

PRIDE



AND JOY!

A ZINE BY THE QUIRK-E ZINERS

QUIRK-E
Queer Imaging & Riting Kollektive for Elders

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i> Val Innes.....	1
<i>Presumptuous</i> Cyndia Cole.....	2
<i>The Joy in Pride</i> Val Innes.....	3
<i>Coming Out to Parents</i> Lorri Rudland.....	5
<i>Silences and Secrets</i> Val Innes.....	7
<i>The Connecting Web</i> Cyndia Cole.....	8
<i>The Hidden Dangers of Lesbian Symbolism</i> Janie Cawley.....	8
<i>Mind Stew</i> River Glen.....	11
<i>Working from the Inside</i> Farren Gillaspie.....	12
<i>My Cowboy Hat</i> Maggie Shore.....	14
<i>Snow Wall</i> Judy Fletcher.....	15
<i>Perspective</i> Chris Morrissey.....	17
<i>Tribute to Pat Hogan</i> El Chenier Ellen Woodsworth.....	19
<i>(Something Inside) So Strong By Labi Zaffre</i> Annie Newman.....	22
<i>Over and Over</i> River Glen.....	22
<i>Dear Parent Of A Gender-Variant Child</i> Gayle Roberts.....	24
<i>Coming out at Forty</i> Greta Hurst.....	25
<i>Words</i> Ellen Woodsworth.....	26
<i>Giving Thanks</i> Cyndia Cole.....	28
<i>Unfortunately Fortunate</i> River Glen.....	29
<i>Drawing</i> Judy Fletcher	30
<i>Pride</i> Gregory Bourgeois.....	31
<i>A Favourite Lakefair Memory</i> Don Martin.....	34
<i>Ageing in Place</i> Adriaan de Vries.....	35
<i>The Future</i> Lari Sousa.....	36
<i>Cora The Woman's Liberation Bookmobile</i> Ellen Woodsworth.....	37
<i>Elder Abuse in the LGBTQ2SA+ Community</i> book.....	38
<i>Queer Organization Contacts</i> River Glen.....	38
<i>Rainbow Bridge Donation Request</i>	39

Pride and Joy: Zine Layout and Editing: Val Innes with contributions from the Ziners.

Quirk-e Ziners: River Glen, Val Innes, Gayle Roberts, Paula Stromberg, Ellen Woodsworth.

Photographs: credited throughout unless they are stock photos.

Pride and Joy is self published and printed by Qmunity in 2023.

All rights remain with the authors. We are grateful to Britannia and to Qmunity for their support.

We are grateful to be living and working on the unceded and stolen land of the Coast Salish people, within the shared traditional territories of the Tsleil-Waututh(Slay-wa-tuth), Katzie(Kate-zee), x^wməθk^wəyám (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and Quay Quayt(Key-Kite) First Nations. We acknowledge the responsibility we have as colonizers to reconcile with and repair the trauma of these peoples rather than causing more. It wasn't until 1960 that First Nations people were allowed to vote, and it wasn't until 1996 that the last horrific Residential School was closed. Canada stole their land and their children and still operates under the oppressive Indian Act. We must do better.

INTRODUCTION

Val Innes

The purpose of the Quirk- e Zine group is to provide a platform to write on specific topics that are important to us as individuals, as members of our queer community and our larger society. And our history of what we have achieved in Canada as queers is important to us, and to Canada as a whole as it speaks to a rather huge opening in attitudes and prejudices. We called this zine *Pride and Joy* because our history/herstory/theirstory lived hidden in mainstream Canada, as we mostly lived hidden, and now we, for the most part, live out and proud, showing our joy to the world as well as our struggles. We also wanted to have this zine be as positive as we can be in contrast to the compelling negativity of a world facing the ravages of climate change, the Russian/Ukrainian war, and a frighteningly polarized USA, not to mention the growing power of China, and at home, a Christian Right determined to limit our freedom. It's a threatened world, not at peace. It's also a world capable of change, and we know this at a gut level because of the changes we queers made happen in Canada; in law and in society's attitudes, we went from pariahs to full citizens in a very short space of time from the first protest marches and legal actions in the seventies. That's an incredible achievement, and our stories belong within that achievement: our memories, our stories of thought, of struggle, of protest, of change, of coming out, of working for change quietly from within, or loudly and publically, and of parading and living openly and joyfully as who we are.

QUIRK-E
Queer Imaging & Ritng Kollektive for Elders

Resilience * Creativity * Advocacy
LGBTQA2S+ writing, imaging and performing

TOGETHER WE STAND
Queer Aging Stories
A collection of stories from the Quirk-E group
Edited by Val Innes
Books

THE BRIDGE GENERATION
A collection of stories from the Quirk-E group
Edited by Val Innes
QUIRK-E

FROM A QUEER PERSPECTIVE
A TRIC BY THE OREGONIAN EDUERS
Zines

QUIRK-E is group of older, queer artist/activists, together since 2008 at Britannia Community Centre.
We produce books, zines, cartoons, readings, poetry, plays, photos, videos, songs, and artwork.

Visit our Facebook page (search for Quirk-E) for free access to our work and info about activities.

PRESUMPTUOUS

Cyndia Cole

The *adjective* “presumptuous” describes a person behaving in an entitled and arrogant way.

Long before we had memes, hashtags, emojis and social media posts, we expressed ourselves through wearing buttons. People I knew festooned their vests, shirts, hats and backpacks with buttons declaring; *Sisterhood is Powerful, Women Unite, Stop Rape, Question Authority* and *No Nukes*. It could be a very public way to find like-minded people. Sometimes it could be scary when encountering those with differing minds. Two of my favourite buttons read *SISTER* and *Mother Nature is a Lesbian*. My *Mother Nature* button was a lovely green and blue. The text was small so folks had to be standing quite nearby to read it. I got to see close up their puzzled or amused expressions while they processed our claim that lesbians are part of nature, have family, and are LOVED.



My friend Dorrie wore a button that puzzled me a bit. It said *How Dare You Presume I'm Heterosexual!* This was in 1977, more than 45 years ago and I was in the beginning stages of coming into my identity as a lesbian. I didn't yet understand that the presumption of my heterosexuality by me and everyone around me was precisely what had blocked my awareness of this identity 10 years earlier when I was a teenager.

I was just starting to experience that no matter how I dressed, wore my hair or moved through the world, everyone, except other lesbians, would assume I was straight. They presumed this because to them EVERYONE WAS heterosexual and MUST BE and had BETTER BE heterosexual. They thought that to even consider or to ask if I might not be heterosexual would be a grave insult and highly disrespectful. Dorrie didn't have to explain her button to me. She showed me as she lived that we would have to come out to people as lesbians over and over and over again, by wearing our buttons or telling them directly or by public displays of affection that they called “flaunting it.” Otherwise, whenever these people presuming our heterosexuality found out THEIR error, they would accuse US of “living a lie” or “hiding in the closet.” And they thought this showed we were sneaky, untrustworthy people.

We went to a lot of meetings and no matter what the meeting topic my friend Frances would always start with the phrase, “As a lesbian, I . . .” Gradually I noticed that no one ever bothered to come out to me as a heterosexual. No one had to declare at meetings, “As a straight person, I . . .” And folks would think I was crazy if I said to them “You never told me that you are heterosexual. I can't believe that you've been lying to me all this time!” They presumed their heterosexuality and I was expected to do the same. *Wow, Dorrie, I thought, that's one powerful little button!*

Coming to understand and question what we now call heteronormativity certainly helped me to recognize the same presumptuousness about gender identity. I've only been misgendered twice that I'm aware of. Once in a store, the clerk said “Can I help you, sir?” The second time, some guys casually passed me by then spit out the word “Faggot!” These misgenderings were unforgettable precisely because I have been able to presume that everyone will presume, I am a cis-woman all the other times.

I get it now that I and we can't presume from someone's name, clothes, hair, voice or mannerisms to know their gender. I'm in my seventies. For decades I have observed the worldview of cisnormativity. It's based on the expectation that a brief glance is supposed to let a person categorize everyone they meet as male or female without error. I recognize that any ambiguity interfering with making this automatic gender binary causes some people cognitive dissonance. This can be so challenging to those who feel entitled to presume. For them, everyone is assigned to be a boy or a girl from the ultrasound or



ASS-uming
makes U
an ASS

gender reveal or at the moment of birth and MUST BE that boy or that girl and had BETTER BE that boy or that girl. They presume that my intersex friend does not exist. They insist that my friend who works as a male and dances as a female cannot exist. They pass laws that say my friends who have transitioned should not exist. They both deny and endorse the genocide designed to ensure my two spirit indigenous friends do not exist. They're the same people who make speeches and headlines declaring, "WE don't use pronouns!" Apparently, they are so ignorant that they don't even know that they are using a pronoun when they say "WE."



My friend Bill had a button that says "Ass-uming makes you an Ass". I loved it. I am learning not to pre-sume or ass-ume. So please understand when I ask you if you want to share how you identify, what to call you, and what pronouns to use when I refer to you. You get to discover and decide. You are the one who knows who you are and I am listening. I don't want to be presumptuous.

THE JOY IN PRIDE

Val Innes

This summer we celebrate Pride again, and we have a lot to be proud of. I am 76 years old, and for 46 of those years, I have been a part of the LGBTQ2S+ movement in Canada. I remember clearly what it was like to be LGBT in the seventies. When I came out in 1977, it was an alternative to suicide on the tail end of a closeted, failing relationship because I would not come out, too scared to lose my job and my family -- a very real fear then. I was outed, and I did lose my contract with Brandon University, and, as I had no civil rights as a lesbian, I couldn't do anything about it. But I kept my family and friends, and I became actively political. It helped that I got immediately included in the guitar group and lesbian social circle activities of singer and songwriter Heather Bishop, bringing me the huge relief of being able to build a vibrant social circle -- it was possible to be lesbian and live well! Thank you, Heather!



By 1991, when I started teaching at Kwantlen University College, my partner received benefits from the College as my partner, and by 2005, I had the right to marry my same-sex partner should I want to. That is the fastest social and legal cultural change in Canada's history: 28 years. We queers did that by peaceful protest and legal action. It wasn't a gift; we won it.

The first march I was in was in 1977 in Saskatoon where we made history in a time when coming together in groups opened you up to harassment and violence. Many of the first official pride parades had years of unofficial gatherings before cities finally gave 'official' permission and many attendees marched with paper bags over their heads in order to not face repercussions such as being fired from their jobs or being attacked. I saw that, close by, marching with women wearing



paper-bags with eye holes and holding signs asking angrily "When Can I take This off?!" I also saw police watching carefully -- not sure whether they were there to protect us from the onlookers or to protect the watching pedestrians from us. And a year or so later, my partner and I got attacked by a group of drunk straight men in Victoria, physically defending ourselves in a doorway until help arrived. So I know what it was like then. We kept marching though, all across Canada.

On August 28, 1971, roughly 100 people from Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and the surrounding areas gathered in the pouring rain at Parliament Hill for Canada's First Gay Liberation Protest and March, presenting a petition to the government with a list of ten demands for equal rights and protections. Where I lived, the inaugural Pride Winnipeg was one of the first Pride celebrations in Western Canada, following Vancouver in 1979 and Edmonton in 1980. Some of the first participants of this event still wore paper bags over their heads out of fear of rallying in public, but in 1986, a group of nine of us successfully held the first public Lesbian Issues Conference at the University of Winnipeg. In 1987, Gay Pride Winnipeg, with 250 LGB community members, supporters, and allies, was celebrating the passing of the bill to include sexual orientation in the Human Rights Code and meeting at the Legislative Buildings to march in the streets of downtown Winnipeg. And the rest is history: by 1995 we legally won freedom from discrimination federally on the basis of sexual orientation. By 2005 same-sex marriage was legalized federally. By 2017, Trans people and gender was part of the civil rights code



Winnipeg Lesbian Issues Conference 1986



Today, the Pride marches are fun and full of music, joy and laughter with allies marching in the parades which often number in the thousands and enjoying festivals with cities approving requests to march, but the history of what we, as a community went through to get where we are today can't be forgotten and should be lauded. Equally as important is to remember that what may seem to be the struggles of the past, are still ongoing today for many members of our community, especially Trans people. And of course, in 76 countries in

the world, homophobia runs rampant, legally and socially. We're lucky to live in Canada. We're lucky to be able to feel and share the joy in our lives, the joy of the Pride Parades. And we need to continue to fight the far right to maintain that joy of the freedom to be ourselves.

That fight, that result and the subsequent public parades is something to feel joy about, and it's a victory to celebrate each time you're in a parade or a festival and just having fun -- because you can.



Canada's Prime Minister at Pride

Be proud!



Feel the Joy!



COMING OUT TO PARENTS

Lorri Rudland

Times have changed and coming out to parents today when homosexuality is much more accepted is not necessarily the risky venture it used to be, when telling a parent, or parents, could mean rejection or banishment. Some of the responses we received when we told our parents were harsh and some were accepting.

I'm proud to be a lesbian, proud of my life and my relationships with my friends, but the early years were fraught. In 1977, I was 30 years old when I told my mother I was a lesbian, and she said, "I would love you if you were a murderer, a thief, or a lesbian." I couldn't help but be struck by the company with which she bundled me together.

My dad's response was a little harsher. At that time Anita Bryant was an internationally known singer for the song, *Paper Roses*, and she led a campaign in 1977 in Dade County, Florida, against gay teachers. When I told my dad, he said, "I wouldn't want a lesbian teaching my children." I responded, "Dad, I am your children."

This conflict estranged us seriously, and I wasn't invited to family gatherings for five years, which is a long time not to see your father and one sister. But times changed, and attitudes softened, and I was eventually invited back into the fold. So I thought I would ask a few people I knew what happened when they came out to their parents or parent.



I have given the year in which the person made the revelation and their age at the time that they made it. Some of the names are real and some are not.

1980, Alison, at 30 years old: Mother first responded – "It's a stage you're going through", then she followed up with, "It's unnatural." A few years later, she said, "Your father would roll over in his grave if he knew."

1975, Kathy, at 25 years: Dad responded – "Some of the greatest people in history were gay, like Socrates." Mother responded – "I had to stop and think how maybe I was gay or maybe not." How fortunate was I (to have such open-minded parents).

1980: Shelly, at 32 years old: Mother answered from her own personal experience of the only things she knew about homosexuals, "One of them killed the other one on the beach last summer. And I know a local newscaster who said her daughter is one too." Because she had met a butch lesbian who neglected her personal hygiene, she further responded, "I hope you wash regularly."



1999, Penny, at 32 years old: Dad – Penny's Dad had already had a brouhaha with a brother who had come out many years previously, and when Penny talked with him he was old and tired. His response to my revelation was to simply say, "Well, I'll pray for you." But later he accepted it and wanted to meet my girlfriend, which was as close as he came to accepting my choice in life.

1996, Rose, at 43 years old: I moved to the big city, but Dad stayed in small town Canada. Dad – "You're going to go to hell. Do not tell anyone in my town about this. I'm not going to be able to raise my head again if people know about you." My response was to say, "I'm not ashamed, I'm not changing; you're going to have to learn to live with it."

1972, Greg, at 20 years old: Mother – “Oh, you poor thing, how you must have suffered.” She was aware that people said homosexuals were evil and degenerate, but she accepted me for what I was. Shortly thereafter she mentioned a man named Darryl, who was a design assistant, and who worked in an antique shop. She would have been thrilled if I had hooked up with him.

1980, Joanie, at 33 years old: This was a low point in my history as a lesbian and was a very sad time for me. I was attending a mental health day program as an outpatient in Vancouver, and during this program I told my dad I was a lesbian. His response was to say, “That’s it then.” He was implying that my lesbianism explained why I was attending the mental health program. It wasn’t. If I had to give a diagnosis, I would say that I was depressed.

Late 1980’s, Carole, at about 30 years old: I wrote a letter to my mother overseas and she responded to say, “I was a little surprised when I received your letter. But when I think about it you’ve always had more of an affinity for women than for men.” My mom was great and when she came to Canada, I took her to my gay choir performance one evening. At first she looked askance at all the gay men and women around us, but then one of the choir members sat down and talked to her. They got on like a house on fire and that was that.

1994, Marta, at 25 years old: Mother was a very strong Catholic and was shocked and aghast. Her first words were, “Don’t tell your father. He’ll be horrified at this. The news will kill him.” She put my father on the line, telling me you have to tell your father, and to my surprise, he had no negative reaction, but was totally supportive. He said, “What’s the big deal?” He actively helped me find a partner by thinking about what was important to me, which was my spirituality, starting with Catholic groups and other groups, and eventually I found my way to the Unitarians. I found my lifelong partner there, and we’ve been together for 23 years.

1970, Farren, in the late teens: My late teens, early twenties, were my new found independence years. I dated girls but I also had a boyfriend. The boyfriend was constant; the girlfriends came and went. Interestingly, I dated some very lovely girls. “Fags”, lived in dangerous times. If we weren’t physically abused, our cars and other properties like our lockers were vandalized. So we kept up our fronts and kept our true selves hidden.

It would never have occurred to me to come out to my parents. My dad worked for the county and he would have been made the brunt of cruel jokes from his coworkers, and I didn’t want to let him down. To tell my mom would be telling my dad. She was battling with alcoholism and would have blurted it out. It was 25 years later before I felt like coming out, but my mom had passed away, and my dad didn’t care about my personal life.



These are stories from the lesbians and gay men I talked with. Some of the responses were harsh and some were not. If there was tension, usually they reconciled and have had good relations ever since. To be sure, the mothers or fathers did not necessarily jump up in ecstasy at the news, but mostly they came to accept their daughters or sons to the best of their ability despite the prejudices of the day. Whatever the difficulties of earlier lives, we are all proud lesbians and gay men and, as the expression goes, have lead fulfilling and productive lives.

The stories were collected by telephone interview except for Farren's, which he wrote himself, and which was edited for space and content.

SILENCES AND SECRETS

Val Innes

Talking of coming out, I came out on the tail end of a broken relationship, a closeted, secret relationship. I came out as an alternative to committing suicide. When I was teaching at Winnipeg Centre Project, an adjunct of Brandon University, I become lovers with an open lesbian; I was closeted, and I would only be with her in secret. She wanted me to meet her friends and socialize; I would not. Eventually, her good mental health reasserted itself, and she ended the relationship, as she should have, refusing to be silenced.

Double locked closet or not, I was devastated and seriously suicidal. A close friend told me I should come out to my parents and friends, that I could commit suicide later if telling everyone did not make it better, that nothing was worse than death. It made some strange sense to me, even in that state of desperation, and I broke silence.

I came out to my family and friends in 1977, eleven months before my mother died. I was lucky in that both my parents were really supportive; however, both were worried. My coming out changed my entire family; finally, we talked of how we all felt. Those were the most honest eleven months I had with my mother. But it was not all as simple as that. I was not what my family had wanted. They saw me becoming more political, more radical, more vocal, and my mother in particular, although she was very supportive and loving in many ways, tried to silence me, to get me to simply settle for a cottage for two – this time with a woman instead of a man, but the same scenario; I was supposed to “think of my family name”.

I would not be silenced, though. I marched in lesbian and gay marches in Saskatoon and Manitoba, joined a rape crisis centre as a volunteer counselor, spoke publically and often about rape and its causes and consequences, and shared my house with two other lesbians. I barely allowed my job to interfere with my suddenly blooming social and political life, compartmentalizing both, given the sobering reality that I now belonged to a disadvantaged minority, rather than the privileged class in which I had been born and raised, and whose protection I could no longer take for granted.

That realization, along with teaching in Selkirk, a blue-collar town on the outskirts of Winnipeg, politicized me even further, as later on, teaching native students in Northern Manitoba and in Winnipeg's inner city did. Prior to all this I had not even realized I was privileged – white, middle class, educated – and others were not. As a lesbian and a budding feminist, I was now just starting to see my world from the perspective of an “other” rather than an unquestioning insider. And my silence had been broken.



My family came to accept that, including my mother, and, many months before she died, she became den mother to my house of lesbians, one of whom had been totally rejected by her parents; the other woman's parents were in Toronto. We all grieved my mother's death. My family accepted my sexuality and my politics, and they accepted my partners as they joined my family, over the years. They were really pleased as we gained our civil rights in Canada.

THE CONNECTING WEB

Cyndia Cole

8



THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF LESBIAN SYMBOLISM

Janie Cawley

I remember buying my first labrys. I bought it at a Christmas fair at Britannia Community Center. It was 1983. I had just come out. A labrys was like a secret handshake among lesbians. If you wore a labrys you were boldly claiming your lesbian sexuality. It was a must have item. All the best Lesbians wore one. The woman selling the jewellery was clearly a member of the team. Although she had a wide selection of jewellery, among the usual earrings, necklaces, bracelets, broaches, and pendants was a wide selection of labryses; silver ones, gold ones, wooden ones, some large and bold, some so small that you could hardly tell they were a double-headed axe.

I had seen a few gold labryses worn by bridge playing Lesbians of my acquaintance, and some wooden ones worn by those few women brave enough to proclaim their butchness in the largely androgynous lesbian community of the 80s, but most of the women I knew had silver labryses some bold, some more modest, but nobody I knew had one that was small.

There were a lot of sideways glances from the crowd of women milling around the jewelry stand as I chatted animatedly with the artist who had created these things of beauty ... beauty, in this case, clearly being in the orientation of the beholder.

"What about this gold one?" The vendor asked.

"No, I don't play bridge."

"How about this wooden one?" The women gave me a speculative look and said, "No Perhaps not."

"I think I like this one." I said opting for a medium silver axe.

My selection finally made and my medium declaration of my lesbian self securely around my neck, I set off fully prepared to explain the significance of my choice of jewellery to anyone who asked. I did not, however, imagine that this preparedness would include defending myself against a charge, of assaulting my older daughter made by her school principal.

It all started innocently enough. Sue, my older daughter, and I were engaging in a little roughhousing. I had finally rolled Sue on her back and pinned her arms down.

"Say aunt."

"It's uncle, and I won't say it."

"Ouch," Sue yelped.

She was clearly hurt. I jerked back. Wrong move. My labrys had caught in her nose. When I pulled back, the edge of the labrys cut her nose. It was a small cut, but it bled for a good half hour. My younger daughter Samantha looked at her sister who was holding wads of tissue to her nose and then looked at me.

"She's probably going to bleed to death you know."

"No Sam, it's just a small cut. She'll be fine."

We spent the rest of the evening in more subdued pursuits playing an endless game of monopoly and watching Cagney and Lacy on TV.

The next day, a half hour after I got home from dropping the kids off at school, I received a call from the school Principal Mr. Russell. Mr. Russell did not like me, probably because I was a Lesbian, or possibly because I was a feminist, or perhaps because he didn't like Birkenstocks. Whatever the reason he didn't like me.

"Mrs. Cawley." There was something in Mr. Russell's tone that indicated that I should not point out, yet again that it was Ms. Cawley.

"Yes Mr. Russell."

"Mrs. Cawley, a serious matter has come up concerning you daughter Sue and I think we need to discuss it in person."

"What's happened?"

I immediately went into fierce mother mode fueled by panic that something had happened to my child. "I'd rather not discuss it over the phone Mrs. Cawley. Could you please come to the school as soon as possible."

"I'll be there in 20 minutes."

I made in 15 and was immediately ushered into Mr. Russell's office. Before I even had a chance to sit down Mr. Russell said: "Your daughter Samantha, announced to her class during role call this morning that you cut her sister's nose with an axe. The teacher has reported this to me and, as you know, I am obliged to report any suspected case of child abuse to the authorities. I wanted to hear you explanation before I proceeded with this matter."

I felt a surge of relief pass over me.

"Hmmm." I said, while I gathered my wits ... " Well actually Sue and I were roughhousing, and she caught her nose in my necklace. It was a very small cut. Have you seen Sue today? Does she look like she has been attacked by an ax wielding parent?"

"Well why on earth would Samantha say that you had cut her sister's nose with an axe if it wasn't true?"



Mr. Russell knew from long experience that Samantha was not loath to dramatize any event. I could only conclude that he was so delighted to have found yet another potential flaw in my personality that all semblance of good sense had fled.

I held up the labrys:

“This is the axe in question,” I said.

Mr. Russell looked at the object I was holding up.

“What exactly is that?”

“It’s a labrys.”

“What on earth is that?”

“Well, it is a double headed axe generally taken as an indication . . . “ I didn’t get to finish my explanation.

“Why would you wear that around your neck?”

I looked at Mr. Russell who was wearing a dead man on a cross around his neck. I refrained from making any comment about his choice of jewelry.

“Look Mr. Russell, why don’t you just have Sue come down to the office, ask her what happened, ascertain the extent of her injury and based on this evidence judge for yourself whether it was anything other than an accident.”

Sue clearly gave a credible account of the events of the previous night and the minor nature of her injury convinced Mr. Russell that he didn’t have a Lizzie Borden on his hands, just a Lesbian. When I picked my daughters up after school, it was apparent that Sue was having a chat with Sam about making pronouncements in class. Whatever Sue had said clearly had little effect on Sam. As Sam got into the car she was saying:

“Mom did cut your nose with an axe, and it did bleed a lot.” In a much smaller voice, she added:

“And you might have bled to death.”

Sue gave Sam one of her famous looks that even Sam picked up on as a clear warning not to continue that conversational thread. Sue looked at me and said, rather too cheerfully I thought:

“Well, I am pretty sure I am the only student who has ever been called down to the office to defend her mother’s behaviour.”

“If your principal wasn’t such an Ass . . . er, idiot he would have done a little investigating on his own instead of taking the word . . .” I could tell by this time that if I continued on in this vein one or other or both of the girls would be upset with me. Really, when I bought my labrys, my lovely, medium, silver labrys, I was hoping that people would ask what it symbolized, and why I wore it. I had visualized explaining what it meant and the joy and pride I had in wearing it. The experience with Mr. Russell hadn’t been a great one, but it wouldn’t stop me from wearing my labrys. Perhaps, however, I would refrain from wrestling with anyone while I was wearing it.



MIND STEW

River Glen

A stew of memories in my pot. Each spoonful a different flavour and each flavour a cascade of thoughts and feelings bubbling in time. Like noodles that can tangle, but can be forked into unraveling in a roux of realizations. There is the fleeting taste of a little girl in jeans, a tee-shirt and sneakers, running so fast she beat the neighbour boy. The same girl dressing like she was in the 1800's, trying on some kind of identity in her play. Also the bitter poison taste of grown up misuse that I was too young to understand. Or the surprise relish for prepubescent me surreptitiously eyeing the transformation of her best friends into womanly shapeliness. There were the days of little appetite, when time seemed to be simmering with frustration while sitting in tedious schoolrooms or at soul crushing low level jobs, boiling off days of youth. My family floundered on until I left home, then they were individually consumed by life in different directions.



During intermittent periods of alienation and being lost, I could feel like I was starving for security, for mentoring or for any semblance of status. In reality though I have missed few meals in my life. There have been times of overripe fruits, stale bread or food left out too long. These decaying things are metaphors for dangerous intoxication, hugging the toilet over and over again, or for all the attention devoted to consuming everything else to excess, or for indifferent, forgettable sex and frequent bouts of bottomed out self-esteem. I mostly had the unrequited love of the too-straight females I that I have cherished. I did have a few years of immersion with the "Queer As Folk" I hung with in San Francisco and LA. This taste of mind stew has pieces savoury good and mouth watering with satisfaction. Those memories of friendships and the days out hiking in the canyons of the Santa Monica mountains, the going to brunch on Sundays at the Marina and toasting with the bottles of cheap champagne or the dancing for five hours straight at the gay clubs, then days on the beaches and drives up the coast.

Could anything ever taste as full bodied and robust as being in the fullness of one's youth and attractiveness and being in love? Or the bitter, metallic, astringency of love not returned or lost? I was tunnel focused on making my own family once my mom passed when I was 25. I married in passionate love. I jumped at the opportunity to upend all and sample all the new flavours and strange fruits of a new country. How about the dizzying aroma of holding one's babies, feeling so full of love the heart nearly shatters into pieces. I think back to that kind of drunkenness. So little sleep and such overwhelming responsibility...I'd buy a bottle for a sip of it sometime.

So much caring. Often a bland flavour but also often with a pleasant aftertaste. Cleaning, cooking, wiping noses, shopping for groceries, tearing around to the soccer games, milking the goats, picking bins of apples, growing the garden, preserving. I cycled through years and years; it was like a huge meal, the meat and potatoes of life topped off with a fabulous dessert light as mousse on the tongue, rich and lip smacking good.



I had some zest, piquancy and exotic spices. At eighteen years old I left junior college after a semester and earned enough for a one way ticket to Europe. I worked in food service in a hotel in Luxembourg, where I learned something of French cooking, drank Dom Pérignon champagne, then for six weeks ate huge English breakfasts in trade for babysitting. I ate pub food in Derbyshire and drank Guinness on the Isle of Skye. I wound up with a boy I had met 6 months earlier at a party in LA who was then visiting my best girl friend. He was 19 and from Illinois. He sent me a ticket back to the USA, and I stayed 10 months in Illinois taking college courses and waitressing at a Howard Johnsons. His parents talked sense into him, and

he sent me packing. I had liked the deep dish pizza I tried in Chicago, but my heart was whacked with a meat tenderizer.

Taking another spoonful, this time I am a 20 year old, earning minimum wage at a travel bureau, when I stayed in first class hotels in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok, Sri Lanka and finished off in Hawaii. Another time I had two weeks at a Club Med in Martinique; I must have gained 20 lbs. from the to-die-for food and free drinks. I hit New York for a day on the way there. I visited my brother in the army in Georgia and friends in Florida and ate the local chow down there, of course. There have been many times in Mexico, starting in Ensenada at 16 drinking Tequila Sunrises at Hussong's Cantina. I ate lobster and abalone like I have never had again. In the 2000's, I have gorged many times on Puerto Vallarta and some other places. In my mind stew are walks in the stomach-dropping beauty of Sequoia forests, painted deserts, high meadows and fields of grain, and, of course, being by the oceans. I have loved being in a kayak, on ferries, on motor boats and under sail, tasting the salty spray.

My restaurant, travel agent, rent-a-car agent, service rep for the phone company experiences, my tending orchards, engagement with animal husbandry and my child rearing efforts eventually gave way to further pickling as a mature student getting a BSW. Then I made the best dish I could out of divorce and social working as my physical and mental health thinned to a gruel, but my kids launched into their own lives. I did offer some kindness though, sips of real caring to people who had had trouble stomaching the realities of life in this world.

I have mostly been cooking my own life in my own pan for a quarter century. I make lemonade or whatever with the ingredients that come my way. I fill up so much when eating meals and hanging out with my kids and grandkids or being in the accepting company of my friends. I am still a little plump from the graciousness of life, though I've lost a couple of teeth on its gristle. I write this wishing all the world could have as full a belly and so many mostly good memories in their mind stew. I write encouraging the idea that even without a menu or roadmap, a person can find their way and a place at a laden table.



WORKING FROM THE INSIDE

Farren Gillaspie

Living in a world surrounded by homophobia, I learned early on that it is better to enter by the side door rather than bust down the front door. I have been in my current job for thirty-six years. I was impressed by the fact that this fledgling non-profit society stood for all the ideals that I held dear. They promoted equal rights for all. Of course they meant that for their developmentally disabled children. I felt, oh well, I am part of that 'all' (my definition).

I found out that the board was comprised of mostly Christians, and most them were very devout. I had decided not to lie about my orientation, but I wouldn't volunteer information either. The organization was quite small then but quickly grew. The director was very appreciative of my dedication. There were several times when he seemed to be opening the door for me to come out. However, he had never shared anything of his personal life. I knew from other employees he was married and had children. So I just didn't respond. I heard from his assistant one time that he said to her. "What the hang is this guy. I thought he was straight; then I was quite sure he was gay, and now just the other day he introduced me to his seventeen year old daughter! What do you think?" "I think it's none of our business. He is one of your best employees, so I say stay out of his business."

A few years in, my assistant came out to me as being HIV positive. I was concerned how the religious families would handle this or the HR department. I thought about that side door. This was the eighties; the AIDS crisis was at its peak. In a coordinators' meeting with some family members present, I suggested we have an in-service from AIDS Vancouver, so we could better understand how AIDS might affect our employees. The director was quick to point out that the answer was obvious. A person with a communicable disease cannot work in this environment. I responded with, "that is precisely why we need an in-service. HIV is transmitted through sexual activity and needles etc. which of course our staff would not be participating in. But I was thinking of your children. Most have been institutionalized for fifteen or sixteen years. We know that sexual abuse had unfortunately been fairly common. What if one of your children tested positive for HIV, and their support staff chose not to work with them?"



The in-service came.

A few years later, I put on the agenda for our coordinators' meeting a question about same sex benefits for our employees. The answer was quick, "our carrier would not offer that coverage". I asked if they could formally ask our carrier and bring their response to our next meeting in a month. It came with a flat, "no, not at this time." I had learned a lot from the family members who had advocated for rights for their disabled children and succeeded in getting them out of the institution. Next meeting, I suggested that we send yet another letter to our carrier, this time asking why, reminding them that ICBC had been offering same sex benefits for five years already, and that we might consult with them how we could support our 350 plus employees. It was a very slow, aggravating process, but about six months later we had our benefits. This was, of course, not a one-man show. Most of our employees were totally behind the request and we had some strong representatives in our management team.

One of my staff worked part time at my workplace while earning his law degree. Our agency was upgrading their policies and procedures just as he became a practicing lawyer. He was a totally out, very personable, six foot two blond dynamo. I suggested that since he knew our agency, he could present a seminar on respect in the workplace. This would address legal issues around harassment, discrimination around gender, sexual orientation, race, religion etc. He did a brilliant presentation that was very balanced. Some board members and some supervisors were squirming, but it was all in line with our labour laws. Many of us breathed a little easier.

My partner passed away in 1997. I went right back to work without any time off. My first day back I got a call from the director of employee services. She said she had heard my partner had passed and offered her condolences. Then she said, "you know you are entitled to at least three days of bereavement leave, why don't you use it? Take the rest of the week off." When I got home that night, there was a beautiful bouquet of flowers outside my condo door. It had a card that was signed by all eleven staff from the administration office, many with touching thoughts below their name.

I was fortunate to meet a very special man four years later, and we have been together for seventeen years. He has attended all of the society celebrations with me. At an awards ceremony where I was a recipient, we sat at one of many large tables. My partner sat across the table and was talking to the father of one of my residents. A woman sat beside me, Mrs. Dawson! She was without a doubt the most staunch Christian on the board. We chatted a bit, then she asked me who the handsome man across the table was. I said, "my partner".

"Really, how long have you been together?"

"Fifteen years".

"That is amazing! I would say it looks like you are two very fortunate men."



Two stories follow that are childhood memories for their authors. The first is by Maggie Shore who is in her late eighties and is an emeritus rather than active member of Quirk-e, but it's great to know she's still writing and sharing. The second is by Judy Fletcher who is a current member of Quirk-e and whose memories come to us through images as well as writing; she's an artist. We include these two looking back to their childhood memories because such memories are too precious to fade away without giving them a moment to be shared. Quirk-e is all about memoir!

MY COWBOY HAT

Maggie Shore

Margaret Shore

I was 12 years old when a wonderful gift arrived from my aunt Nan. Nan was a longtime hiking friend of our family and knew what a 12 year old farm girl needed. It was a black felt sombrero which fit me perfectly. I wore it every day.

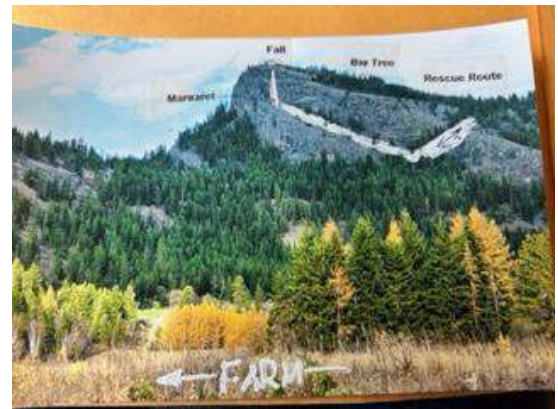


We lived on a farm in the North Okanagan at that time and because I was a bit horse crazy, I always referred to it as my cowboy hat, crunching up the brim so it looked authentic. And of course a cowboy hat was necessary when horseback riding. I always felt that my hat was the height of country style and was proud to place it on my head, tighten the neck string and imagining I was a cowgirl of the month. We had a team of horses that performed all the field work with my dad, two quiet natured, hefty,

mares, May a bay and Dolly a leggy white. They were obedient, docile and could work up to a semi-gallop coming back down the hill. My steed of choice was May whose pace was slow and lumbering. First I would take her from the stall in the horse barn with her halter and reins. Then I would stand her by a box or a fence, and I'd jump on her wide back. She heeded my instructions of gee and haw for right and left and kicks in the ribs to get her going. Riding her bareback was initially exciting and fun but soon became painful, causing sores on my rear end from bouncing around for two hours. A bit of Vaseline solved that problem.

In my 13th year, in March, my brother Phil and I were hiking on our mountain when I had a bad fall, injuring my head. Taken by vertigo, I fell 70 feet down a cliff-face, landing precariously and unconscious on a small ledge. My heroic brother saved my life by climbing down to assist me and then calling for help for 2 hours. I was eventually rescued and taken to the hospital, fully recovering from my misadventure in a few weeks.

The hat, of course, had flown off and disappeared somewhere into the forest below among the trees and boulders and we all forgot about it. There the hat remained for five years, lodged in a secret place among the mossy logs and branches, consorting with nature and the elements, until one day, someone came upon it by accident. It was covered with grey mouldy patches, embedded twigs and dirt and had become a nest for insects. It disappeared after that, as I believe my mother threw it in the garbage. A sad end for my precious cowboy hat.



And the next story is from Judy Fletcher who shows as well as tells her story, **SNOW WALL . . .**



#1 In 1958, I am twelve years old and we are living on the McGrady farm outside Colborne. The house is a couple of hundred yards from the road. Since I started Grade 9, I have to take the school bus into town every morning. On this day, it has snowed all day but at 4 o'clock the snow plough comes out of town and the bus follows it. As we do not have a car, we have spent the winter stomping down the snow until we have a walkway a few feet above the driveway. When we arrive at the road we jump down off the snow bank onto the road. This day, the school bus drops me off and drives away. I find myself looking at an 8 foot wall of snow that the plough has thrown up. I cannot even see the house but it must be back there. I cannot even see the old snow bank that was there this morning. And the footholds that we created have been obliterated by a ton of new, soft snow. I wade into it.

#2

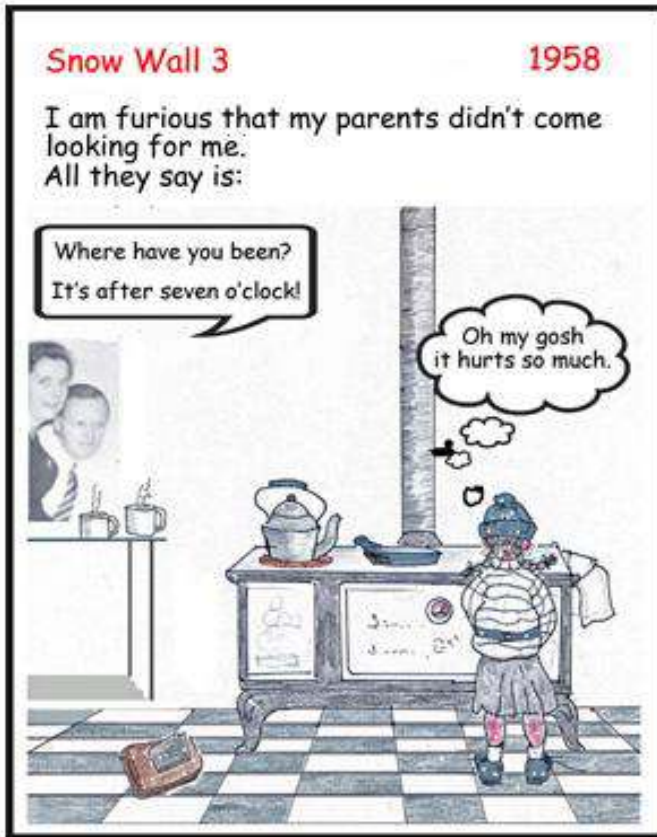
I have on a jacket and a skirt with ankle socks and boots. I am immediately soaked to my waist. I run back into the road. I throw my binder and books up onto the embankment and try again. And again. And again. It gets dark quickly and very much colder. I am now frozen from my waist down to my toes. But I am still unable to find a foothold in the old snow to climb up. I don't even stop to have a cry. I know that I must get indoors before I freeze to death. It is very dark now. Looking down the road I see something red. It is our mailbox. I'm about 30 feet away from where I should be. I clear away the rest of the mailbox and find the post and crossbar that it is sitting on. I use them as climbing aids and throw myself up onto the top of the great white wall. It is seven o'clock. I gather my books and trudge up to the house.

Snow Wall 2

1958



It gets dark quickly and very much colder. I am now frozen from my waist down to my toes.



#3

Once inside. I to straight to the wood stove. I am 12 and I don't understand about hypothermia. I just want to get warm.

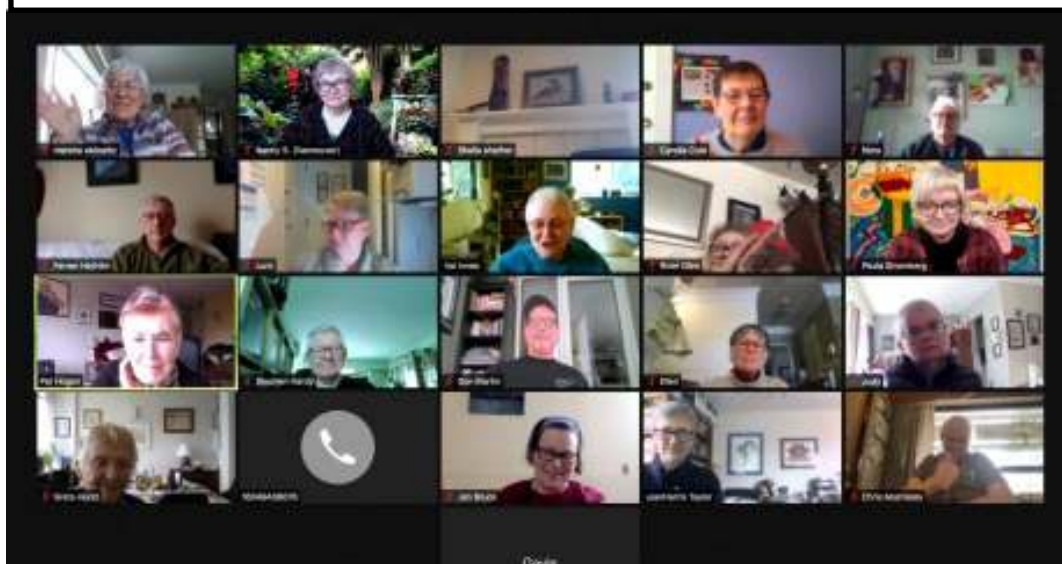
I stand there waiting for the pain in my legs to go away but, instead, it becomes excruciating. And I am furious that my parents did not come searching for me.

All they say is: "Where have you been? It's after seven o'clock!"



Judy Fletcher

QUIRK-E: Zooming through Covid and after, once a week, every week: COMMUNITY.



PERSPECTIVE

Chris Morrissey

On Tuesdays I book a HandyDart, the public transit for people unable to use the regular public transit. Often, several people are picked up and dropped off. It is a bus after all. On Tuesdays, I travel to Davie Street for a volunteer shift that I do once a week. The driver told me that he had to do one more pick up before dropping me off.



It appeared to me that we were headed toward an older, somewhat run-down area of the city. The woman he was picking up was in a wheel chair, so she needed to use the lift. However, once she was on the bus, she moved to a regular seat.

When I'm sharing the bus, I usually greet the other passengers as I get on or as they do. So, I turned around. She greeted me and I her. As we went along, she shared with me that she was going to the QE theatre. "What about you?" she asked.

Here we go I thought. How do I answer? How much do I reveal? How brave am I feeling today? For many years I have been a very closeted lesbian. I experienced that it was not safe to reveal that aspect of my identity. I have learned to quickly decide when and to whom revealing my sexual orientation will be safe.

Memories of other times when I've faced this dilemma surfaced. For example, several years ago, I made the trip over to Vancouver Island to visit my aunt and cousins. My aunt knew that I had left the convent, had returned to Canada and had been working. "What are you doing these days?" she asked? At the time, I was employed by the LGBT Community Centre and working with a program for older members of our communities. I had no idea what my aunt knew or thought about sexual orientation. I could only imagine, knowing that she was a very devout Roman Catholic. I had to think fast.

"I work with older adults," I replied and quickly changed the subject. For heaven's sake, I thought once I left the convent I'd be free to be myself. Apparently, it's not as easy as moving to another country. I remembered the saying "where we go, we take ourselves." My fear of rejection and my internalized homophobia travelled with me.

Sitting on the bus, 25 years later, I was once again faced with a similar question and my hesitation. Have I grown at all? Has all the money and all of the hours spent in therapy paid off? So nonsensical! I've been very public in the intervening years including being on TV. Now I was on public transit with a driver and **one** other passenger. I knew that some of **my** biases were at work. This was an older person. How would she respond?

"Once a week, I volunteer with a not-for-profit and I'm on my way there now." I didn't say more. Besides my own discomfort, I was wary. I was aware that there is lots of prejudiced around refugees, never mind ones who are LGBT.

"Which one," she asked, "there are so many these days."

I took a breath. "I work with newcomers and refugees specifically those that come because they were being persecuted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity."

After a pause she said, "Oh, have you gone to that building with the stairs? I used to go there sometimes." I relaxed. I knew that she was referring to the Queer Community Centre on Bute Street.



“Well, yes, I used to.” Showing her my prosthesis, “like you I’m not able to go there anymore.”



Gordon Neighbourhood House 1019 Broughton St, Vancouver

“They do have gatherings for us at other locations, like Gordon Neighbourhood House. Do you get the newsletter? If you register for it, you’ll get the info. “ We arrived at her destination. “Maybe I’ll see you sometime at an event.”

Clearly the past still haunted me. There had been no backlash. No negative comments. Quite the opposite, in fact.

For heaven’s sake. I’m going to see queer refugee claimants when I get off this bus. Young people who have been thrown out by their families, locked up, beaten, imprisoned. Risked everything to get here. AND **they** have survived. For heaven’s sake, **Get over yourself!**

Gordon Neighbourhood House 1019 Broughton St, Vancouver



Rainbow
REFUGEE 🇨🇦

Chris Morrissey and Rob Hughes **founded Rainbow Refugee** in 2000 to promote safe, equitable migration and communities of belonging for people fleeing persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or HIV status. Rainbow Refugee provides support, information, and system navigation to refugees and refugee claimants seeking refugee status in Canada. For more information contact [Helping LGBTQ+ Refugees Resettle in Canada - Rainbow Refugee Vancouver](#) or visit at 1033 Davie Street, Unit 620 in Vancouver



Rainbow Bridge is a Circle of Hope, a part of Rainbow Refugee, currently sponsoring a large refugee family to settle in Vancouver. Chris, as part of Rainbow Refugee, with massive experience in this, is our mentor, and we're completely grateful to have her expertise in our Circle. See how to donate on P.39.



TRIBUTE TO PAT HOGAN

RAINBOW BRIDGE GALA NIGHT JUNE 23, 2023

On June 23rd, we gathered at the Rainbow Bridge Gala Night to celebrate Pat Hogan and to share an evening of music and tribute to her while fundraising for the Afghani family we're sponsoring into Canada. Two women, El Chenier and Ellen Woodsworth, spoke about her to the audience, most of whom had known and appreciated Pat for years. The Quirk-e Ziners would like to share their speeches with you in this zine, so that those of you who couldn't attend can read the speeches and share in honouring Pat for her decades of tireless work for women.

TRIBUTE TO PAT HOGAN by El Chenier

We've all heard the expression "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, I'd like to turn that on its head and say it takes Pat Hogan to create community. Unlike other groups, lesbians don't have natural communities. There is no language we speak that connects us (well, not a verbal one anyhow), no church we all go to (unless you count worshipping at the feet of the goddess), no family we are born into to help us explore the contours of who we are and how we can be as our beautiful, queer selves. It takes special people who have charisma, uniqueness, nerve, and talent to make that happen, and that special person is Pat Hogan. And I don't say this lightly. We social historians have no time for great man history, or great woman history for that matter. But in this case, an exception must be made.

Pat was born in 1939 in the small northeastern textile town of Putnam, Connecticut. The youngest of three kids, her teenage and early adult years were "normal" in the sense that she dated plenty of men, but, she once said in an interview, marriage appeared as a "long dark tunnel," and she avoided it like the plague. She eventually left Putnam from NYC and made her way to San Francisco before finally landing in BC (remarkably, still straight!)

Most of you may know that Pat has a daughter and a son. When she first arrived in Canada, she and her partner rented a house in Burnaby and housed Americans who fled to Canada as conscientious objectors. When that relationship ended, she bought herself a Ford panel truck, originally owned by the Canadian army, that she fixed up to live in, which she and her kids did for a summer. When she had to decide on a place to settle down, she chose Vernon because she thought it would offer her the most support, and she wasn't wrong. It was there that Pat became deeply politicized. Like many of us, she started out at the Women's Centre and went on to serve as the North Okanagan representative for the BC Federation of Women (BCFW). She was also co-coordinator for Direct Action for Women in Need in

Vernon, BC. After attending a conference in Vancouver where Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon shared their work on domestic violence, she immediately returned home and organized a conference on the topic, the first ever held outside the Vancouver Lower Mainland.

She also co-authored a successful grant application to start the Okanagan Women's Coalition (OWC), developed a network of women's groups in the Okanagan, and helped to establish the 1st Women's Transition House in Vernon where she worked as a counselor and administrator.

It was also in Vernon that she *finally* had, as she put it, a few flings with women, so that by the time she arrived in Vancouver, she was a lesbian

**TRIBUTE TO PAT HOGAN by Ellen Woodsworth
with thanks to Claire Robson for her research.**



Pat Hogan is a mover and a shaker making spaces for the voices, creativity, and love of women and 2SLGTBQI+++ communities. She created safety for our early movements to emerge out of the darkness and blossom, full of laughter, commitment, and radical social change ideas, somewhere we could be and see ourselves in a movement that was exploding stereotypes, prejudice, and hatred.

Pat has mothered, nurtured, and occupied leadership roles in many key organizations over decades. Opening creative spaces for many of us in this room as we emerged out of our isolation, self-hatred, and shame organizing a world of strength, community and power where we could be whoever we wanted to be. She helped show a way forward for thousands of us which was full of love, laughter, and dancing, where we could be women loving women in public and say the word lesbian out loud with pride.

Paula Stromberg has this to say about Pat's contributions to our community: "Pat Hogan has been adding to our Lesbian Cultural Landscape for nearly 50 years -- enriching and reflecting women's lives. Pat is an entrepreneur, a risk-taker who dared to come out, promote Witches Camps, queer ballroom dancing, budding women musicians and crones' conferences that helped us older lesbians connect -- and above all -- Pat has brought joy to our lesbian lives. For so many of us, attending her joyful, lively events have strengthened our Lesbian Web of Connectedness over these many decades. And what else is life but feeling connected and a sense of belonging? -- Thank you, Pat."

Pat served on Van City Credit Union's selection committee for their Ethics in Actions Awards. She was a board member of the Vancouver Pride Society Board from 1990-1994 and was also vice chairperson of events and in charge of stage production at the Sunset Beach Festival, as well as representing Vancouver LGBT participants at the International Gay and Outgames. [How many of you were there ?](#)

She was a programmer on Coop Radio *Women's Vision* where she worked with CBC producer Rosemary Allenbach to produce a ground breaking documentary on The Persons Case, the historical legal battle spearheaded by the Famous Five (women) who won their case to have women legally declared persons in Canada.

She has volunteered as a committee co-coordinator and onsite worker at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival for over 30 years. She is a tireless and meticulous organizer, whether it's a conference, a concert, a craft fair, or a dance. Pat's car is always full of flyers for the next event, often something she's organized, but also other events she thinks may be of interest to her 3000+ mailing list. As a promoter and organizer of cultural events, she gave many young local performers not only her encouragement, but opportunities to perform their work in a safe and supportive environment.

In 1990, Pat consolidated her many social justice and cultural issues by founding Sounds and Furies, a womyn's production company with a mission to celebrate and promote women's art and culture. The concerts have included performers such as Penny Lang, Holly Near, Heather Bishop, Lillian Allen, Faith Nolan, Chris Williamson, Rita Chiarelli, Ellen McIlwaine, and Kate Clinton. One of Sounds & Furies newer events is an annual BOLD -- Old(er) Lesbians & Dykes conference which brings together over two hundred women from across Canada and the United States for educational workshops, entertainment, fun, and networking. The conference features author readings, entertainers, and workshops on a diverse range of topics and gives awards to outstanding activists like Bernie Skundahl, a Haida elder who walked from here to Ottawa and got the 2SMMIWG Inquiry and

Recommendations founded. Presenters have included Heather Bishop, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Barbara Findlay QC, Betsy Warland, Lydia Kwa, Libby Davis, First Nations elder Florence Hackett, Kate Reid and Taylor Stutchberry, offering scholarships to many women who otherwise would not be able to attend.



She founded a BC retreat, based on the teachings and work of Reclaiming, a political/spiritual organization co-founded by Starhawk, well known author, activist, and eco-feminist, working on issues relating to the environment, human rights, poverty, and homelessness. An organizer and advocate for abused women since the seventies and eighties, Pat's long history of fundraising has made a profound difference to hundreds.

For over twenty years Pat organized "Not so Strictly Ballroom Dancing" for same-sex dance classes, providing a safe and fun atmosphere, as well as an annual Women's Craft Fair with an open microphone, at which writers, musicians, and performers are able to take the stage, donating all profit to local organizations. In 2006, she got together with other queers and helped form Quirk-e, the Queer Imaging and writing Collective for Elders which continues meeting weekly and has published numerous books and zines.

The times they are changing; the right wing is raising its powerful head spewing hatred at the 2SLGBTQI ++, women, indigenous, racialized people and refugees. Pat's work helps us organize against losing the rights and space we have gained. Today she is well-known and highly regarded in many intersecting social circles – gay and straight, business and cultural, male and female, famous and not-so-famous, organizations and individuals fighting for radical social change. It is her amazing ability to work collectively and in coalitions that we need in times like this. We need Pat's skills and those of many of you here tonight to support Afghani women.

As Yael Blum from the *No Shit Shirley's* said, "let's hold hands together, let's hold hands around the world and let's be proud of where we stand". It's people like Pat who make this possible.



**A CELEBRATION DANCE WITH PAT TO THE MUSIC OF QUEER IS FUNK.
A GALA NIGHT INDEED!**

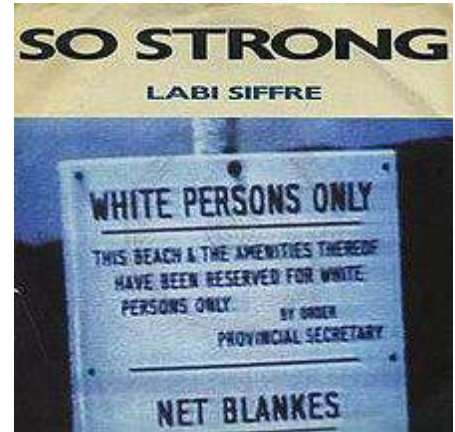


(SOMETHING INSIDE) SO STRONG BY LABI SIFFRE

Annie Newman

Music moves us, inside and out. Music expresses emotion, talks to the body, enlivens the heart, makes us think. Music and song often act as a much needed instrument of political change. Labi Siffre is a British black musician, who wrote "Something Inside So Strong," in 1984 after being strongly impacted by watching a documentary on apartheid in South Africa. It showed white soldiers killing black civilians protesting in the streets.

A 2022 article in the Guardian described how this song was created because Labi Siffre viewed this documentary and wanted people to know about it. But there was an even more personal meaning too, for Labi, that moved him to write this song. He told an interviewing journalist: "I sat down, played a C chord, threw my head back and sang the first two lines of "Something Inside So Strong, and I realized I was writing about my life as a gay man, and I found myself crying."



Something Inside So Strong has been described as an anthem. This song speaks of brave people: in South Africa, Ukraine, Iran, Afghanistan, and many other countries and groups around the world, including right here, in Vancouver; who stand up for what they believe deeply in their hearts. This includes of course, the LGBTQ2SQIA+ Community. This is an anthem for all people, struggling to keep their courage and hope ignited, in the face of injustice and oppression.

OVER AND OVER

River Glen

Usually there is one book or one leader, and it or they are believed to have all the answers and the book or they cannot be questioned. Add more followers and ramp up the followers' dissatisfaction or fear and repeat the message over and over. Machiavelli said use a common enemy to serve as a scapegoat and then focus the dissatisfaction and negativity onto them. A minority with recognizable characteristics is a great target. Of course, the female gender, which is a majority, can be "The Others" in some countries. In the believer's eyes "The Others" lack the fundamental qualities of humanness as measured against the characteristics of the true believers.

"The Others" can be from somewhere else, or of a different class; they can be indigenous, non-binary, transsexual or homosexual, Black or people of colour, homeless, addicted, disabled or ill. "The Others" can simply hold different political views. The leader of the true believers may not actually believe what they sell, but they need to pretend they are, and with a critical mass of followers they get real political power.



Rage against “The Other” has played out worldwide and throughout history. Crusades, conquistadors, witch burners, slavers or even local police have crushed “The Others”. On any day, listen to the news of contemporary rage. The individuals filled with rage could have local gang affiliations or be the lone wolf armed with semi-automatic weapons effecting mass murder, or they can be the purveyors of illegal weapons, poison drugs or sex slavery, maiming and killing from afar. The average terrorist that is plotting this or that crime feels they are justified in their rage. At the top of the heap are despotic leaders armed with nukes threatening the whole world. What a grim picture of human inhumanity can be painted.

NEVERTHELESS, it is 2023, and never in history has there been as much knowledge, education, travel and communication. More people are enfranchised; more people are escaping poverty. Medicine can fix many illnesses. Finally, some steps are being taken to do something about climate change. Though fringe groups don't see these as positive. The word “woke” is attributed to the progress and derided by the rage filled. It seems for the ratings of that demographic, TV commentators spread false arguments against transgendered, feminists or environmentalists. Even science is called fake news. On the other hand, there are two girls in love in a TV commercial, Asian and Black actors are leading in movies and making big bucks and millions of gringos are dancing to Latin music. At



least, finally there is the acknowledging of the missing and murdered indigenous women, the residential schools and other systems of oppression in our institutions. Reconciliation is glacial, but no one knew the word before the end of the nineties.

Canada is loved by this writer, but poverty, inequality, injustice, environmental destruction, violence, killer fentanyl, all are as Canadian as the beauty, humanity and ingenuity found here. We may not have Dickens' age poorhouses but we have rotting SRO's. We fought the pandemic, but we had trucker convoys. There were those who refused to take available steps to protect others, and we have people who oppose the most basic of liberties, the ownership and control of one's body.

As a queer writer, I put this on paper for my future. First they come for one group and then for another. I also call upon all “The Others” to stand up for each other. Solidarity is strength. Let us all learn new words like reconciliation, but also put whatever muscle you have behind it. I think this country needs more cooperation and less seeing everything as adversarial. It will always be a work in progress as long as there is progress. Words like “woke”, “progress” or “liberal” are not dirty words. Every election is worth your time. Every loss you feel needs to be addressed. And, yes, every true believer is a fellow human being, and their rage has to be dealt with. Please read as many books as you can. As a grandmother, I want to see the end of kids growing up in poverty. I want to see a planet saved from heating up. I want people to stand up to billionaires, so more can have the stuff of life.



Yes to controlling our own future. **Yes** to Pride, and **yes** to finding joy in the world.





The next article is by Gayle Roberts, an eighty-two year old retired high school teacher and Science Department Head. Her childhood memories are mainly of wishing she was a girl. Gayle transitioned from male to female during the 1995 – 1996 school year. At the start of that year, she returned to her “old” school and resumed science teaching and her position as Science Department head. She retired in June 2002.

Gayle is a coauthor of the online guidebook **Supporting Transgender and Transsexual Students in K-12 Schools. A Guide for Educators.**

DEAR PARENT OF A GENDER-VARIANT CHILD

Gayle Roberts

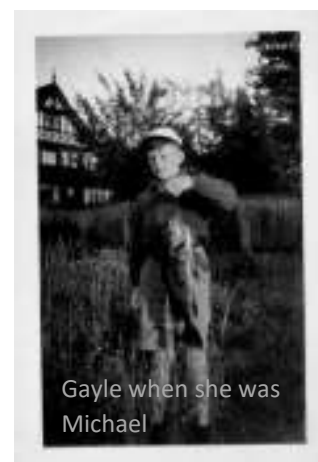
Dear parent of a gender-variant child:

A little while ago your eight year old boy dropped a bombshell in your lap. He says he is really a girl. Or, perhaps instead, your rather tomboyish twelve year old daughter has told you that she wants to get a boy’s haircut and dress more boyish than she already does. You look at her long brunette hair and think how nice it looks. “Why do you want to do that?” you ask. “I’ve always wanted to be a boy,” she replies. Or perhaps it’s your five year old who says little and seems very withdrawn and you are worried that he is depressed. You have talked to him to find out what’s going on in his head and he tells you that he saw a television program recently about a boy whose parents are letting him dress as a girl at home. “I’m like that,” he says. “I want to be a girl just like he’s going to be.”

You were scared, you were upset, and you wondered whether you’re a good parent or not. You told your partner what your child had said that day and each of you said that you knew of no one who had ever experienced their child wanting to be the other sex. Now you’re both worried and wondering what you should do.

Relax. Society and the medical profession have come a long way in the last few years. You are not alone. There is support available for you and your child. Unconditional love is the most important thing you can give your child if he or she tells you that he or she is really the other sex or wants to be. Demonstrate your love with hugs and kisses and reassuring words. Encourage them to talk to you about their feelings. Listen to what they are telling you. Talk to them. Consult with them. Don’t be judgmental. Don’t tell them that they are silly. Let them know that you are there to support them not to judge them or, worse, punish them. If they believe there is something wrong with them, tell them that they are fine and that they are not alone and that there are many other children just like them. Ask them to tell you what would make them happier and what you can do to make that happen. Reassure them that they are safe.

Now that you have taken care of your child’s immediate needs, look after your own and your relationship with your partner. Don’t blame yourself or your partner for your child’s gender variance; upbringing cannot prevent it or cause it. Consider consulting your family doctor or a children’s hospital and asking for a referral to a clinician who has specialized in the management of childhood gender variance. Learn as much as you can about childhood gender variance. There are many



Gayle when she was Michael

excellent websites that you can visit. Gender variance is no longer considered to be a mental disorder. Do not punish your child. Your child has not chosen to be gender variant; it is part of humanity's rich diversity, just like eye and skin colour and our collective cultural differences which we embrace not reject.

As you learn more about childhood gender variance consider joining an organization which supports children and parents just like you; peer support helps you and your child to learn what works and what doesn't. Such meetings can be safe places where gender-variant children can begin to learn what it is to be the "other" sex in a safe and supportive environment. Consider using hormone blockers if your child, you, and a clinician who is qualified to assess gender-variant children and adolescents decide that transitioning socially is best; your child will thank you later in life for that decision. Consider educating and seeking the support of your extended family and friends. If necessary, stand up for your child in our still mainly binary gendered world. Sometimes people can be cruel and be bullies. Be prepared to advocate for your child. Consider discussing with your child's school how they can best support him or her if he or she decides to socially transition. And, finally, take to heart the advice of a Toronto parent with a socially transitioning child:

"Look for the hidden blessings. The bad stuff is going to be easy to see. It's going to be right in your face. But there are blessings too. Amazing chances to love and be loved. To see your child blossom. To find out about your own issues and find freedom from the dark places inside that you didn't even know were there. Look for those things."



COMING OUT AT 40

Greta Hurst



I was 40 in 1976, when we moved to Brussels and all three children were in school, so I had lots of free time. Brussels had an English language monthly magazine which included all that was available at that time: all kinds of clubs, organizations And a feminist group. When I joined their monthly meeting, I remember standing at the back of the room. Not a man in sight. Our leader, an American matriarch, stood up front, and I, plastered with fear, stood against the back wall. My only thought was "I can leave this meeting and never come back and my life won't change. However, if I stayed and listened, my life would change radically". Of course, I stayed. I became a member that evening and later became

part of the coordinating committee. We started that year with a course reading feminist material. It was reading feminist literature that radicalized me.

I had learned from a very early age that what women did was what they were told (mainly as instructed by men, who did the leading). When I was young, I was extremely timid which brought out nastiness in some people. I was punished in junior school when we lived in Montreal, the city where I was born. I was punished in first grade for talking in class and not doing what I was told. While my kindergarten teacher adored me, my first grade teacher disliked me on sight. And then I felt very sorry for my second grade teacher who was Japanese and was being ostracized completely by the other teachers. When I was in third grade and World War II was at the height of action, word circulated in the teachers' room that my father was German. One of the third grader's father had just been shot down, and the teacher turned around and looked at me. So did the rest of the class. Fortunately, that was the last year in that school. We were living in the working class part of Montreal, and my next school was much closer. I never had any more problems at school. That was the beginning part of my education: classism and racism in my first school which was non-existent in the neighbourhood school.

It was clear that when I married in 1961, women married men, not other women. That would have been an outrageous thought, so it was never spoken or even thought. My husband, Peter, was Austrian, and I had European parents, a Norwegian mother and a German father. I had already decided that Europe was the place to live. As Peter was an engineer and spoke three languages, it wasn't difficult getting an engineering job.

We first moved to northern Germany in 1956 and lived in a market town for a year, and my German improved enormously. Actually there wasn't much choice. However, we moved to Brussels the next year, which is a very cosmopolitan city where we stayed for several years. The children now went to a long-established English language school. It was there in Brussels that I found my path although I didn't know at the time. It was that feminist group led by that formidable American. Finally, I saw my path when we studied a course outlining what women's purpose was. And it was not just caring for their families. A fire ignited for me, and it didn't take too long to become a staunch feminist and find my path as a feminist and a lesbian.

Today at 87, I feel very grateful that all went as well as it did. I've seen a lot and done a lot of travelling. I have three wonderful children and have been single for a long time.



WORDS

Ellen Woodsworth

A world of words churns inside me, cavorting, splashing, burping, playing, waiting to be chosen, discussed, and cooked into a piece so delicious that it is irresistible. The words are becoming more and more demanding. Peering into my depths I hadn't realized I was full of millions of words, millions. How is it possible that I was unaware that I am bursting with words, phrases, sentences, stories, even books?

Perhaps thousands, no, for sure thousands. In preverbal



times, Dad started telling me stories and reading to me each night. We all devoured books – mom, dad, & my brothers. Saturday mornings they took me to Swansea Public Library, to listen to the librarian read books. There were, and still are, always stacks of books beside our beds, on tables, on shelves and in the car. We gave books, lent books, borrowed books, and talked about books at the dining room table, over breakfast, on the streetcar, while driving and at the cottage. Mom was part of a book club that met monthly for over twenty-five years. My family introduced me to books about animals like Big Red, and Old Yeller, mysteries by Nancy Drew and Agatha Christie, politics by Dolores Ibaruri, WEB DuBois, Franz Fanon, Betty Friedan, James Baldwin, Simone DeBeauvoir, Karl Marx, Paulo Freire and great literature by Dostoyevsky, Han Su Yin, Dickens, Pauline Johnson, Robert Louis Stevenson, A. A. Milne, Vita Sackville West, Robert Service, Pearl Buck and many more. Books of poetry by mom's cousin, Al Purdy, and one of her best friends, Miriam Waddington. There were books by Dad's grandfather, his uncle J.S. Woodsworth, his cousin Grace MacInnes, and his Aunt Alice Chown an anarchist suffragette.

Now my partner and I can barely move around our bedroom because of the stacks of books. There must be hundreds of books in our bedroom and there are the books in the kitchen, living room, dining room, hallway, and study. Why are there no books in the bathroom? I lose words and sometimes books reading in the bathtub.

I love books, big, small, tiny, enormous, fat, thin, tall with engravings, illustrations, sketches, photographs, printed on brown, yellow, beige, white or ivory paper. Some bound, some stitched, some glued. Thousands of books slip and slide through my subconscious.

Some are devoured, some savoured, some nibbled, some munched, some spit out, some left



unread, partially read and some left for another day. I have travelled the world with books and seen amazing books. Visualize a life-sized bronze buffalo made entirely of books by Indigenous writers on the Red River in Winnipeg, or the ceiling of the Istanbul art gallery where hundreds of books dangle from the ceiling, or the sacred books in Japanese temples stroked in elegant designs incomprehensible to me, but so beautiful.

I am full of words, images, ideas, concepts, and memories. They have helped me speak, sleep, read all night, all day or all weekend or wake up, shout out loud, laugh, cry, rage, flex my muscles, jump out of bed, grab my

partner, call a friend to share a book or ask to borrow a book.

Books are the structure of my life, while art takes every other space. Words are at the core of my being. They have saved my life so many times, comforting me, exciting me, stimulating me, illuminating me, educating me, making me grieve, taking and giving me power to change the world. They ooze through my pores, burst from my lips, call to me in the night, pull me from my work, demand my eyes. They say STOP to all other activities. They are my fuel, my breakfast, lunch, snack, diner, and late-night nibble. Imagining it raining books. Imagine sailing over an ocean of books being buffeted here and there by waves of books. Books, books, books, and more books as far as the eye can see full of words.



Now at 75 I want to write my memoir, but the books are jealous. They push their way around, knocking my pen out of my hand, curling up in my lap staring at me demanding ATTENTION. They want me to read them and not get distracted by the gush of words emerging onto more and more pages in my journal. FINALLY, they say: "Okay, you go ahead, write your story using the words we have taught you. We will be there with you every step of the way. Be realistic, you cannot write without us."

They tell me I have to SLOW DOWN and listen deeply to help the words surface. They are my lovers, caressing me as well as harassing, shafting, attacking and buffeting me. I quit university and left



lovers, so I could take the time to savour words, discuss ideas and dive into books that expand and create new worlds. Words have given voice to my thoughts, concepts, and ideals. Words have forced me to launch a lesbian newspaper, write articles, speeches and create “CORA” the Women’s Liberation Bookmobile. People have invited me all over the world to hear my words.

I am full of bits and pieces of words from all the books. Think of the treasure troves waiting for me to discover, as delighted to be found as I am to find them. It is a total illusion that there is a

separation of my being from words. I can no more be without words than I can be without air. I stop for a few moments, and the words emerge; I savor an idea, and it slips out, a thought emerging amidst another thought, and it becomes an idea; a page emerges before me, and suddenly, like magic, there is a story.

Like a toddler I take the next steps and begin to release these words into my memoir, giving myself the time to really listen, enjoy the agony of creation and savour the moments of being totally myself.



You'll find Ellen's writing in Quirk-e's books and zines . . . and you'll find Cora the Woman's Liberation Bookmobile on page 37.

GIVING THANKS

Cyndia Cole

Like many people I was told to count my blessings, to be grateful for the good things we tend to take for granted. Things like ‘I’m still alive.’ ‘There are no bombs falling all around me.’ and ‘I no longer live in fear because I’m a woman and a lesbian.’

I remember my shock forty-two years ago when Brenda told me to be grateful for the bad things. Things like – I couldn’t walk at the age of 30, due to rheumatoid arthritis; that I had recently experienced abuse from someone I trusted; that my father had died, and that I felt desperately alone and unsupported.

Brenda said, “You promised to go through these bad things, because you knew you could transform and overcome them. You promised to grow stronger and happier by going through bad things. That’s called ‘turning poison into medicine.’ And because you have compassion, you realize the only way you can give courage and hope to all the other people going through bad things is to do it yourself.” I thought giving thanks for bad things was pretty weird and might be pretty powerful. So, I tried it. Although I had only recently met Brenda through our lesbian community, right away I wanted Brenda’s charisma, which radiated from her confidence and conviction. So, I chanted like she taught me. I chanted Nam-myoho-rence-kyo even though I didn’t know what it meant and I most certainly did not want to become a Buddhist. As I chanted,



I found a place inside me that could say thank you for facing all the baddest things in my life so far. Strangely enough, a cluster of good things started to appear. I felt less pain, less resentment, less anger, less victimized. I wrote some terrific poems; I met a woman who adored me; I started walking. I found a way forward.

Throughout the pandemic and other trying times, my partner Angie and I tell each other ‘three good things’ each night before we fall asleep. Researchers say it trains our brains to see the good things and to fall asleep more peacefully by turning off the switch that ruminates on the bad things. We never



fail to find three good things. She likes to repeat the same ones many times – that she has spent time with me, and with our puppy Duke, and has had good things to eat or drink. I like to search for new good things each night. Mine often focus on small accomplishments, like making cards or gardening or connecting with someone in a supportive way. I do sleep peacefully.

But honestly speaking, giving thanks for the bad things has had an even more powerful impact on my life. Bad things like the life-threatening or chronic diseases of my loved ones. Like the persecution my partner and I faced by being women who love each other and who worked together. The most dramatic bad thing was the day I was marched out of my office to my car like a criminal, after being falsely accused of wrong-doing as a cover for the political move to shut down and privatize my whole health care department.

Brenda also taught me that Nichiren Daishonin says when obstacles arise “the wise will rejoice while the foolish will retreat.” “Why rejoice at persecution?” I asked. Brenda said, “Because it means you’re moving forward. Resistance is proof of that. A boat drifting makes no waves, but a boat speeding forward creates a huge wake. Strong opposition proves you are on a fast track forward. So, rejoice and give thanks. Keep going and never retreat!” Brenda would be proud that I faced this intense bad thing with the powerful confidence and conviction that I learned from her, saying thank you in my heart.

Right after that, so many good things appeared, like more money, more time, and more freedom to be myself. Most of all, I deepened my ability to say thank you for all things, good and bad, that are forging my unbreakable determination, invincible hope and unshakeable happiness. I can, and do, say give thanks for everything, from the bottom of my heart, and I mean it.

UNFORTUNATELY FORTUNATE

River Glen



Youth is so cheap. Not much yet invested. No name made. Only the previous generations as measurement. Direction a murky school age vision of current desires. Much of it is hormonal. But also, in part, a moral quest of understanding and purpose. The second birth is autonomy from parents. Some want autonomy from church and state, while they are at it. In the prime of life, vision can focus. Successes or failures are air under wings, fortunately, or unfortunately not. Some Things will always keep coming. The somethings of: people, materialism, jobs, residences, and maybe some understanding. How easily can all that has been made, all that has been gotten, slip through one's fingers. One has to keep improvising, but when one is older, reinvention is not as easy as it used to be. Even the

the tools change every decade or two. The tools have the power to carry whole societies into behaviours unlike anything before imagined. A phone is rarely used by the youth to actually talk. How can a thing of such communicating fecundity create barriers, but it does. The consequences are mostly ignored in the rush for the newest and latest. Of course, commerce continues to ride the wave of planned obsolescence and the capital consolidates, and the amount of square feet rent money gets has minimalism looking like its time has come. But that's what our now 8 billion hungry mouths look like.

Old age isn't so cheap. Healthcare alone is expensive for society. Individually, the time and energy invested to keep body parts functioning, relationships viable, to stay abreast of the daily news, to try and deal with banks, taxes, fill the empty fridge eats up the days. Yet, there can also be too much time on hand to wander into mindsets of lament about what's gone or what was never created. Will anyone remember you when you are gone? Does it matter what the subsequent generations measure it to be?

Few people spend time caring about the 2nd, 3rd or 4th grandparents, and history can be cherry picked on the whims of the people in power. Looking at the condition of the world shows there are all the selfish desires and the few altruistic ones steering everything towards yet another and then another murky vision. Being old, getting comfortable can be a drive of greater significance than any residual hormones or pursuit of status. A moral quest might not be as much about saving the world as it is trying to make some sense of life or finding the right excuses anyway. Yet, thankfully for some, morals still can mean marching with peace signs, rainbow flags and carrying "fight climate change" banners.

Maybe the third birth of ageing is not so much about autonomy as it is about balancing ageing's processes of evaporation, while keeping a foot in the door. Ageism is finally being talked about. Obviously not everyone can be productive, but at least one can still have gratitude. Unfortunately, you are damn fortunate to be old, but don't try and tell the youth that; they can't possibly understand, and they have too much of their current reality to deal with.



PRIDE

Gregory Bourgeois

I first marched for gay rights in 1974. It's no surprise that I remember the exact year because it was a personal milestone. I had been active before that with public speaking and peer counselling, but I had never lived up to the cliché, that is walking down a Main Street carrying a sign. Earlier that year, someone told me that the true test of a gay liberation group is that they are willing to demonstrate or march in a public space, and I agreed with him. But fear of violence stopped me, or maybe it was fear of total exposure, or maybe just fear of the unknown. Well, I can't recall what the problem was exactly, but it was high time to get it over with.

My "first time" was on a weekday in downtown Toronto. There were twenty five to fifty of us demonstrating in front of the headquarters of the Toronto Star newspaper. It made no difference if we were only twenty five or more like fifty because most crowds look puny when they are shouting at a twenty story concrete building. Nor did it help that the sidewalks were otherwise empty. This was a neighbourhood with very little pedestrian activity, so there was no one around to witness our grand gesture. There were a lot of cars though, but they were moving so fast that the best we could hope for from the drivers was a brief and puzzled glance. So my debut could not be described as a major spectacle. We packed it in after what we felt was the requisite amount of time, but still hung out in the street for a



while bantering and clowning, and I certainly enjoyed that.

After that marches and demonstrations were a regular part of my life. Certainly, the numbers of participants grew, but painfully slowly. I remember one picture in the *Body Politic*, the gay liberation paper, which said it all. It was a photo of a group of demonstrators carefully posed. The photographer had tried to make it look like they were just the midsection of a long, long line but they were too stiff and carefully spaced out. There were about twelve people in the photo, and I'm sure that's how many who showed up

that day.

And then there was the Anita Bryant snafu. The organizers had decided to have a variety show first and march later. Unfortunately, they underestimated how long the show would take, and the streets of downtown Toronto were sparsely populated by the time we left the hall. Especially so in the financial district where we wound up shouting at office towers again. Still, someone said to me that night "big crowd -- nine hundred, we think." I loved the guys with the crowd estimates -- did they have a degree in crowd estimation or something? But the numbers never seemed high enough. Especially if you went to a bar or club for a drink afterwards. Which I did every time. You walked in, and these places were always crammed to the rafters. I was shouting inside, "why can't you ninnyes join the fight? We need you!" Disco music sounded especially inane to me on those nights.

Despite my faithful attendance, I was worried that I was letting the team down somehow. It was obvious that the organizers and marshals wanted us to project the image of the strong, impatient and angry gay men and lesbians! But I had a hard time concealing the fact that I was just having fun. Sure I was always bellowing "Gay rights now!" But I was just as likely to forget what I was doing and wave to my friends and yell "Yoo hoo! Bobby! It's me Greg!" I was just so happy about being able to shout to the world that I was gay, and I wasn't afraid to tell the world about it. And I was smiling too much.

Some people would ask, including my older self, why did you get such a buzz from this? Maybe it was just such a huge release after spending the first nineteen years of my life concealing such a huge chunk of my life from other people. However there was one night back in 1981, when I felt that I came up to the mark as an angry young (or youngish) gay man. Less than 24 hours earlier the police had raided the gay bathhouses and charged several hundred gay men with being inmates of a common bawdy house. I guess that foggy Victorian expression implied prostitution without having to state it precisely. My immediate thought was “these things aren’t supposed to happen anymore, I thought we were past all this.”



I was hopping mad when I reached demonstration, and I immediately joined the chant. People were yelling “no more shit!” Those three little words summarized my feelings exactly. One straight man further agitated me. He dove into the crowd fists flying; there were thousands of us there; did he think he was going to beat all of us singlehanded? Still, that was the only violence that I had ever witnessed at a demonstration.

After the parade marshals dragged him off, we surrounded every police officer we saw and shouted “Zeig Heil!” Then we stomped off to police headquarters and chanted “Fuck You!” All of this took place against a backdrop of shouting, shoving matches and minor scuffles. The marshals weren’t egging us on; this was all spontaneous. And one of the estimating guys told me “four thousand; this is our biggest crowd yet ever!”

The Toronto papers were certainly impressed, and we made the front pages of all three dailies . And the photographs were pretty good as we looked like we were really boiling. My only disappointment was a picture taken from on high. One of the photographers had gotten to a higher floor of a building across the street and aimed his camera down at us. We certainly looked like a boiling mass from that angle, but we barely filled the intersection. Back down in the middle of the crowd, it seemed like the whole world was there, but really it was a smallish angry mob.

Despite our small actual number, the press continued to cover this issue, and the gay community organized to fight these bawdy house charges. The police raids ultimately backfired as a public relations exercise as a large segment of the city decided their actions were absurd. Who cares what gay men do inside their bathhouses was the general sentiment.

In the aftermath, I quickly came to the realization that I my new identity as Greg Bourgeois Street Warrior was just a pose. I admitted to myself that I wasn’t that person. It didn’t really bother me because I intended to march whenever I was called upon. If people continued to march and turn up in ever greater numbers we would achieve real progress.

Given my commitment, it’s odd that I didn’t show up for Toronto’s first Pride event which was held later that year. I guess it just didn’t capture my imagination. It was 1983 when I finally checked it out. The first part was held in the park behind the Art Gallery, and I found the speeches, music, and souvenir stands quite charming. However, when they announced that it was time to march, I said to myself “time to get down to business.”

So we assembled in the street, and waited patiently while the marshals adjusted our lines or did whatever they did on those occasions. However, this was taking what seemed to me a long, long time. “Just what the heck is causing the great big holdup ?” I wondered. So I looked behind me, and the line of people filled the street and continued down and out of sight. Then I looked to the front, and the picture was the same. There were so many people stretched out ahead of me that for the first time in all my years

of marching, I couldn't see where the procession began or ended! Could it be that we were finally catching on ?

Finally we started to move and I took a really deep breath. I was ready to bellow out "Gay rights now!" Fortunately, they switched on the music machine right at that instant, thus stopping me from hollering right in the middle of the street like a damn fool. What was a music machine there for anyway? Well, the people surrounding me were in the know and began to do a sort of combination march and dance step down the street.

I was still slowly absorbing this new reality when I realized that the spectators on the sidewalk had joined the party as well. Gone were the faces from the past with their stony stares, and the "Down with Fags!" chants, and the people who used to point at us and laugh. The laughing people were the worst. Now people were cheering us on and dancing. And if they laughed, they were laughing with us.

My fellow marcher-dancers were also a type that I wasn't used to seeing at "Gay Lib" events. When I joined Gays for Equality back in Winnipeg, high school wasn't that far behind me, and it struck me that we looked like the gay community's equivalent of the science club nerds. We all had bad haircuts and the ill fitting baggy jeans. Over the years some of us styled up, but others bought themselves alpaca ponchos and Solidarity buttons. But at this event there were quite a lot of sleek and sexy men wearing the "right" jeans, that is the Calvin Klein's, and sporting Vidal Sassoon style expensive haircuts. As well, there were some wannabes, with slightly dated shag haircuts and off-brand jeans. Well, we were finally reaching the comfortable middle class, and the working class as well. Not just college boys and lefties who don't know how to dress. By the way, as usual there were lots of women there, but I can't remember what they were wearing because I was too busy studying the men's jeans.

At the end of the day, I rode the subway home with a big smile on my face. In addition, I felt a little bit of surprise. I had expected something a little lame and a little boring. More of an obligation than a celebration. I certainly hadn't expected an experience which bolstered my self esteem and bordered on euphoric.



I wondered if the organizers realized the public relations value of what they were doing. The general public gets tired of protests and negativity, and eventually they get into the habit of looking away or changing the channel. On the other hand, if they see light, colours, music and dancing, they're intrigued. It also conveyed the message that we see ourselves as just another piece in Canada's mosaic. No different from Italian Canadians or Ukrainian Canadians for example. Not just another group with a grievance. This can be more effective than shouting and raging.

I no longer get the big buzz out of the Pride parade. It's a case of "been there, done that." I now rely on smaller pleasures throughout the year. For instance, just turning on the television or going to the library and seeing the Queer Community represented everywhere, and in a thorough and thoughtful way that I am still not accustomed to. Of course, I wouldn't resist a great big joyful occasion. Like seeing all the book banners and religious bigots being beaten back once and for all. Well, I can dream can't I?

A FAVOURITE LAKEFAIR MEMORY

Don Orr Martin

Lakefair is a week-long civic event that takes place in July in the state capital of Olympia, Washington on the shores of Capitol Lake. It started in the 1950s in that small provincial town and is still going strong today. There are midway booths and carnival rides. A Lakefair queen is crowned from among girls representing area high schools. There used to be hydroplane races. Downtown businesses have sidewalk sales. A big parade with floats and marching bands, and a huge fireworks display top off the week. There is always lots of drinking and arrests for disorderly conduct. The whole town goes a little insane. I was recently invited to submit my favourite Lakefair memory to the newspaper by an arts and entertainment writer. I lived in Olympia for over forty years until 2014. Here is my favourite memory:

Sometime in the early 1970s, I went to Lakefair in “drag” accompanied by a couple of my straight college roommates. I had recently started a gay and lesbian student organization at the state college, and it felt like the time was right to bring Olympia into the twentieth century. Back then I had long hair and a mustache. I tied my hair in a flowing scarf and wore my dangliest pair of earrings—I pierced both ears and wore matching sets at a time when only a few brave men were piercing just one lobe; depending on left or right, it signalled one’s sexual orientation. It was a warm summer night, so a halter top—sleeveless with bare midriff—was a perfect complement to my “Daisy Dukes”. Eye makeup, bracelets, high heels, and a jeweled clutch completed my outfit. I looked fabulous and was both exhilarated and terrified. Would I get threatened or worse? My roommates went as bodyguards and carried enough cash to bail me out of jail if needed. But as I recall, I mostly just got laughs and dirty looks. I affected a swishy persona, and it was a blast—a cathartic release—to be someone else for a few hours amid the carnival atmosphere. The carnies who ran the midway booths and the rides loved me. One even propositioned me, but I was too chicken to meet up with him at the end of his shift at midnight. Mothers would cover their kids’ eyes when I walked past. One girl about six or seven stood staring with her mouth agape. Finally, she asked, “Are you a boy or a girl?”

“Yes,” I replied.



You'll have to imagine the halter top, accessories, and longer hair, but these are my Daisy Dukes (super short cut-off jeans like those worn by the female lead on the Dukes of Hazzard TV show).

A site River Glen thought you might be interested in is **Good News from LGBTQ Nation**
<newsletter@lgbtqnation.com> As the site says:

Good things are happening to LGBTQ people. It's easy to overlook the positive stories in the daily mix of news, so every other week we highlight moments you may have missed.

Like it? [Share it with a friend](#). Everyone could use a little good news.

AGEING IN PLACE
ACTION AND ADVOCACY ALERT: BC SENIORS CARE
Adriaan de Vries

Older adults unanimously prefer to live independently at home for as long as possible. However, many seniors are pushed into long-term care earlier than necessary and against their wishes because of barriers to adequate home support. A significant factor in whether a senior can stay at home is the cost of home support services.

According to a 2023 report by BC's Office of the Seniors Advocate headed by Isobel Mackenzie, providing publicly funded home support makes sound economic sense. While subsidizing a long-term care bed costs taxpayers about \$59,900 per year, providing two hours of daily home support costs less than half, on average saving taxpayers \$31,700 per year. One hour of daily home support, which is enough for many more seniors to stay in their home longer, saves taxpayers about \$45,800 per year.

BC is one of the last provinces still charging for home support services in spite of the fact that providing home support costs so much less than the alternative oft- chosen option when people cannot afford Home Care. This policy also does not consider the non-financial costs of residential care, such as reducing the quality of life, limiting access to the person, limiting ability to stay in touch with chosen family and community, and much reducing independence, all leading to mental health impacts such as increased depression and more.

Please send an email or a letter to your BC MLA demanding that they move to correct this current fiasco of no financial sense. Please copy Isobel Mackenzie, the BC Seniors Advocate at:
info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT BC SENIORS' ISSUES – services, funding, management & more

For more information about the financial situation for BC seniors as well as the chaotic state of management of BC Long Term Care for seniors read these recommendations from the BC Health Coalition:

https://assets.nationbuilder.com/bchealthcoalition/pages/1784/attachments/original/1686776208/BCHC_Submission_to_2024_Budget.pdf?1686776208

Read the BC Seniors' Advocate report released September 22, 2022. Click on the title to read. *BC Seniors: Falling Further Behind*. In spite of being one of the wealthier provinces, BC falls into the bottom tier when the compared to all other provinces and territories in terms of overall support of its elders.

For **2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors' issues** read the report by Dignity Senior Society titled *Aging with Dignity: 2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors in BC*, released in March 16, 2023 here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c9553f69d414969eb918334/t/646d174e84af27679d43d83a/1684870991468/DSS+Study+Final+Rev+May+11+2023.pdf>

Every voice via email or letter makes a difference. Please act now.

Use the first three paragraphs of this article as the opening salvo in your letter or email. You can conclude with just a final statement asking for action from your MLA.

Also, please share this article widely with your Community and family.



THE FUTURE

Lari Sousa

I think people underestimate
The impact of being free
Of being safe and having
These imperfect opportunities
To set ourselves free
And finally manifest
The person we each
Desire to be.

Happiness is never easy
Inward and outward;
There are many battles
Barriers and walls
That makes us feel
It's almost impossible
To experience what it
Truly means to be free.

May the world embrace
All of us --
By eliminating
The roots of all
The systems of oppression
That first caused us to experience
The misery, discrimination and alienation
That stop us from being free --

That's not the life
Any of us deserves to live.

We are all truly worthy of
Having daily opportunities
To make choices,
With safety and agency
To experience
What it truly means to
Be happy and free.

May we all
Allow ourselves and others -
The safety, agency and knowledge
To make choices
That truly make us happy
And set us all free.



CORA THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION BOOKMOBILE

And thanks to Ellen Woodsworth, we have an interesting look at some herstory connected with sharing feminist books.

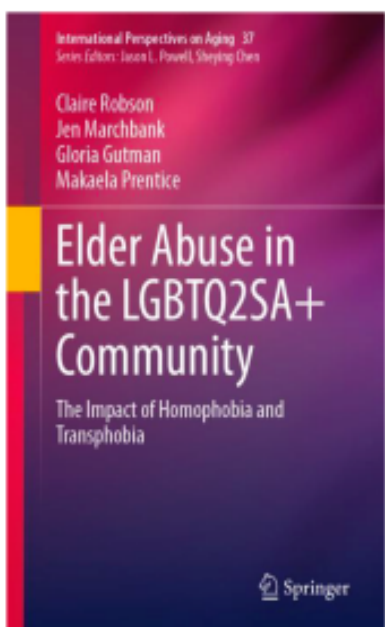


Cora the Women's Liberation Bookmobile, Judith Quinlan on the left, Ellen Woodsworth centre, Boo Watson on the right

Cora the Women's Liberation Bookmobile, Judith Quinlan on the left, Ellen Woodsworth on the right



Hot off the press. Get yours today; it's a book that all of us should read.



Claire Robson, Jen Marchbank, Gloria Gutman, Makaela Prentice

Elder Abuse in the LGBTQ2SA+ Community

The Impact of Homophobia and Transphobia

- Raises awareness of the invisible problem of elder abuse in the LGBTQ2SA+ community
- Expands and complicates our theorizing of elder abuse and encourages further research
- Offers support to other survivors and encouragement for them to share their stories

This book describes and analyzes the lived experience of elder abuse from the queer community. It discusses the experiences by transwomen, gay men and lesbians of financial abuse, physical and sexual abuse, homophobic abuse, and neglect within partner relationships, residential care, in home care, and religious organizations. Queer and trans elders have been described as 'The Silent Generation', since they have lived through times when their sexual and gender identities were criminalized and pathologized. The book shows that they are far more at risk to suffer abuse and neglect by those they should be able to trust, since they are more likely to have encountered all key risk factors, such as isolation, previous abuse and trauma, and mistrust of the health care system. Their vulnerability has been overlooked and this book addresses that gap. As such, this book provides a great resource to anyone working with elders, including medical professionals, care providers, police, counsellors, and policy makers.

Edition No: 1

2023 . XVII, 167 p. 2 illus.

Series

International Perspectives on Aging

Hard cover

ISBN 978-3-031-33316-3

QUEER ORGANIZATIONS

If you're looking for connections within the queer community in the Lower Mainland or on Vancouver Island, the following contacts should be useful.

- Rocketman website with a list of queer organizations: <https://rocketmanapp.com/blog/13-organizations-supporting-lgbtq-communities-in-british-columbia/>
- Qmunity- <https://qmunity.ca>, reception@qmunity.ca, 604-5307 ext. 100 , 1-800-566-1170
- Vancouver Island Queer Resource Collective (Vancouver and Victoria) <https://viqueercollective.com/>
- Dignity Seniors Society <https://www.dignityseniors.org/>, dignityseniorssociety@gmail.com
- Vancouver Pride Society <https://vancouverpride.ca/>
- Surrey Pride surreypride.ca
- Alex House alexhouse.net,
- New West Pride <https://newwestpride.ca>
- Youth 4 A Change <https://www.youth4achange.net>

Collected by River Glen



Donate to help a refugee family settle in Vancouver!

We are sponsoring a large family that includes a member of the LGBTQ community. They have actively protested the Taliban regime and their lives are in danger. The family has escaped Afghanistan and anxiously await our help to come to safety in Canada.

How can you help?

We need cash donations and contributions to our raffle and auction! With the \$120,000 we are raising, we will help the family relocate to Vancouver, find housing and health care, and settle into school and employment.

Who are we?

Rainbow Bridge is a Circle of Hope within Rainbow Refugee, a Vancouver organization that supports refugees seeking protection from persecution for sexual orientation, HIV status, and gender identity or expression.

DONATE



To learn more and sign up for our newsletter contact
Claire at clairerobson@shaw.ca
Please like us on Facebook to see our events and activities.



RainbowRefugeeCircles

We have raised about \$80,000 and need to raise another \$40,000 to bring the family to Vancouver and support them for a year while they find a home and settle into school and employment.

PLEASE HELP: donate what you can, and you'll receive an instant tax credit.

You will also know that, while you can't necessarily change the whole world, you can change it for these people who fought for women's rights in Afghanistan and became targets. They are in constant danger.

CELEBRATE PRIDE



**WHEREVER AND WHENEVER YOU
CAN!**