218.2220 email: tatacent@tatacentre.ca web: www.tatacentre.ca

Truro

Central Nova Women's Resource Centre: Resources, programs and services available for all women identified women. Advocacy and support - with outreach to rural areas. Also, see our Facebook group. Central Nova Women's Resource Centre <http://cnwrc.weebly.com>, cnwrc@eastlink.ca 535 Prince Street, Truro, NS B2N 1E8 (902) 895-4295 web: cnwrc.weebly.com

Colchester Sexual Assault Centre: Provides support and information to anyone (GLBTQ included) affected by sexual assault and abuse. 902-897-4366 email: trurosexualassault@hotmail.com (Centre Hours Mon-Thurs 9:30-4:30) at 80 Glenwood Drive, Truro Nova Scotia

Hepatitis C Aware: a project of Northern AIDS Connection Society (NACS) working to educate members of the communities in Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants and Pictou counties on Hepatitis C. 1-866-940-AIDS email: nacs@eastlink.ca

Northern AIDS Connection Society: HIV prevention education initiative serving Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants & Pictou counties. We are located at 33 Pleasant Street, Truro, NS. Phone 895-0931 email: nacs@eastlink.ca web: northernaidconnectionsociety.ca (Our Board of Directors meet bi-monthly. Annual General Meeting held regularly in June. See webpage for contact information and upcoming events.)

Rainbow Proud: Rainbow Proud supports the LGBT** community of Truro and surrounding areas. Our small group of volunteers work hard to put events together for everyone's enjoyment. Any feedback will be considered and can be sent to our email address. We hope you continue to come celebrate our community together. email: rainbowproud@hotmail.com web: rainbowproudnovascotia.ca (See webpage for schedule.)

RESPECT: Students Making Healthy Decisions 893-6300 email: respect@nsac.ca at P.O. Box 550, Nova Scotia Agricultural

College, Truro, N.S. B2N 5E3

SAAFE (Supporting An Alternative Friendly Environment): Social/support group at the NS Agricultural College. 893-6300 email: lyoung@nsac.ns.ca (Meetings as requested. Membership changes each academic year.)

Wolfville

Acadia Women's Centre: 585-2140 email: womens.centre@acadiu.ca (Acadia SUB Second Level Balcony)

Yarmouth

South West Nova Pride: We are a social group for SW Nova Scotia. All GLBT people of any age and in any stage of coming out are invited, we have a monthly gathering at Sobeys community room on Starrs Rd. in Yarmouth at 7:00 PM on the 2nd last Wednesday of each month. We create a monthly calendar of events for such things as pool, potluck parties, day trips or what ever members like to do. So come join us have fun and meet other GLBT people. 645-2914/749-0977 email: jackanddan@eastlink.ca, diannefcc@eastlink.ca web: SWNovaPride.com (Check out our our facebook at South West Nova Pride.)

Prince Edward Island (902)

Gay PEI Mailing List: Electronic mailing list for all GLBT, questioning and friendly, focus is on PEI email: gay-pei-owner@yahoo.com web: groups.yahoo.com/group/gay-pei at All first posts are moderated to stop spambots, otherwise, it's an open list.

GLBT Youth group: Safe Space Drop-Ins 367-3408 or toll free 1 877 380 5776 (E-mail us for further details.) at 144 Prince St.

PFLAG Canada - PEI: Providing support, education and advocacy for GLBT persons, their families and friends in PEI 902-887-3620 email: pei@pflagcanada.ca web: www.pflagcanada.ca (Meetings take place on an as needs basis.) at Check with Mary or Bill Kendrick on this months location by calling 902-887-3620.

Charlottetown

AIDS PEI: AIDS PEI offers HIV prevention and support services to all residents of PEI. 902-566-2437 email: info@aid-spei.com web: www.aidspei.com at 375 University Ave, Unit 2, Charlottetown PE, C1A 4N4

ARC - Abegweit Rainbow Collective: Serving GLBT Islanders, their friends and families. 894-5776 email: info@arcofpei.com web: www.arcofpei.com, meets 1st Monday (6:00pm at 375 University Ave Suite # 2 Charlottetown, PE)

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sstephen57@gmail.com armshaw@hfx.eastlink.ca

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I Am Soon To Be No Longer What I Amherst

by Gerard Veldhoven

Now that I am leaving this border town, this decidedly conservative area has experienced some positives regarding the LGBT members and it is worthy to make note of the various happenings here since the 1970s.

In 1975, the talk of the town was the establishment of the first openly gay family to settle in this area. I mention the word "open" because this family consisted of two gay fathers and the two daughters of one parent. This family soon realized that their fears that this might have caused some fierce opposition were unfounded, and the amazing support was rather overwhelming, especially in view of the fact Cumberland County is known as a conservatively minded area. That is not to say everything was rosy. The kids endured some teasing at school and the two sons of the other parent also experienced some kind of schoolyard pranks. The boys were in custody of their mother. However, considering the location, it was minimal, especially considering that this was the 1970s. This family unit stayed together until the girls left home to begin their own families. I was part of this family for 36 years which sadly ended when Norman passed in 2010.

This experience was the beginning of my activism regarding equal rights, equal marriage and the many other aspects of a just society. The need to be educated as to the diversity of the citizens of Canada and the right for all to live here in peace, harmony, respect and with dignity is a daunting task. So I decided to give this my all and I became involved in the many aspects of bringing attention to the plight of the queer community. In September 2004, Justice Heather Robertson declared that it was unconstitutional that same-sex couples could not be legally married after three couples went to court to challenge the marriage law. The PC government decided not to oppose the ruling and thus same-sex marriage became legal in Nova Scotia, the 7th province to do so. On October 16th of that year Amherstians were witness to the first publicly performed legal same-sex marriage in the province. It

was televised and made news across the country as the first in Atlantic Canada. Norman and I were the couple in question. Amherst was again part of a first as far as queer news was concerned. The Amherst Daily News carried the story and a picture on the front page.

In 2006, I established the Cumberland Pride Society and this group was at that time a vital part of the town and became an organization that was respected by most in the community. In April of that year I approached the mayor and council for approval of the flag raising ceremony and they readily agreed. This will be first year there will not be a Pride Week for Amherst. The group fell apart due to infighting and everyone became disillusioned. However, the end result is a town that for the most part recognizes some sort of equality. Regardless of all the work that remains to be done, we can say with certainty that the fight is worth every moment we are involved.

As I mention these facts I am reminded of the turmoil in other countries, aside from our own. We have plenty of things that need our attention and we all know what they are, but in other countries such as Uganda where the Anti Homosexuality Bill has reappeared, queer folks have plenty to worry about. Other Eastern and African nations also have many issues and we must show our support.

This will be my last column from Amherst. I am relocating to New Glasgow and I will be continuing my column under a yet to be decided title. With a new beginning and with a wonderful man at my side, I continue my journey. Let me assure you that at seventy-one it's not too late to fall in love!



Rainbow Refugees: May 17 and Bill C-31

by Hugo Dann

May, June, and July will be busy months for Nova Scotia's newest LGBTQ organization. May 17 is the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. Rainbow Refugees Association of Nova Scotia (RRANS) will be highlighting the persecution of LGBTQ people around the world, and we'll be hosting our first major fundraiser on May 19 at The Company House in Halifax. The theme of "Freedom Songs" was inspired by Bob Marley's anthem, Redemption Song and will feature some of Halifax's best local artists. We have already raised \$1,000 and we hope this event will bring us closer to the \$11,000 we need to sponsor a refugee to come to Canada. In June, RRANS plans to hold a community meeting and elect a Board of Directors; in July we'll march in our first Halifax Pride Parade. Meanwhile, the task of raising awareness continues.

In February, Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, introduced Bill C-31: The Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act. Despite its benevolent title, this bill has little to do with immigration, and everything to do with refugees. The Harper Government is determined to ram it through both houses of Parliament before the end of June. This is not the first time the Conservatives have tried to pass such reforms. In fact, their previous effort was passed by the last Parliament, when they were still a minority government. So why the big rush now? Because the previous legislation will become law this June. It was well debated, with lots of community consultation, and the other parties in Parliament were able to make significant amendments. The new legislation, Bill C-31, will strip away those amendments and place unprecedented control in the hands of the Minister. It has set alarm bells ringing amongst refugee and human rights groups, Canadian and international, and poses a particular threat to queer refugees.

Under C-31, if two or more asylum seekers arrive together at our border, the Minister can order them detained for a year (at a cost of \$70,000 per refugee!), without recourse to having their claim heard by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). Children under 15 may

be separated from their parents and placed in foster care. Even refugees whose claims are approved, who are granted permanent resident status in Canada, will have to go for regular interviews with the IRB, CSIS, or the RCMP for up to ten years. If they are deemed in any way uncooperative, or the interviewer doesn't believe them, their refugee status can be revoked and they can be deported. Most alarming for LGBTQ refugees, under the proposed legislation the Minister will have the sole power to designate a country as a "safe country of origin." Refugees from "safe" countries will have little more than a month to prepare their claim (as opposed to the more than 200 days for claimants from other countries). They would have no right of appeal, if their claim were denied. Nor would there be any stay of deportation for judicial review, or on compassionate or humanitarian grounds.

The Minister has already indicated that Hungary might be deemed a "safe" country, despite the fact that Hungary is planning to bring in anti-gay legislation that would severely limit LGBTQ freedom of speech, and association. South Africa, given the liberality of its constitution, could be named as "safe;" despite the fact that rural lesbians are often subjected to so-called "corrective rape," and urban queers and trans folk are the frequent targets of homophobic violence.

Bill C-31 has drawn heavy criticism from experts in constitutional and international law; it's almost certainly in violation of the Charter of Rights, as well as of numerous treaties and conventions. If it passes Parliament and receives royal assent, it will be challenged. Yet while those challenges play out through Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court, it will wreak untold havoc on the lives of countless vulnerable people. From a purely human perspective, this is a costly and cruel "fix" to a refugee system that isn't actually broken.

If you would like to learn more about Bill C-31, or you want more ideas to share with your local M.P. on this issue, or if you would like to know more about RRANS, please contact us at rainbowrefugee.ns@gmail.com. You can also find us on Facebook at Rainbow Refugees Association of Nova Scotia (RRANS).

International Day Against Homophobia events

PFLAG Moncton: James LeBlanc will be giving a talk in Westmorland Institute that day

AIDS PEI: In partnership with PFLAG and ARC we have moved the LGBT library to the provincial library and will be having the grand opening on May 17th. In our provincial library there will now be a Queer specific section.

PFLAG PEI: there will be a grand opening on the day for the Pat Malone Memorial Library, a collection of glbt literature for the community and their allies available island wide through the Confederation Center of the Arts Library. We are also planning workshops and events in cooperation with ARC and AIDS PEI. More information to come closer to the date!

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