

# LEGACY

**YOURS, MINE AND OURS . . . .**



**QUIRK-E**  
Queer Imaging & Riting Kollektive for Elders

**A ZINE BY THE QUIRK-E ZINERS**

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*We are grateful to be living and working on the unceded and stolen land of the Coast Salish people, the First Nations. We acknowledge the responsibility we have as colonizers to reconcile with and support Indigenous Nations. Canada stole their land and their children and still operates under the oppressive Indian Act. We must do better.*

## INTRODUCTION

Val Innes

“What does it mean to leave a legacy? The definition of a lasting legacy is the positive impact your life has on other people — friends, colleagues, even strangers. Your legacy is the sum of the personal values, accomplishments, and actions that resonate with the people around you.” [www.betterup.com/blog](http://www.betterup.com/blog). Actually, though, you could equally well define it as simply the impact our lives have had, good or bad, on the people around us and the ones who come after us. There are also the legacies inherent from our country’s history and our ancestors’ behaviour which we have to deal with one way or another.

In this zine, while not all of the writing is on our legacies, it is the prevailing theme. And some of the writing will be about members of Quirk-e and our queer community who have recently passed: Chris Morrissey, Margo Dunn and Greg Bourgeois. That’s a lot of loss for Quirk-e particularly that of Chris Morrissey who was our founder and an active leader who has created and left a deep legacy. But all of us leave a legacy – of children for those who had them, of the work we have done, of the love we have shared, of the friends we have made and of the changes we have worked for and won. And Canada’s legacy in terms of its treatment of Indigenous people is clearly present in Canada and in this zine.

We are a unique queer generation. We are the ones who marched, wrote, challenged and protested the homophobic and transphobic country we grew up in, and we changed the laws and much of the negative attitudes towards us in Canada. This legacy of ours is also apparent here, in a zine that exists because of those changes. In a complex, often frightening world, our legacy has brought us far more safety within Canada than existed prior to us. That’s a very positive impact, and a resounding legacy!



## QUIRK-E DECLARATION

The Queer Imaging and Riting Kollektive for Elders hereby declares its adherence to the Canadian and BC Human Rights Codes, including, but not restricted to, prohibition of discrimination in publication or speech, because of the Indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or that group or class of person.

## RE-CREATING QUEER LEGACY FROM QUEER TO QUEER

Adriaan de Vries

I am 14.

“You disgusting queer!”

It was spat at me. Venomous. Striking me with the precision hit of a cobra. Hitting me at my most vulnerable – unformed low self-esteem. I was blindsided as I was going about my life in naïve oblivion, not expecting anything from anyone, minding my business. I was the way I am every day, protecting myself, guarding myself from appearing, looking, or seeming different, from appearing ‘queer’, as if I knew what that was.

Then I thought I was the only queer in my world. The only one who knew that, under all the layers of acting, of posturing, of covering, that I was queer.

They were ‘only’ words, but I was viciously stricken. There was no surface wound, nothing showing that anything was wrong. “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but names can never hurt me.” Never? Deep inside I bled, my heart painfully lacerated. It would be with me, ulcerating for decades.

It was the times – the 1960’s and 70’s. This vitriolic hate, directed at about 10% of humanity, was accepted as the norm, propped up by sanctimoniousness and aspirations of godliness. It was supported by



malignant hyper-masculinity that was the required standard for anyone male. The oppressed had not yet said: “Enough. I’ve had enough. I had no choice in this matter, and I am a person worthy of everything you demand for yourself. Every right. Every privilege. Stop with the hate and discrimination. I am equal . . . I deserve what you have.”

And from there, we pass into 60+ years of fighting, of marching, of rising up, up and up, of suffering and supporting each other with our open wounds of self-hate, depression, addiction and mental illness. Then, standing up to be recognized like any other human being, to be equal, to be. To be proud and joyous. To be healthy, in mind and spirit. To be alive.

We fought. We still fight.

I am 18.

I went to college. A Christian college but some initial freedom, nevertheless. Away from the ever-present weight of parental opprobrium and religious communal oppression, I got to explore who I am. It started the path to freedom. It allowed a queer essence to grow inside, with tiny roots of self and beginning self-acceptance.

For a decade and longer, I lived in a binary world: queer and non-queer. Me: functioning professionally as “straight” and personally as weekend queer. My self-effacing goal was to keep my divisions divided. One separate and hidden from the other.

I am 36.

HIV exploded into the world, and my acceptance of my queerness and community thrust me into freedom. My allegiance to my community was stronger than my fear of being queer. I marched as: “Silence = Death”. I volunteered at the AIDS Committee of Toronto. Family Rights were won to allow spouses to visit their same sex partners dying in hospitals. After more decades of persistent, consistent lobbying, we got Same Sex Marriage rights. Slowly, inexorably pride crept in. My queerness became my strength, moved to the fore. My queerness became my essence. I experienced life as I had never experienced it before.



I am 78



My Queerness is expansive. I luxuriate in its gifts: as an individual, as friend, as partner, as community. I recognize and revel in all those things, and experiences that I have as queer that I never would have as straight.

I am queer. Do you hear me? I am queer. I am proud. I am accomplished. I am smart, and I am wise, advanced even beyond my advanced years.

Queer legacy inexorably led me to my fullness as queer! Crossing the river Styx, emerging from the legacy of hell and self-hatred into the legacy of self-acceptance and joy, community and deepest fulfilment, pride and love. And so, it is.



This next piece is from Chris Morrissey, Quirk-e's founder, one of our coordinators and dear friend to all Quirkies. This is one of her last pieces of writing; you'll read her eulogy later in this Zine. We miss her. She was a woman who lived justly, loved tenderly, cared deeply, and made major change happen.



## IT CREPT UP ON ME

**Chris Morrissey**

There is a mobility scooter, a wheelchair, 2 walkers, and half a dozen canes scattered around my one-bedroom condo. I have my glasses on a cord around my neck, a medic alert device, and frequently my compass card on a lanyard. I tell myself that I have all these because I am an amputee. The next phrase I hear myself saying is "not because I'm old". I'm not one of those old women I see with things hanging round their neck and using a walker. It is hard for me to acknowledge *even to myself* the reality that I **am** one.



When I tell people that I have just turned 81, some of the responses I get from people around me are "It's only a number". "But your heart is young." "Wow, I couldn't tell." I've been telling myself that 80 is the new 60. All of those things are possibly true and I take comfort in them. Deep down inside, however, I know it is my own fear of growing old, of being old.

I am afraid of not being relevant any more. I am afraid of people thinking that I'm "past it" and then being left aside, no longer seen as being able to make a contribution. I don't believe any of this and at the same time I have to fight the feelings.

I struggle with my own internalized ageism. I do have to acknowledge and accept as I age, some of my abilities change. I remember the first time I discovered I couldn't see well enough to turn a screw with a screwdriver. I was pissed off. I had to ask for help. I hate having to ask for help! I've had to learn to accept help when I need it and sometimes when I don't need it! I'm having to learn to receive as well as give, to be interdependent rather than always independent.

### And those commercials!



We are inundated by them, advertising the latest anti-ageing product. In Shoppers Drug Mart, I recently saw a Clinique ad "A New Way To Lose Wrinkles". Whenever I watch TV there is always at least one, usually more, ads about dark spots (after 40), how to get rid of bags under the eyes. I hear news about the latest search for the gene that will stop or at least slow down the ageing process. I confess that I am, on occasion, when I move through the product isle in the drug store, tempted to try a product or two.

Why is it that **our** culture values youth and appearances to the exclusion of age and experience? Some years ago when I was visiting my mother in hospital, a doctor came in, followed by several who appeared to be interns. They all gathered around my mother's bed. The doctor began

relating to the interns the reason that my mom was there. After a few minutes, he looked across my mom lying in the bed and asked me, “How has she been today?” I looked back at him and said, “Why don’t you ask her. She can speak.”



It is amazing to me how I have become what? Incompetent, invisible? Recently, I went to an Apple store with my laptop. The first time this happened, the young man attending us, directed his attention to my companion. He is a guy who very generously accompanies me. Clearly, there’s the assumption that I can’t explain what the problem is. After all, I’m old. What do I know about technology? My friend has learned to redirect the usually young man attending us. “Don’t look at me. It’s her laptop.” Recently, he took me to buy new sneakers. Looking at my friend, the server asked, “How will you be paying?” I looked at the salesperson and responded, “Excuse me, I’m paying.” We have to

continually advocate for ourselves!

I have to remind myself that ageing is about health as well as numbers. Some of us have been privileged to have good nutrition, reasonable housing, and often excellent education. There are also our DNA and genetic factors over which we have no control. Access to good health care is also an important factor. It is not uncommon for an old person to go to a doctor with a health issue only to be told, “Well you are 80.”

I have a t-shirt that says, “I thought growing old would take longer”. Somehow it crept up on me. I don’t want my death to do the same. As each day goes by, I am conscious to do my best to live in the present, to be grateful for each day and what it brings. I am conscious that most likely the next major event in my life will be my death. I know that someone will take care of things for me after I die. Since I know this will be a reality, I hope I can do my part before I die. We live in a society that does its best to deny both our ageing and our deaths. In this environment, it is challenging to talk about and prepare for death. Is this what is really behind our fear of ageing?



Photos from Chris Morrissey

## A FLAUNTING OF DYKES

Lorri Rudland

Many years ago, in anticipation of the upcoming Gay Pride march, in August 1984, several friends and I tried to think up a slogan for the banner. We weren’t an organized group, just some friends, Rachel Epstein, Dorrie Brannock (now passed), and a few others whose names I’ve forgotten, who wanted to do something different in the parade. Since most banners we had ever carried fell in the general category of “Women

Against”, we thought it would be fun to think up a slogan that was a bit irreverent, funny or less predictable. We thought and thought, but our old habits of oppositional thinking seemed to defeat our purpose.

Finally I asked if they wished to hear my only venture into Japanese Haiku poetry. They said, with a decided lack of enthusiasm, “well, okay.” I carefully began to prepare them, as I had prepared others before them, for a recitation of my meaningful two-line poem. In serious tones, I introduced the theme of coming out, the pain, the wonderment, the triumph: “one day you’re standing on the earth,” I said to the converted, “and the next day you’re standing on the moon,



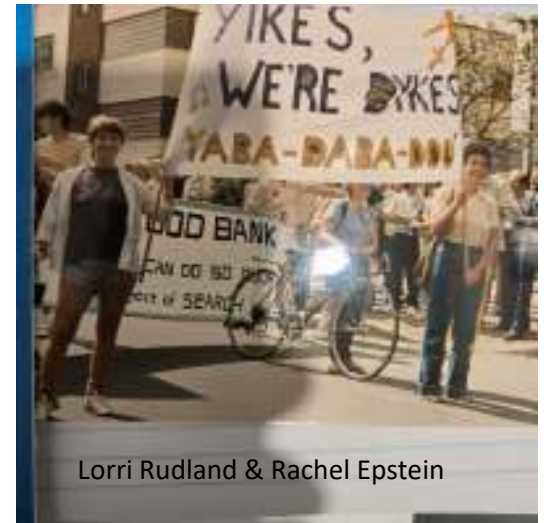
looking down.” Then, after an attempt at a serious pause, I recited with real feeling, “Yike, I’m a dyke.”

Perhaps their understanding of poetry was limited. I admit my Haiku structure was imperfect. But after some thought, they conceded my poem might do as a slogan. First, we rewrote it from an understated, individualistic, contemplation on my dramatic, lifestyle change to a collective flaunting of lesbianism.

Our new version was longer, a joint celebration of coming out, converting fear of the individual into a threat from the pack. The new version proclaimed, “Yikes, we’re dykes. Yaba-daba-doo.” Not as melodic or original as Meg Christian’s song “Leaping Lesbians,” but what the hell. On a large lavender banner we painted our slogan, and on Gay Pride day, we marched it proudly down the street. We didn’t know what to expect from the crowd or our lesbian and feminist sisters. We were richly rewarded. Marching directly in front of the serious banner for the Food Bank, and following behind banners of Lesbians and Gays for or against this or that, our slogan had a profound effect on the onlookers. They would look at the banner, read it and do a double-take. Usually we would be rewarded with a gasp of laughter or sometimes an open gaping mouth. We even pasted together a spur-of-the-moment little song, something like “Yaba-daba-doo, we’ll have a gay old time. “

On the political side, as expected, we received some criticism. And strange criticism it was, being political ourselves. Several women said, “But we didn’t say anything,” and we would repeat, “Yikes” with a pause, “We’re dykes, Yaba daba doo.” My favorite was, “But what do you stand for?” We simply repeated our slogan. One official solemnly told us we couldn’t win a prize, because we hadn’t registered as an organization.

Over the years I’ve been in many parades behind many banners, but I’ll never forget marching down Beach Avenue in downtown Vancouver, behind that silly slogan and watching the faces of the bystanders.



Photos supplied by Lorri Rudland

## 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. When I first applied for employment, 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 of 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, now just the other day he introduced me to his seventeen year old daughter! What do you think?”



Farren



"I think it's none of our business. He is one of your best employees, so I say stay out of his business" she replied.

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 and 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, about persistence when they had advocated for rights for their disabled children, finally getting them out of the institution. Next meeting, I suggested that we send yet another letter to our carrier, this time asking why and reminding them that ICBC had been offering same sex benefits for five years already, and that we might consult with them about 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-person 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."

Farren and Jen





## SHARDS AND SCREE

Maggie Shore

Ellie and Doris smile at each other  
across the cafe table, sipping chamomile tea  
between tidbits of news,  
their white hair two halos of light.  
Ellie suddenly brightens over an important  
insight about their trip to Reno;  
she is preparing to speak,  
her mouth poised, savouring the taste  
of the first words.

A long pause hangs between them.

"Dammit Doris, I had this great idea  
I was going to tell you, something about . . .  
and it just went "poof", disappeared  
as if the words had leaped off a cliff  
and fallen into darkness."

Doris replies nonchalantly:  
"If you don't use it, you lose it."

Ellie sniffs into her yellow hanky  
and dabs her eyes.  
She wonders aloud:  
"God, Doris, where does that stuff go?  
Those unsaid things that just disappear  
a whole sentence formed in your mouth -- gone.  
It happens to me a lot these days."

"Oh dear," Doris offers. "Don't you worry so."

Ellie continues:  
"All those words and ideas -  
gone in a flash, dropped into oblivion,  
wherever that is. Maybe those lost fragments are just  
lying about at the base of the cliff,  
piles of dark shards and scree of lost memories."

"Well dear," said Doris, "Maybe they're recycled, who knows?  
So let's head back now. You know they don't like it  
when we're late for supper."



Maggie & River



Maggie Presenting



Maggie 2025



Maggie's photo: Shards and Scree

## MY LEGACY

### Marsha Ablowitz

Great Aunt Sylvia shocked me. She invited me to her suite and handed me her obituary written in meticulous tiny script.

"When I die I want this printed in the Jewish Western Bulletin."

"Yes, I'll do that."

I was shaken. Who wrote their own obituary? I didn't want her to die. Sylvia died at age 102, and I delivered her obituary as promised. She wrote how her dad had built and named the Sylvia Hotel after her. She swam with Joe Fortes. She started a business and organised charities. I wondered who would write my obituary. What would they say?

I am childless, and when I was a teenager I longed to save the world. I made up songs and sang to myself about making things right by stopping wars. I had energy to work for social change, but I wasn't sure where to start. I was inspired by Saul Alinsky's conflict theory. I decided in the 1970s to study for my Master's in Social Work, with a specialty in Community Organizing.

When I graduated, I soon realised that no one hires social agitators. I worked as a street worker for Gordon Neighbourhood House in Vancouver's West End. My clients were street kids, school kids, drag queens, hustlers, ex-cons. I befriended them, formed support groups and took some of them hiking and camping. I tried to problem solve, but I missed many opportunities to really help. I knew some kids needed psychiatric help. However, it was not available. I decided to learn more about mental health and took a job at the UBC Psychiatric Hospital. It was a bit like joining the army. The tightest hierarchy I could imagine. The professors and directors were all old men licking one another's asses.

One day we were worried about a patient. She was an older, soft spoken woman on my ward who had a diagnosis of anxiety and paranoid delusions. She was convinced that her husband planned to kill her. In ward rounds, a smart young nurse asked our head psychiatrist if the husband ever threatened his wife. The psychiatrist replied that he had met the husband, and he was a fine, well-educated man, an engineer. So the woman must be paranoid. The frightened woman was discharged home to her husband who promptly killed her. The ward staff never met to discuss our mistake. I began thinking about sexist medical bias. I was learning a lot about abuse from teaching women's self-defence. On the psych ward, I organised Women's Liberation groups and started reading about Feminist psychology. I was asked to help with the Mental Patients Association, a patient's rights group.

I happily left the hierarchy and dark walls of the hospital for a job in Kitsilano as clinical supervisor for the Kits Community Mental Health Team. It was a relief to work in the fresh air. Also, since I was a supervisor, I could insist no one made homophobic or racist jokes. After work, I continued volunteering: teaching Vancouver's first Women's self-defence courses, and leading the first agency-sponsored Women's consciousness raising groups and Lesbian support groups. I counselled hundreds of straight women, lesbians and a few gay and trans people. I was one of the first openly lesbian therapists in Vancouver.

In the 1980's I was invited to travel to Northern B.C. teaching women's therapy and self-defence in rural communities. There was little training available for this work. One afternoon at the end of a three day women's self-defence course in Alert Bay a young woman said:

"We know a lot about rape. But we can't do anything about it."

"Why?" I asked.



Marsha now



"We are all raped by our boyfriends when we become teenagers. They are our boyfriends."

I was shocked and wished someone had told me this at the start of the course. This was probably the reason they had asked me to come. I mumbled something about getting the mothers and women together to discuss how to protect the young girls. I knew that we needed days to find solutions for this problem. That is what I should have been doing from the first day. I didn't know how to ask the right questions at the right time.

One day a nurse in my mental health service asked if I would get our city wide mental health intake form changed to include the question: "Have you ever been abused physically or sexually?" I had never thought to do this. She had to nudge me to do it. My heart was racing as I brought this suggestion up in the city directors' monthly meeting. After I presented the idea there was silence in the room. My fellow directors were not expecting this. They stared at me. Our teams had clients from all over the world. In conservative cultures, you didn't mention sex. Also many of our psychiatrists trained at U.B.C. under the notorious sadistic sexual offender Dr. Tyhurst. They were threatened by him and his cronies. At that time male chauvinist psychiatrists who worked in psychiatric wards abused so many women. They hid behind Freudian theory that claimed women's mental illnesses were caused by their internal mental conflicts and sexual fantasies relating to their fathers. The doctors felt free to abuse patients. They thought they were so wonderful that their patients were benefiting from the attention.



Marsha at work then

One of my clients told me her psychiatrist agreed to provide follow up after she was discharged. He would even come to see her in her apartment, so she needn't go to his office. He came weekly at lunch time. She made him lunch, he drank her beer, and they had sex. Then he billed the medical plan.

I had grown up in cultures where men -- priests, doctors, teachers -- were all powerful. I had been harassed myself, but I didn't realize the extent of abuse of women and girls and boys. When Dr. Tyhurst's patients informed the B.C. College of Physicians and surgeons that Dr. Tyhurst was chaining them and whipping them, making them grovel at his feet, the B.C. College enquired. Dr. Tyhurst said this was what the women needed for their therapy. The college did nothing. The abuse continued. It was considered inappropriate to mention abuse of clients.

So I was anxious to bring the topic up in our team meeting. My colleagues just stared at me. I knew they were thinking 'Oh Marsha, not another of your wild ideas.' Finally they started asking questions:

"Why would we ask about sexual abuse?"

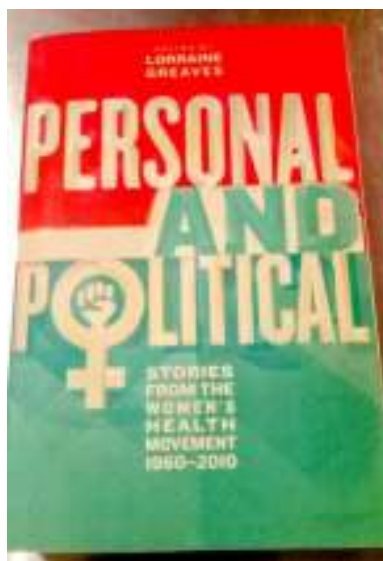
"Won't asking that traumatise our clients."

"It could put bad ideas in their head."

"Why ask about such a rare event?"

My heart was pounding as I persisted. "It's a problem for some of our clients. It affects their whole life. Let's just try it." Finally the directors agreed that I could try this at my team and report back. I brought this plan up in our team meeting the next morning. A few of my male team doctors and therapists were opposed. They asked questions like: "Why ask questions that could upset the clients? Why risk insulting our patients? What about the women who enjoyed it?"

Several of the women staff supported me. We talked it over. Finally we agreed to try asking this question to our clients and report back. The results shocked all of us. We saw about 800 patients that month. None were terribly upset by the question. Some were relieved to be finally able to talk about it. About 80% of our clients vividly remembered physical or sexual abuse, from parents, siblings, teachers, school mates, relatives, priests . . . But in the child and family section, 100% of the mothers reported abuse. My fellow team directors were surprised with the result. They all agreed that this was significant information, and the question was added

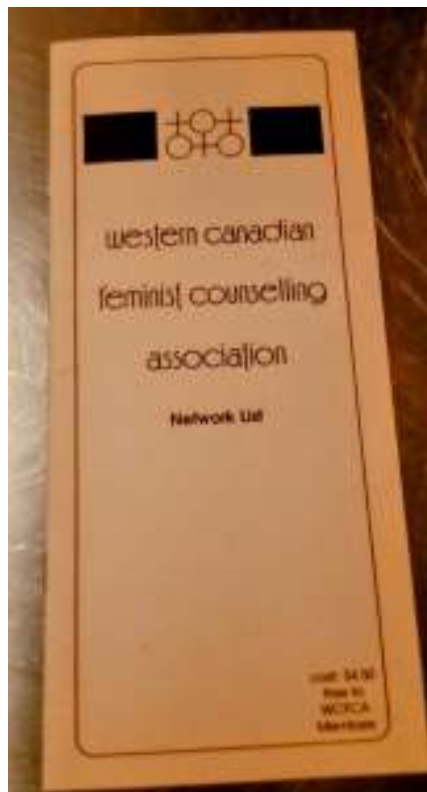




to the assessment form. Thousands of our patients reported abuse. My First Nations and Trans clients reported suffering the worst abuse.

In the 70's and 80's, I did not know the terms PTSD, and Trauma Therapy. After the abuse question was included on the intake form our mental health service staff realised we needed to learn how to effectively help victims of rape, child abuse and incest. There was almost nothing written on these topics at that time. Ironically, though the first discussions about women's rape prevention came from the Women's liberation movement of the 70's, the first studies of diagnosing and treating PTSD came from psychotherapists in the armed forces. Trauma was called "Shell-Shock" during WW1. A colleague at the Forensic institute helped me treat some male abusers who had been abused. She told me the term Trauma Survivor was better than Victim and that sexual abuse survivors' treatment was similar to treatment of traumatized soldiers.

In the first decade of my career, I knew I needed to learn and advocate for women. I was one of the few people in the Vancouver mental health hierarchy talking publicly about these issues. Colleagues asked me to teach about sexual abuse in Vancouver agencies and at the Vancouver Justice institute.



I learned from my clients. Dr. Ingrid Pacey and other feminist therapists welcomed me to help run the Western Canada Feminist Counselling Association. WCFCA held many meetings and conferences to support, educate and to network with hundreds of feminist therapists. We lobbied medical and government agencies on women's and gay issues. We spoke to Royal Commissioners. We wrote articles and supervised students. I tried teaching police trainees who were not interested.

After he had abused women for years, Dr. Tyhurst was finally confronted by a few brave women psychiatrists who had been abused by him. At last the B.C. College of Physicians and surgeons could not ignore these complainants since they were licensed women doctors. Later Dr. Tyhurst was criminally charged with assault, taken to court and finally convicted. However, he appealed endlessly. He died before he ever served time. Most of his fellow abusers were never even charged. I had not insisted that my clients who had been abused by doctors report their abuse. Most did not wish to be re-traumatized by lawyers who could publicly drag them through the mud. I respected their wishes.

Over the 1970's to the 1980's, when I tried talking with colleagues about stopping abuse by doctors, they shrugged. One doctor told me that he was the only doctor on his hospital ward who was not abusing women. He didn't want to be guilty by association. Could I have done more at that time? Probably yes,

if I had had more support and courage.

By the time I retired in the 2000's, most therapists were starting to confront abuse and trauma issues. Now in 2025 many people speak about trauma. My naive youthful ambition to help save the world did not turn out so great. I hope youth will continue to fight abuse. I will support them when I can. I am now in my 80's, and I am no longer concerned about what will be written on my obituary. I have been lucky to have lived a full, privileged life with a wonderful partner and inspiring, creative relatives and friends. I need nothing more.

Photos supplied by Marsha Ablowitz



Cyndia Cole

## AWARENESS AND LOVE THROUGH ABUSE, SHAME, BLAME AND RESENTMENT

Farren Gillaspie

Dreams have always provided powerful insights into my sub-conscious. After a tumultuous childhood, I have spent a lot of time trying to figure out the whys of it. My Mother and I were constantly bickering. We were a cold family: no hugging or touching for us. After my sixtieth birthday, I thought, to hell with it! I am who I am, and if it is necessary for me to know the details, then my Higher Power can just make the answers more available to me. I was tired of puzzles. Well as one of my mentors said one time, "if you ask, be prepared to receive!"

Several nights later I had an unusual dream. In reality, I had moved away or maybe more precisely ran away many years earlier. In my dream, however, I was in my old bedroom in my family home, except it didn't quite look my room. My sister was with me, and we were catching up on what had happened with each of us since I had been away. I knew she was my sister, but she didn't quite look like my sister. My grandmother came to the foot of the stairs telling us mom was calling us for dinner. My protestant grandmother and my Catholic mother were seldom under the same roof. She didn't quite look like my grandmother either. While I was heading down the stairs, I saw my mother at the foot of the stairs, and yes she didn't look like mom either. She was singing a cheerful song that sounded familiar, something about her wayward son returning home, and he knew how much she loved him, and he loved her. I was so filled with joy that I started spontaneously laughing. When I reached her, I put my arm around her as we bounced off each other, heading into the dining room. In real time, we were definitely a no-touch family



Farren as a child

Photo supplied by Farren

I woke up in total bliss. As I am often prone to do, I queried my higher self before I could adulterate it with thought. The answer was instant. "That was your real family seen through love without all the baggage." I was on a high for the rest of the day. But that was not the end.

A few nights later, I had another dream. I was having tea with my mom in a love infused room filled with flowers and light. All of the heaviness between us was gone, and in its place only what I could describe as love. It felt like we were there to resolve something. The conversation went something like this.

"Mom I have spent so many years being ashamed. At first I thought it was because I was so skinny or my head was so big. Then I thought it was because I was gay. But in this moment with you right now, I am drawn back to a summer day when I was twelve, and I was wearing some old shorts that I often wore. In a very firm maybe even angry voice, you told me to go upstairs right away and change into long pants, that I was too old for shorts and they were indecent. I am realizing just now that I thought I must be indecent, and my body was bad."

As I shared with my mom, I could see and feel her pain.

"My dear son, you were not indecent and your body wasn't bad. You were my beautiful son. I wanted to keep you safe. I saw you as vulnerable."

She paused, "I know, I was that age, I was vulnerable, and my mother didn't protect me."

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**Editor's note:** A legacy we all have in Canada is the history of the colonization of Canada and the horrific treatment of the First Nations who lived on this land for thousands of years before colonization. As Canadians, we all have a responsibility to learn that history and to be a part of the real reconciliation required. Apologies are not enough. Lorri Rudland, in the following article, gives you some places to start to learn more. In her next article, later in this zine, she shows some of the reconciliation that is happening and what is not happening yet.

## LEARNING ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA

Lorri Rudland

### We recommend the following sources for online information

- Assembly of First Nations (AFN)
- Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN)
- First Nations Health Authority
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to investigate residential schools and to listen to survivors of those schools.
  - The TRC (2008-2015) issued 94 Calls to Action aimed at redressing the legacy of residential schools
- Missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry (MMIWG)
  - National Inquiry created by federal government in response to the national crisis of violence against Indigenous Women and Girls. It began on Dec.8, 2015 and wrapped up in 2019.
  - MMIWG issued 231 Calls to Action to redress this violence in areas such as education, police, the justice system and health.
- Indigenous Watchdog, "260 years of promises made and promises broken to Canada's First Peoples" See TRC Calls to Action in progress, or not.
- Inuit Circumpolar Council, formed in 1977, United Voice of the Arctic, is an international association that represents Inuit around the world providing an integrated Inuit perspective on Arctic policy and governance.
- Inuit Tapirit Kanatami, the National Representational Organization Protecting and Advancing the Rights and Interests of Inuit in Canada, particularly to improve the health and wellbeing of Inuit.
- Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture, in Saskatchewan, a project of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, is a primary resource for learning about Metis history and culture, offering a vast collection of texts, photos, videos, and audio files.

### Books of Interest:

#### ***21 Things You May Not Know About THE INDIAN ACT: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples A Reality*, by Bob Joseph**



This is an excellent book, and we encourage every Canadian to read it. It is only 105 pages of text with Appendices. One Appendix concerns a series of dates, with a short commentary after each, that chronicle the history of residential schools in Canada. It makes for horrifying reading. Secondly, another Appendix contains 94 Calls to Action released from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"From declaring cultural ceremonies illegal to prohibiting pool hall owners from granting Indigenous Peoples entrance, from forbidding the speaking of Indigenous languages to the devastating policy that created residential schools, Bob Joseph reveals the hold this paternalistic act, with its roots in the 1800s, still has on the lives of Indigenous Peoples in Canada in the twenty-first century." Shelagh Rogers, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Honorary Witness, author of *The Next Chapter*

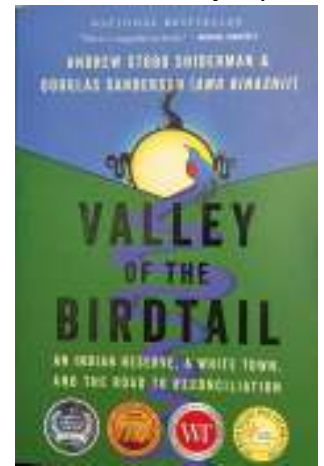
***Valley of the Birdtail, An Indian Reserve, A White Town, and the Road to Reconciliation (2023)***, by Andrew Stobo Sniderman & Douglas Sanderson (Amo Binashii), is also an excellent book.

In north-west Manitoba, the First Nations Waywayseecappo reserve and the Euro-Canadian town of Rossburn are divided by the Birdtail River and about 150 years of racism. "The average family income in



Rossburn is near the national average, and more than a third of adults have graduated from **university**. By contrast, the average family in Waywayseecappo lives below the poverty line, and less than a third of adults have graduated from high school.”

The modern-day story is told through the experience of Maureen Twovoice, a First Nations student struggling to graduate from high school and Troy Luhowy, a student of Ukrainian descent, who was a popular student in the small town of Rossburn, and encountered few difficulties in graduating. The federal government continuously underfunded reserve schools, which resulted in less experienced teachers, higher turnover, reduced textbooks, pens, and pencils for Waywayseecappo Elementary school, and lower standards. Because the reserve had no high school, Maureen had to attend Rossburn high school, but the drive alone on the school buses was over one hour each way. At the high school, the average Waywayseecappo student was two to four years behind academically, and most ended up dropping out. They made no friends there as racial discrimination was rampant. But Maureen persisted and graduated, while living with a mother traumatized by the memories of her attendance at the brutal residential boarding school. Maureen went on to graduate from the University of Winnipeg, ending up with a master’s degree in Indigenous governance.



But by 2010, enrolment in the provincial division of Park West, which included Rossburn, had been steadily declining, reflecting the depopulation of rural Manitoba, as more farms were mechanized, reducing the number of school-age children. Waywayseecappo had a larger population of children, who were seen as sources of revenue, and if they could enter the provincial school division, the enrolment problem could be solved and keep the provincial schools open. And so the idea of “reconciliation” between the communities of Rossburn and Waywayseecappo was born. Troy Luhowy was teaching at the Waywayseecappo school, and after four years he was given the job of principal.

He was shocked when he looked at the school budget, and saw that the reserve school received forty percent less money from the federal government than the Rossburn School received per student from the Manitoba government. Troy supervised 314 students from kindergarten through Grade 8, which he calculated received about a million dollars less per school year than provincial schools. A partnership was developed to equalize funding and share services, improve relationships and provide better schooling outcomes for Waywayseecappo. Maureen was hired as an Indigenous coordinator with Park West School division, to organize workshops about Indigenous history and culture in their provincial schools. The long years of racism and separation were ending, and a new era of cooperation and reconciliation had begun.

The book does an excellent job of detailing the federal government’s racist and punitive policies towards Indigenous Peoples, citing names and dates, including

- the passage of the Indian Act
- the illegal pass system where Indigenous peoples became prisoners on the reserve and needed a pass to visit a relative or go anywhere off reserve
- the permit system where no Indigenous person could sell food or animals off reserve
- the prohibition on the use of farm machinery, which meant farming manually only, as in medieval times, so that “Indians would work harder and experience the redemptive power of industry, thrift, and self-sufficiency.” Valley of the Birdtail, P. 152

Those policies meant that no Indigenous person could succeed at farming, unlike their prosperous farming neighbours, Ukrainian immigrants, in the Rossburn environs. They thought Indians were just “lazy” because of their poor results at farming. Finally, the authors, Sniderman and Sanderson, in chapter 18, propose a type of ‘land back to Indigenous Peoples solution’ in which they could use the land for profit through rents, logging and mineral extraction if they chose to.

The book is a major success in drawing comparisons between the two communities of Waywayseecappo and Rossburn. It details the years of racist and punitive policies enforced on the reserves by the federal

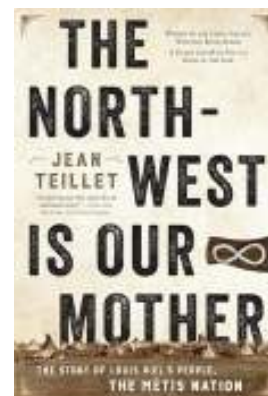
government, starting from Confederation in 1867, which were major obstacles to Indigenous educational and economic advancement. We recommend this book! Review by Lorri Rudland

***The North-West is Our Mother, (2019)*** by Jean Teillet, Metis Lawyer.

There is a missing chapter in the narrative of Indigenous Peoples in Canada—the story of the Métis Nation, a new Indigenous people descended from both First Nations and Europeans. Their story begins in the last decade of the eighteenth century in the Canadian North-West. Within twenty years, the Metis proclaimed themselves a nation and won their first battle. Within forty years they were famous throughout North America for their military skills, their nomadic life and their buffalo hunts.

The Metis Nation didn't just drift slowly into the Canadian consciousness in the early 180s; it burst onto the scene fully formed. The Metis were flamboyant, defiant, loud and definitely not noble savages. They were nomads with a very different way of being in the world always on the move, very much in the moment, passionate and fierce. They were romantics and visionaries with big dreams. They battled continuously -- for recognition, for their lands and for their rights and freedoms. In 1870 and 1885, led by the iconic Louis Riel, they fought back when Canada took their lands. These acts of resistance became defining moments in Canadian history, with applications that reverberate to this day: Western alienation, Indigenous rights and the French-English divide.

After being defeated in the Battle of Batoche in 1885, the Metis lived in hiding for twenty years. But early in the twentieth century, they determined to hide no more and began a long, successful fight back into the Canadian consciousness. The Metis people are now recognized in Canada as a distinct Indigenous nation. Written by the great-grandniece of Louis Riel, this popular and engaging history of “forgotten people” tells the story up to the present era of national reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. From: *Goodreads*.



**NDP MP MUMILAAQ QAQQAQ, representing Nunavut** made parting remarks when she left the House of Commons in 2021. She said that she was racially profiled during her time in Ottawa and was constantly reminded that she didn't belong there. See Quirk-e Zine, *Fighting Racism from a Queer Perspective*, for the full text of her speech, at [www.Quirk-e.ca](http://www.Quirk-e.ca).



**A Two-Spirit Journey: The Autobiography of a Lesbian Ojibwa-Cree Elder by Ma-Nee Chacaby, with Mary Louisa Plummer** 2016 has just won CBC's Canada Reads 2025.

“Born in a tuberculosis sanatorium in 1952, Elder Ma-Nee Chacaby has experienced a life of both extraordinary hardship and extraordinary resilience. This book chronicles her experiences escaping from an abusive marriage, achieving sobriety, working as an alcoholism counsellor, raising foster children, and coming out. Chacaby's story has been praised by readers and critics alike, with the *Winnipeg Free Press* calling it “a handbook of hope.” Chacaby gives voice to the struggles of Indigenous peoples facing the social and economic legacies of colonialism” UM News, March 21, 2025.

**The Xwi7xwa Library, the Indigenous Library at the Vancouver Campus of the University of British Columbia.** It is a centre for academic and community indigenous scholarship. Its collections and services reflect Indigenous approaches to teaching, learning, and research. Everyone is welcome to visit the library.

Added by Paula Stromberg: Vancouver libraries are ordering a book by Swampy Cree Author, David A. Robertson: *52 Ways To Reconcile How To Walk With Indigenous People On The Path To Healing*.



## THE COLLEGE QUEER ALLIANCE I STARTED STILL GOING STRONG 53 YEARS LATER

Don Orr Martin

The first phone call I took (that wasn't a crank call) was from a lesbian in Lacey. It was 1973 at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. I was the founder and sole person staffing the phone at the Gay Resource Center. She and her partner had both been divorced from men, and between them they had five kids living in a double-wide trailer. She wanted to know if I could offer them any help regarding child custody issues. They were terrified their ex-husbands, who were soldiers stationed at Fort Lewis, would come after them. They invited me over to talk. I learned they had held their "wedding" the previous year at a gay-friendly bar in Tacoma. This was forty years before same-sex marriage was legalized in Washington State. I had no idea what to tell them, so I just listened. Not long after their call, I was flooded with phone messages from people wanting help and support. I needed to compile a list of gay resources fast.

Keep in mind that this was only a couple of years after the Stonewall rebellion, the so-called birth of the modern gay rights movement in the U.S. It was still illegal to have gay sex even in liberal Washington State. Gay culture was emerging in big cities but was nonexistent in tiny Olympia. There was no support, no bar, no organizations, and no role models. I didn't know how to even meet other gay people in a small town.

I kept falling in love with the straight men I got close to, only to have my heart broken time after time. This destroyed my confidence and led to alcohol and drugs to dull the pain. Eventually, I figured out if I was going to lead a gay life, I would have to befriend other openly gay men. I could move to a big city, but I'd always been a country boy at heart, and that didn't appeal to me much. The other alternative was to help build a gay community in this provincial town.

At that very moment, Evergreen's second year of being open, student-run organizations were starting to form. There was Ujamma for Black students, MECHA for Latino students, the Asian/Pacific Islander Coalition, the Native Student Alliance, the Evergreen Political Information Center, and the Women's Center. They all received office space, phones, and small budgets. Here was a chance to start a gay and lesbian student group. I don't know where I found the gumption, but in late 1972 I petitioned the college to establish the Gay Resource Center. The GRC would be one of the first officially sanctioned college organizations for gay students in the state. Gay organizations at the two largest universities formed about the same time, but I believe neither was funded by the institution. It took a lot of persistence to get college funding for the GRC.

The administration initially put up fierce resistance. The nascent college was being closely watched by the state legislature. Conservative politicians looked for any excuse to cut funding. An openly gay organization sent shivers of fiscal fear through many in the administration. At first, they decided the GRC could not have an office or a phone—there were suddenly no more available. My pleas to be treated equally to the other student groups were summarily dismissed. Fortunately, Maryanne who staffed the Women's Center was a lesbian and offered to let the GRC share their tiny office and two-line phone.



Right away I started a weekly discussion group. Back then we called it a "rap" group. At Maryanne's suggestion, I borrowed our format from the feminist movement's consciousness raising meetings that were appealing to a broad spectrum of women around the US in the early 1970s. The rap sessions were mostly a social affair, but we discussed a wide range of topics from the personal to the political. The only means of communicating on campus at that time was a newsletter put out each week by the public relations office. The GRC was not allowed to announce its presence or its meetings in the newsletter. So, I

silkscreened posters and put them up around campus. A small group of brave souls met in one of the carpeted junctions between hallways in the bowels of the library building. Determined to challenge the PR director's blackout policy, I organized some straight supporters from other student groups to stage a sit-in at his office. We





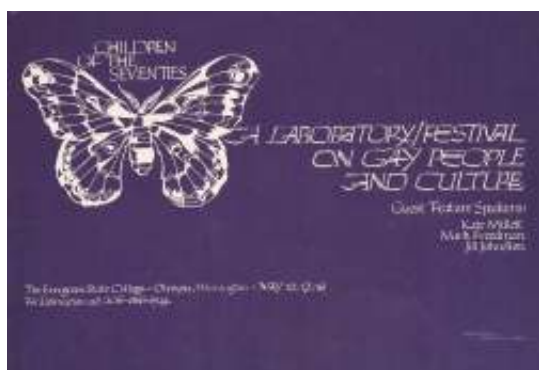
demanding publication of GRC meeting announcements, or we would put up our posters all over the state legislature. He relented.

We wanted the GRC to serve the whole community, not just the college, but we were nervous about advertising in town because of potential threats. The college was a relatively safe haven away from downtown, and it got enough regular visitors from the community that slowly the word spread about our meetings. Eventually as many as twenty people from the surrounding area were attending our rap sessions, mostly men, including some older guys who in the 1960s had been involved in the Dorian Society, a pre-Stonewall gay organization in Seattle. One of the school's faculty started coming to our meetings, and he sometimes hosted a movie night at his house.

As the Gay Resource Center became more visible, the crank calls, death threats, and desperate messages for help started pouring in on the phone line. Gay-curious students would slowly walk past the open door to the office I shared with the Women's Center, or they would linger in the hallway, hoping to be noticed. I was not prepared to deal with this drama alone. Maryanne, studying for a degree in social work, was a tremendous support. She talked me through a lot of stuff. I eventually convinced Jerry, another student who was coming to the rap sessions, to help me figure out what we could realistically offer as a "resource center" for people with no rights. Jerry had a wider circle of friends and professional contacts. I visited the other gay student groups at universities in Seattle and Pullman to understand what they were doing.

Together Jerry and I presented our case to the campus activities board for why the GRC was needed and should be funded. We provided excerpts and data from phone calls, attendance numbers at the rap sessions, and the list of services people were seeking, such as mental health and substance abuse counselling, legal aid, and medical advocacy. After a close vote of the activities board, we finally got our own office and phone. As women joined the staff, we changed the name to the Lesbian and Gay Resource Center—over the years the name would change many times as new sexual minorities were added, eventually becoming the Evergreen Queer Alliance.

The year 1974 was pivotal. A whole new group of activist students was running the office. I had taken a leave of absence from school for financial reasons and for my own sanity. When you go from organizing protests demanding change to actually running the day-to-day operations of the thing you said you wanted, you realize it's a different skill set. I needed to step down, at least for a while.



That spring, the new GRC staff hosted perhaps the biggest queer event ever produced in Washington State at that point. It was called *Children of the Seventies: A Laboratory/Festival on Gay People and Culture*. Featured speakers included Kate Millett, Jill Johnston, Mark Freedman, and Arthur Evans. There were three days of workshops, music, and art. Hundreds attended. An array of exotic characters invaded Olympia and the GRC scrambled to find housing and accommodations. It was an amazing event. There was broad support on campus, except, that is, from the college Board of Trustees.

Later that year, one of the coordinated studies programs hired a highly regarded substance abuse counsellor from Seattle as an adjunct faculty. Chuck Harbaugh was well known in the gay community in Seattle. He became very popular with the students at Evergreen and was recommended by his colleagues for a permanent position. But the deans rejected his application and wrote a blatantly discriminatory memo that was leaked to the press. They put in writing that they refused to hire Harbaugh because he was gay. This led to ongoing protests on campus and eventual arbitration.

The GRC had built strong support from other student groups by the time classes started in the fall. I came back from leave in time to sit across the negotiating table from two deans, one a white feminist anthropologist and the other an African-American historian. I remember feeling betrayed at their prejudice and casual denial of our human rights. I lost my temper, at which point they halted the meeting. Their decision not to hire an openly gay man stood. Ironically, a few of the school's faculty and administrators were gay but were so

intimidated by the institutional power structure that they felt they couldn't speak up. There was no such thing as employment protection for LGBT people in 1974, and so in the end Harbaugh had no basis for an appeal. Homophobia won that day. There were things to like about Evergreen and many wonderful staff. The experimental college graduated a host of highly successful students. But I believe this incident exposed a cruel prejudice, political cowardice, and a disconnect between the school's ideals and its reality.

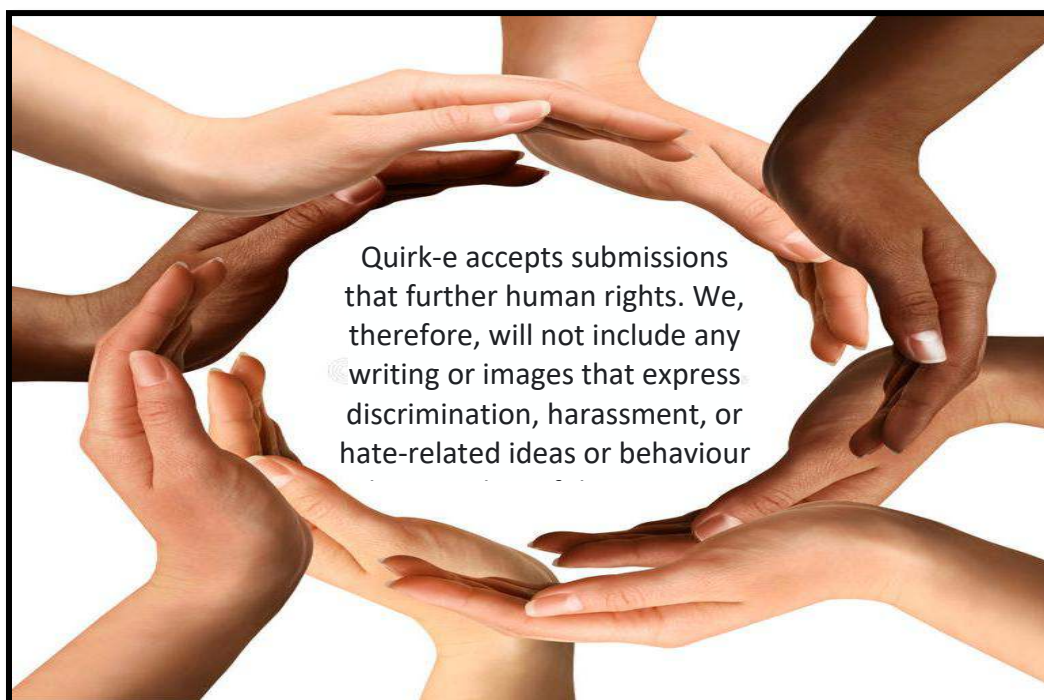
The GRC staff persisted for years in trying to get the college to adopt a non-discrimination policy on sexual orientation. The Board of Trustees simply refused to consider it. They said the public was not ready, and that even though the college was innovative, they didn't have to be innovative about everything. The first recorded non-discrimination policy I could find for Evergreen was 1995, well after the governor had banned discrimination in state employment by executive order.

The Queer Alliance is still going strong today. Looking back fifty years, I think about all the students who cut their teeth on the struggle for LGBTQ rights at Evergreen, who went on to be champions of social change. I believe the Gay Resource Center and similar organizations played an important role in advancing human rights and liberty in US society.

*Note: This story uses fictionalized names and composite characters.*



Photos supplied By Don Martin.



## JUDY FLETCHER'S ART



Some of us work with words, and some of us work with pictures. Judy works with both . . . and tells a story.





## MY LEGACY

Ellen Woodsworth

Feb. 10, 2025

I learned to raise Joe Hill's rallying cry "Don't Mourn, Organize" when I was just a kid.

Both my parents were great organizers from way before I was born. I still have photos of Dad as a student during the high unemployment of the 30's marching outside University of Toronto carrying a "Smash Capitalism" sign and stories of mom signing the Stockholm Peace Petition for which she was fired from her position as President of the PTA in 1951. After graduating from U of T Dad couldn't find work as those were the 50's and the height of McCarthyism, so mom had to support the family and he went back to university.

At one month old, I was taken to southern Ontario where other organizers from across Canada and the US had created a cottage cooperative from an old sheep farm. Together they built roads, a laundry house, dock, raft and twelve cottages. All of us pitched in, even us kids. We sang folk songs around the fire at the end of the day and listened to our parents talking about the social and world problems. Mom became Executive Director of our local YWCA. Her friends were feminist leaders who talked about women's issues, Miriam Waddington a poet and Kay MacPherson who started the Voice of Women for Peace and later the National Action Committee on the Status of Women where mom represented the National YWCA on its first Board. I grew up listening to Pete Seegar, the Weavers, Paul Robson and Nina Simone, and reading James Baldwin, Pearl Buck and Simone DeBeauvoir. Dad took me to Ban the Bomb rallies and became the President of the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Then both my brothers became Presidents of their university chapters. I helped create the high school group Canadian Students for Nuclear Disarmament. I wore a nuclear disarmament peace button in my grade eight graduation photo.

I was lucky I had great women role models. But even in elementary school, I mourned the fact that though I was the pitcher for baseball teams both hardball and softball and was also on a women's hockey team, because I was a girl I wasn't allowed to play football or swim at the men only pool at U of T where my Dad and brothers swam. Political leaders were all men, except one lonely woman MP, Grace MacInnes, who was Dad's cousin.

In the early sixties, the Vietnam war still raged, although the demonstrations kept growing, and the civil rights movement was our teacher. The Red Power movement was a few years away, and there were few visible out queers as homosexuality was illegal as were abortions and birth control. So women and many others were getting angrier and angrier, and by the 70's, we had begun to create organizations and win more and more rights, slowly getting elected to public office and learning how to use an intersectional lens on our work.

Today I am shattered, mourning the destruction of movements, leaders and the rights we built around the world, destroyed in a matter of weeks, and the ongoing genocide of Palestinians. We learn of the rise of far-right governments in the US and Germany, aided by a US billionaire who made a Nazi salute on prime time TV at the inauguration of the US President, watched all over the world, to let us know what was coming. Immediately USAID was cut; the President announced there are only two genders, tried to blackmail Canada, Mexico and China with enormous tariffs and purchased a prison in El Salvador for 40,000 of the millions of immigrants and refugees he has ordered arrested and or deported. I go into shock, numbly sharing information, dimly aware we have a federal election either this spring or fall, and the same billionaire who used AI to win the US election will be running communications for the Conservative Party and its leader Pierre Poilievre, who is publicly backed by Elon Musk.

I chair a national peace meeting where we share the latest information and discuss what to do. We agree the focus must be to defeat Poilievre by exposing his backer Elon Musk who is increasingly becoming despised



everywhere, his TESLA stocks plummeting. I suggest to these leaders that we discuss how we are feeling. I realize that we are all mourning the world we helped build and the future we had wanted for all. I am a senior and wiser now; I realize that if I don't mourn, I won't be able to organize. I will be too depressed to even move. I have to trust myself. It is never too late. This will be my legacy.

Join me as I "Mourn and Organize".

## TRIBUTE FOR GREG BOURGEOIS (1953 -2024) AT HIS CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Cyndia Cole



I first met Greg in November 2021 when he applied to join QUIRK-E, the Queer Imaging and Riting Kollektive for Elders. We were still under a lot of Covid Pandemic restrictions at the time, so I met with Greg only over the phone. I found him very easy to talk with. As I did his orientation to QUIRK-E, we covered a lot more than the basics of who, what, when, where and how because it was so comfortable to chat. I thought it was brave of Greg to meet a whole lot of new folks -- a well-established group with not so many gay men and lots of lesbians -- while we were meeting only through zoom.

I learned over time of Greg's rich history of founding and joining activist groups, writing newsletters and supporting our 2SLGBTQ+ community. Once we could get together in person, Greg volunteered to staff our book table with the confidence of one willing to step up and take on the work. Despite his health challenges, Greg made the effort to attend our picnics and gatherings. We felt at home with his easy-going personality.

He brought friends along to all three of our annual on-stage performances for Surrey Pride at the Museum of Surrey. In his presentations we learned that Greg had been speaking out to groups with courage, honesty, vulnerability and humour since he was 19 years old. In his own words, he was "just a dumb guy with one good idea: Gay Liberation."

Fifty years later, all of us now enjoying the fruits of his labours, a life in service of our rights and freedoms, say, "Thank You, Greg. We are honoured to host your book and movie reviews; your memoirs of your personal and our collective liberation on our website. We treasure your legacy."



## WORDS SHARED AT THE MEMORIAL GATHERING FOR GREG BOURGEOIS - JAN 29, 2025

Janice Van Aertselaer

Greg and I became friends while we were in high school, though a tap-dance group we were part of, and through performing in a high school drama, "The Crucible". During that time he asked me to go on a "date". We were in a restaurant, talking, and eventually he said, "I need to be honest with you. I'm seeing a "shrink" because I think I'm a "fruit" ... *those are the words he used!*



Greg and Jan

... and this guy told me that I should try going out with a girl who I like and see what happens. But I'm going to tell you right now, I really do like you, but nothing is going to happen". I think I said something like, "Well, something has happened, because we've become good friends". That is what happened, and we continued to enjoy hanging out together.

We both headed to the University of Manitoba in 1971. Recently I read the piece he wrote for the *Quirk-e* magazine about being part of the founding of the first gay liberation group in Winnipeg. I remember that well. I went to some of his speaking engagements. I thought he was very brave and I saw him growing in confidence after being so unsure of himself in high school. It seemed he had found his rightful place. In that article for Quirk-E Greg describes asking a question of Jack Baker. "Jack answered my question thus: 'That's a pretty standard approach. You tell a counsellor that you're gay, and he tells you that you're intimidated by women, and you just need to find an approachable one, and date her for a while, and the sexual feelings will come. That just doesn't work.'" It made me smile when I read that, because I had been that approachable woman for Greg.

Eventually we both ended up living in Toronto at the same time and we continued to hang out. We enjoyed sharing meals at the Swiss Chalet. I accompanied him to some gatherings with his extended family. And I remember going on a little train trip together to New York city because he wanted to see some of the art deco. I didn't have a clue what that was, but he explained it as he pointed it out.



Angle and Greg at the Quirk-e  
Pride table

Following those years, I moved to Saskatchewan, and he moved to BC, and we lost touch for a while. With Roselle's help I found him again in 2011 after seeing their Mom's obituary, and we corresponded a bit by email. In 2013 I made a trip to Vancouver and we had a good visit. He took me on a lovely lunch date, somewhere by the water, being proud to show me that he had learned to drive and had acquired a car. He told me about his work, and I told him that the way he spoke about his clients, with such acceptance and respect, reminded me of Jean Vanier of L'Arche saying, "What you do is the most important work there is to do". He said he appreciated that because sometimes he wondered if he was making any kind of difference.

We continued to be in touch for a few years after that. He sent me a book with one of his home-made cards, and he enjoyed sending me videos of tap-dancers, like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. He never lost his delightful and witty sense of humour. Sadly, we lost touch again over the last few years, which I very much regret. Life happens.

For those of you who knew and loved Greg, I hope these memories bring a tear or a laugh or both, and I hope they contribute to your appreciation for who he was. May your hearts be warmed by your own memories and by one another's presence as you celebrate Greg's life today.



By Cyndia Cole





## MARGO DUNN 1944-2025

Margo Dunn was a member of Quirk-e and a very active member of the Canadian Lesbian community, as you will see here from The British Columbia Archival Network.

Margo Dunn, actor, writer, feminist and owner of Ariel Books, has been an active force in the Vancouver women's movement since 1966. She participated in the Abortion Caravan to Ottawa in 1970, acted in guerrilla theatre, and taught Women's Studies at Vancouver City College, Langara.

Born in Montreal, on March 17, 1944, Ms. Dunn completed a BA in English from Marianopolis College (de l'Universit  de Montreal) in 1964. In 1966, she moved to Vancouver and attended Simon Fraser University from 1968 to 1970 working towards an MA in English. Ms. Dunn returned to SFU in 1974 and 1975 to finish work on her MA thesis, *The Development of Narrative in the Writing of Isabella Valency Crawford*.

From 1977 to 1979 she worked as an editor and taught drama at the University of New Brunswick. She also ran in the 1978 New Brunswick provincial election as a candidate for the NDP. Ms. Dunn has also taught women's studies at VCC-Langara in Vancouver from 1980 to 1990. Ms. Dunn is also a writer and editor; she edited the publication *Makara* in the 1970s and *Room of One's Own*, in the early 1980s.

In addition to her professional activities, Margo Dunn is an unofficial record-keeper of the Vancouver women's movement. She collected and stored material that she felt was important to record women's activities in the struggle for freedom and equality. In this role, she was sought out by representatives of various womens organizations and individuals to store and preserve their records. More recently, Ms. Dunn has been a columnist for *Xtra West* and *Angles*. She also contributes opinion and editorial pieces for the gay and lesbian television programs, *Prism* and, later, *Outlook*. She also writes and performs her own work and has resumed her early profession as an actor.



Margo Dunn



Ariel Books first opened in 1974 as a private business focusing on books about women's spirituality, but switched to collective ownership and a more general feminist bookstore format circa 1975. In 1981, when the collective decided to sell the business, Margo Dunn and Janice Pentland-Smith purchased the store that was then located at 2766 West 4th Avenue in Vancouver. In 1983, Margo Dunn acquired her partner's shares and became the sole proprietor of Ariel Books. In 1991, Ariel Books moved to a larger space at 1888 West 4th Avenue, where it remained until it closed in 1994.

Ariel Books was one of two feminist bookstores

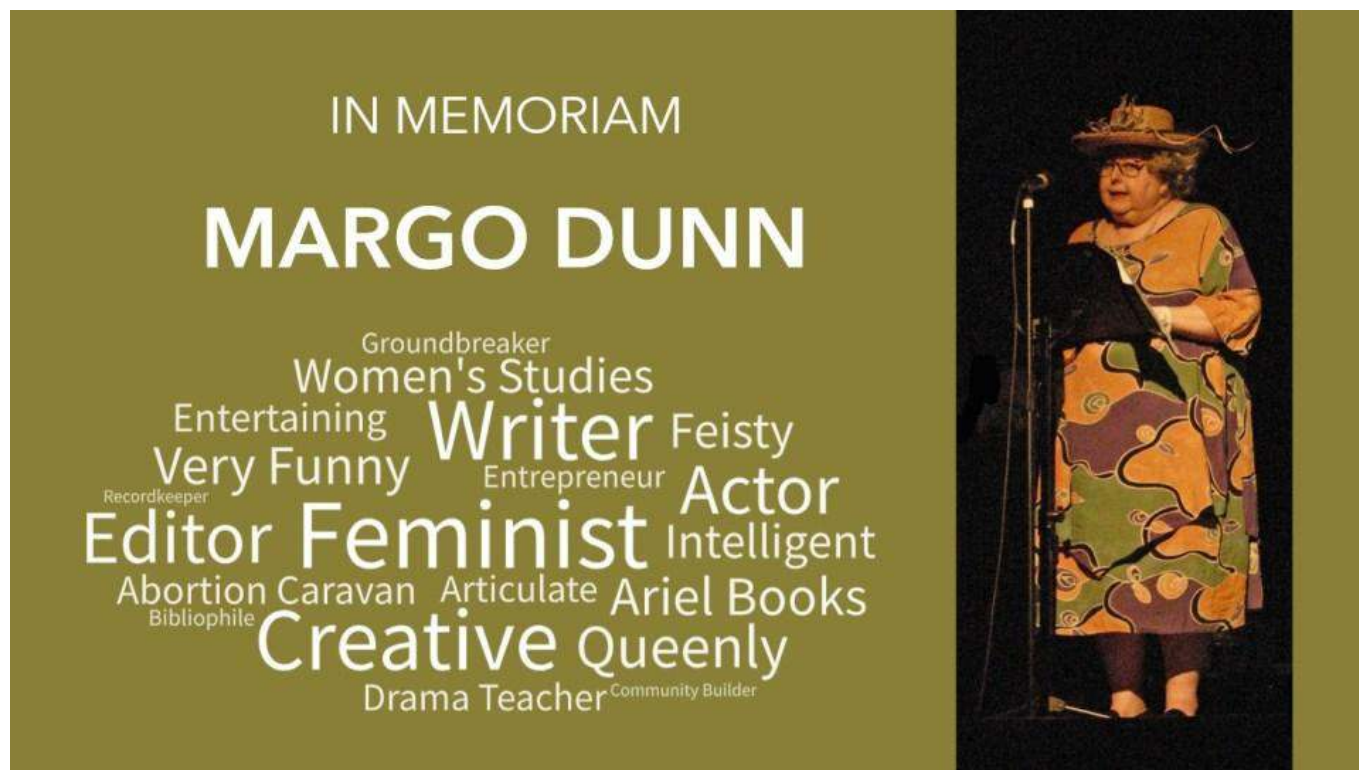
operating in Vancouver during this period; the other was the Women's Bookstore (in operation from 1973 to 1996). Indeed, Vancouver was the only city in North America that supported two feminist bookstores simultaneously for such a long period of time. Ariel Books specialized in books for women in such areas as feminist theory, politics, lesbian issues, violence against women, assertiveness, psychology, parenting, birth and midwifery, fiction and the like. Ariel Books also hosted readings by popular feminist writers, and acted as an essential resource for Vancouver women.





## TAKING THE TRAIN TO MONTREAL WITH MARGO DUNN

Cyndia Cole



I am standing on the platform at the CN train station in Vancouver taking a deep drag on what I hope to be my last cigarette ever. I have been smoking a pack a day of DuMauriers, the ones in the red boxes. I tried to quit when I got bronchitis and then again when I got pneumonia. I told myself that I had gone through withdrawal while too sick to smoke. I believed I could go back to having only one or two per day like I did for two years before becoming addicted. Back then, I couldn't afford DuMauriers and smoked only roll-your-own. I was lousy at rolling and could only make cigarettes using a crude little device. No filters, of course. Having failed to quit with those two tries, this time I am determined to go cold turkey and to never, never step back onto the slippery slope to addiction.



It is 1974 and everyone smokes. We are all persuaded by the media that smoking makes you look cool. I am only 24 and overly concerned with how I look. And there is only one non-smoking car of the very many on this cross Canada CN passenger train.



A young woman boarding in 1974

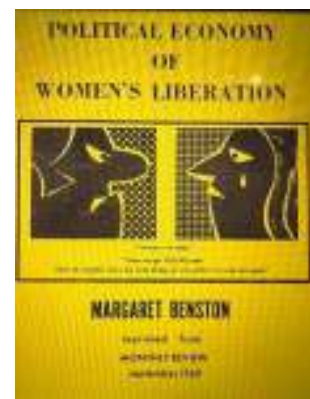
I put out the butt and mount the Day-Nighter car, my mind focused on finding Margo Dunn. She is already in the window seat and I try to arrange all my belongings next to and around her. It's going to be a long five-day trip to Montreal. Margo is very allergic to cigarette smoke and I can't be near her and have it on my clothes.

To keep Margo from an attack, neither of us can walk through any of the other smoke-filled cars. This means we cannot buy any food or drinks from the snack bar or dining area and can't sleep in the car with pull out beds. Our non-smoking 'Day-Nighter car has the seats like airplane seats with a small footrest, armrests and the ability to recline ever so slightly. I really need to be horizontal to sleep so I am only going to doze for the next five days. We have tried to pack all of our food and drinks with us. We have no way to keep anything cool. We grow to tolerate room temperature juice but, as time goes on, the crackers spread with tinned 'potted meat' seem pretty gross.



Older women crocheting while travelling in 1974

I met Margo Dunn about six months before at Women's Caucus meetings on campus. We were working with others in developing the field of Women's Studies, and towards establishing a Women's Studies Program at SFU. Margo needs to spend the summer of 1974 in Montreal to further work on her MA thesis. Maggie Benston has been invited to teach a six-week course in Women's Studies at Sir George Williams (now Concordia) University in Montreal. This is one of the first credit courses in Women's Studies at a Canadian university. To my surprise, Maggie is inviting me to team teach with her. Maggie has published the ground breaking *Political Economy of Women's Liberation* and is a tenured professor at SFU. My only credential is a very recent BA. None the less,



Maggie is committed to collective work. And she respects me from my participation in informal meetings she hosts toward her next Women's Liberation publication. So the three of us are off to Montreal together for the summer. We sublet a three-bedroom apartment on Stanley Street, walking distance to our classes in an English-speaking area near McGill.

Maggie is taking a flight; however, Margo has a fear of flying and wants to take the train. Even though it will take five full days, I decide to accompany her and see Canada from the ground. After all, it's an opportunity to get to know Margo and incentive to quit my nicotine habit.



Train trestle like those in the Fraser Canyon

Once our train lurches underway, we face long delays leaving the Fraser Valley due to flooding. At points all I can see out the train car window is water, and I wonder if the tracks are actually on a grade above it. When we turn northward into the narrow Fraser Canyon, we stop again for several hours. Finally, as the train begins to move, we are informed they had to clear a rock slide from the tracks. I begin to wonder why Margo is so certain that flying is too risky and that train travel isn't.

When we arrive in Montreal at last, almost a day late, I have seen enough of the endless prairies and endless forests of the Great Canadian Shield. For another 48 hours, my body continues to shake from side to side like it had with the motion of the train. But the great news is that Margo and I have shared our life stories, intense opinions, hopes, dreams, and are bonded. Even better, thanks to Margo's allergy, I have gotten through my nicotine withdrawal and never do smoke another cigarette. Instead of smoking on the journey, I crochet a large shawl that I think is the latest fashion. The first time I wear it, I accidentally damage it, so I can never wear it again. So far it has been my one and only crochet project.

Margo is happy to share her home town Montreal with us. We eat quiche, patè and crepes in outdoor cafes, drink wine and socialize with the Women's Studies students. Since I am only 24, many are older and more worldly than I am. I love the cosmopolitan atmosphere, the Jewish delis, the fashion. We haunt the [Librairie L'Androgyne](#), a lesbian, gay and feminist bookstore



Le premier local de L'Androgyne, rue Crescent

When Margo decides to take us out dancing, I am all in. Not far from our apartment is *Chez Madame Arthur*. Margo herds four of us there, looks around ever so briefly, snorts, "It's all men!" and promptly marches us out. All I notice are mirrored walls, loud music and not many tables. We find a restaurant and have a drink





Librairie L'Androgyne. Suzanne, nouvelle coordinatrice de la librairie avec Paul. Photo by Daniel Charland. Date [1970-1975]. AGQ-F1000, 58.  
Dr. Fonds Librairie L'Androgyne/Androgyne Bookstore. Collection of the Archives gays du Québec

friend, took me to my first lesbian places (twice) and gave me a smoke-free life. She published my poem *No Rape No in Room of Ones Own*. We always talked for hours. She graciously forgave me for some actions that broke her trust in me. She delighted me in her persona and satirical stories told as Queen Elizabeth II at Quirk-e performances. In our last conversation, she complimented my writing in a piece called *What Maggie Taught Me* which describes

some of our shared history.

And Margo was so enduringly proud that her bravery on the [1970 Abortion Caravan](#) played a key role in saving the lives and futures of countless women in Canada, women like me.

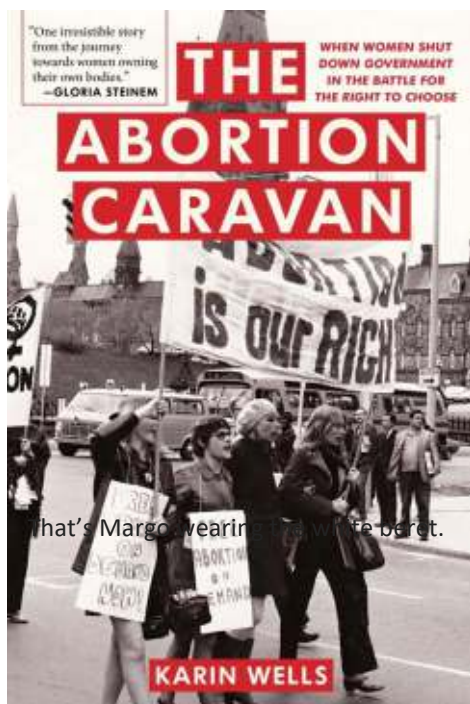
That summer in Montreal in 1974, Margo, Maggie and I can barely imagine it. That a legacy will grow from our course to build a Women's Studies program that continues for 50 years and more. Today the address of 2170 Bishop, formerly [Madame Chez Arthur](#) is home to the Simone De Beauvoir

Institute, a college of Concordia University and one of the oldest Women's Studies programs in Canada.

there instead. I am married to a man at this time, though he is back in Vancouver. I have never been to a bar in Montreal and have no idea that this is my first excursion into a lesbian bar, one that is somehow filled with men.

A year later, Margo takes me to my first Vancouver lesbian bar, *Queenies*, even though I have not yet come out. This time, I notice the pairs of women making out in both washrooms. I am deeply embarrassed to be wearing a long, flowy dress. No one else is dressed like I am. Margo and Jessie have fun dancing while I just sit nervously near a woman that I know won't come onto me, and watch.

I owe Margo so much. She is my first lesbian



Cyndia Cole



## REMEMBERING CHRIS MORRISSEY

Pat Hogan

I first met Chris when she was on staff at QMUNITY, the community centre for 2S LGBTQ+ folks. Shortly after I met her, Chris started up QUIRK-E, The Queer Imaging and Riting Kollektive for Elders. And for the past 19 years, our QUIRK-E community has written stories about ourselves, as well as poetry and plays. We have helped each

other out with our writings, worked with a youth group, published books, and supported our members many times over when they needed a helping hand. And . . . we laugh a lot.

When Chris died, we thought about the many ways she touched us and others. We thought about what we knew about her incredible strength and her inspiring life. We put some words down about who she was to us. The following are our thoughts and memories of Chris: She was a wise empathetic activist, a trailblazer and always altruistic. Chris was a leader and an organizer. She founded LEGIT, Rainbow Refugee and QUIRK-E, which are ongoing organizations. When the need was there, she simply made an organization happen.

Chris was funny and witty, always truthful, humble and loving. She was down to earth, yet resolute in what was important to her. Chris was so courageous in her work in Chile. She showed the same courage and strength in carrying on as usual, even when her leg was amputated and her health declined. She never stopped. We will dearly miss Chris, but her spirit will carry on.



In Memoriam picture provided by Don Martin





## CHRIS

Lorri Rudland

Chris Morrissey was a woman of great wisdom, compassion and a resolute spirit to make the world a better place. She was a great guiding presence in Quirk-e, the writing and imaging group that she founded, of which I am a member. Claire Robson was hired as lead artist. Chris gave me great advice on my writings and was always very supportive. She also started Legit and the Rainbow Refugee Society, helped save many lives at risk in dangerous countries, and affected a change in Canadian federal immigration law, to have same-sex couples receive equal treatment under the law.

I was one of Chris's many friends, and I liked to enjoy her company for coffee dates at JJ Bean, hosting the Quirk-e table together at community events, and eating lunch in scenic surroundings like a patio restaurant on False Creek, and another on the Fraser River in Richmond. She got her haircut at Eddie's place on Hastings Street, and I drove her there regularly, until she bought a scooter and scooted everywhere.

We both loved onion soup, and one day I took a bag of onions and some ingredients to her place and made a big pot of onion soup while Chris sat listening to her audio books. She really enjoyed the soup. Her company, her good humour, and her good counsel are irreplaceable. I feel heartbroken that she is gone. I like to think that perhaps now she is re-united with Bridget, her beloved and long term partner who had passed some years previously.



### CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF CHRIS MORRISSEY DEC 27, 1942 – APRIL 14, 2025

Our founder and one of our coordinators, dearly loved and missed by all her Quirk-e friends.



### B.C.'S CHRIS MORRISSEY, A 'FIERCE' ADVOCATE FOR 2SLGBTQ+ IMMIGRATION RIGHTS, MOURNED BY COMMUNITY

[CBC](#) Sat, April 19, 2025 at 7:00 AM PDT

Tributes for a long-time, beloved and well-known 2SLGBTQ+ advocate have graced social media and news headlines since the death of Chris Morrissey on Monday. Among those remembering a friend and a fighter is Yogi Omar, who described Morrissey as a "hero."

"She means a lot to queer immigrants," Omar, who is from Indonesia, told CBC News. "She's always doing something for the queer community; she was always trying to make the queer community a better place, more welcoming, more diverse, more inclusive for everyone."

Morrissey, who died surrounded by loved ones at the age of 82, was most widely known for founding [Rainbow Refugee](#) in 2000. The Vancouver-based organization helps people fleeing persecution based

on their gender identity or sexual orientation, and was started after Morrissey experienced a trying immigration experience with her partner.

Rainbow Refugee co-chair Sharalyn Jordan described her late friend as "indomitable, extraordinary, and fiercely loving."

**(WATCH | Chris Morrissey leaves behind legacy of strength, determination and love: Community-focused beginnings)**

Jordan said Morrissey was raised Catholic in Prince George, B.C., by a very community-oriented family. Morrissey eventually became a nun, which took her to Albany, NY, where she met Bridget Coll. "Their first mission that they were sent on together was to Chile during the Pinochet regime," Jordan told CBC's *On The Coast* host Gloria Macarenko. "They were working very closely with women's organizations on poverty issues and on protesting the dictatorship. It was brave anti-torture work that they were doing."



Chris Morrissey and Bridget Coll are pictured in a 2014 photo. (Lisa Christiansen/CBC)

Chris Morrissey and Bridget Coll relied on a network of friends for help. The pair would become life partners, but when Morrissey tried to bring Coll, of Irish and American citizenship, to Canada in the early 90s, they were told same-sex relationships were not recognized under the Immigration Act.

"So, they went to court," Jordan explained.

"They held a press conference, which in the early 90s was a big deal. At that time, we did not have equality protection, employment protection, housing protection. But by being public, they ended up gathering other people in same-sex relationships, gay and lesbian relationships, queer relationships who were facing similar struggles." Canada's immigration laws were [changed in 2001](#), allowing same-sex couples to sponsor each other for immigration.

### **LEGIT, Rainbow Refugee**

Morrissey formed the Lesbian and Gay Immigration Task Force — also known as LEGIT — an organization focused on helping people navigate the immigration process, in 1991.

"Anyone who's moved here from another place that is hostile to be queer, it's very difficult," Omar said.

"Oftentimes, when you move away, you uprooted yourself, whether you're an immigrant or whether you're from a different city, you don't have those roots and to have a whole network is so important ... [Chris] is always a big support in that world."

Morrissey then advocated for the [Immigration Act to be changed](#) to recognize same-sex couples as family, and she formed Rainbow Refugee. "Rainbow Refugee is an organization that now kind of creates communities of belonging among queer and trans refugees," Jordan said. "We will continue to do that work in honour of Chris."



Morrissey was awarded the Order of Canada in 2019 for her work supporting 2SLGBTQ+ immigrants.

"Her legacy is her paving the way for other people to be a very authentic queer person," Omar said. "I think Chris's legacy speaks very true to people who just want to be, and who don't like something in the government, the community, whatever it is, and to fight back and to know where to stand on the right side of the history and continue fighting, but loving so hard at the same time as well."



## CHRIS AND BRIDGET

Cyndia Cole

Chris Morrissey and Bridget Coll were partners for 40 years. Together they worked with others to change Canada's immigration legislation to recognize same-sex relationships as family. Their family expanded when they were adopted as grammas, a role they loved. This image shows their names on a photo of irises created by Judy Fletcher. Judy says, "Purple was Chris's favourite colour." Judy used this image to create T-shirts in their honour.



These Chris and Bridget dolls were handmade by two women enabled to make safer new lives in Canada through Rainbow Refugee Society, which Chris and Bridget co-founded.

Photos by Cyndia Cole



Chris and Bridget met in Chile when they were both nuns and working with women who bravely resisted the Pinochet dictatorship. Their cremains are interred together at Mountainview Cemetery.



## DOES RIV HAVE A LEGACY?

### River Glen

As I age, and the friends around me age as well, concepts such as taking stock, anticipation of further impairment and mortality are on my mind and in my face. The mirror doesn't lie, nor the witnessing of others I care about slipping, figuratively speaking, through my hands. I actually was gifted with cancer 21 years ago, so it allowed me to face such concepts earlier than some people. I work at keeping my feet on Mother Earth, but I also make an effort to understand how my attitude needs to be both realistic and reconciled.

The examination of my own legacy is not without some bits of pride and some bits of regret. I have won no medals, changed no policies, nor invented some great thing, and no buildings will be named after me. I admire people with talent and focus enough to have such legacies. I really value those who have done so in the service to humanity or the life on this planet. I respect the merit deserved, but honestly when compensation goes stratospheric into billions, I stop being impressed and become worried. I also have definite opinions about inherited wealth and power, but I won't go there now.

What I will admit to is that my smaller life is fine by me. I am pretty average in just about all my abilities and in my self-discipline and the extent of my ambitiousness. I definitely didn't have a silver spoon background, and I had incidences of what were, for me, various levels of trauma. I had a huge chip on my shoulder by the time I was middle school age. I was never guilty of being too attractive or having the most winning personality, but I attempted to act my way around that. In a lot of ways, I was my own worst enemy as I carried this ball and chain of insecurity and lack of self-acceptance around for decades. I also was rebellious and resentful of authority, but would go up to a line that just ducked repercussions in time. I managed to survive into my 70's now and have modest successes that make me, all in all, satisfied. I have to look at the merit of my successes with more of an informed lens though. I was white, I was pretty able bodied, and I had enough ability to learn from my mistakes to be able to go on and make different ones. But some of that was either dumb luck or the grace of help from others.

Unpacking a little more of my suitcase of life, I am proud I got my high school diploma which neither of my parents had. I found queer friends in high school and hung with them into well into my 20's. I had some failed relationships. I did a little traveling; I got an Associate of Arts at night while working full time. I worked in restaurants, as a travel agent, was in two other customer service jobs. I'll fit in here my mom had a sudden death from a heart attack a few weeks after I turned 25. It made me driven to make a family of my own, so marriage became a priority. That happened December 26, 1980, and then I co-owned an orchard in Kelowna with my ex-husband for 16 years. I helped save a heritage house from demolition and helped restore it, which I think makes me a pretty good "Recycler". I went back to school as a mature student and got a Bachelors of Social Work and did some good, I think, helping people with HIV/AIDS. I also tried to be a good ally to Rainbow people while still in my hetero marriage. I carried mountains of guilt when I left the marriage in '97 and ran as fast as could back to the queer culture I had left in the 70's.

Through the middle aging years, I got my four amazing kids raised. I hosted international students to help pay bills. I helped with the LGBTQ2SAI+ Okanagan Rainbow Coalition's presence and outreach, through putting on dances and a newsletter; I hung with the Unitarians who were the cool kids in conservative Kelowna. I served as president of the fellowship for a while. I had insecurities with my job that felt really scary to me, and with old grief I never had had time to work through, I had a physical and emotional collapse in the early 2000s. I was depressed, anxiety ridden and personality fragmented but smiled. I got blasted with fibromyalgia and learned I



River Glen



had both ovarian and uterine cancers. So, if dealing with that and dragging myself onward counts as legacy, I have that much of one.

Post the early 2000s period, mostly recovered, I moved to Vancouver in '06. I dealt with losing my father within a couple of days of moving. He was the only family of original elders left. Never having had a decent relationship with him meant it was the loss of any chance of having one, and that was where the grief lay in his passing. I got two little dogs that I wrapped my life around, and my kids over time settled in Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria, so this has been a tremendous blessing. Vancouver queer scene was hard for me to become a part of as I do have bad days of pain, low energy, being generally out of sorts, but I can also fall victim to the muscle memory of social anxiety. I had a Buddhist connection from Kelowna who opened a door for me in Vancouver when a beautiful gay man, Bill, introduced me to the Quirk-es in June of '07. I am so grateful, and I have tried to contribute to queer culture through them . . . us.

The current state of my legacy is my being part of Quirk-e. I also have been a member of the 411 Senior Centre since '06. Living in Surrey now, I can pretty much only zoom meet with the 411 Social Issues committee. I am on the Surrey Pride board and help with putting on our festival and other Pride events. I lend my voice to the committee trying for a queer centre in Surrey. I try to create community in my 55+ building by hosting "social tea/coffee and treats" regularly. I have played ukulele since, I believe, 2013. I owe gratitude to Sarah McLachlan who was so generous in giving seniors free lessons. I still play with some folks from back then and in a new group I found in Surrey. I have for several years helped a Quirk-e emeritus who is now 89 and just going into long term care. My help has given her more time to be able to live in her beloved co-op housing, in her beloved neighbourhood.



My other legacy is trying to be a grandmother, my (soon to be 5) grandkids, will remember fondly. I could go on and on about my pride in my kids, their spouses and the little ones, but just know it's the sun, moon and cosmos for me. Being the only queer in the family, known so far, their support by going to Pride events with me is beautiful. This is my current legacy. I am by no means done with using my vote, voice and means to try to contribute to a more just, safe and healthy world in the time I have left. As I opened this piece, I say again I am so appreciative of Mother Earth, glad I am privileged to be aging and serious about facing mortality open hearted.

## WHAT KIND OF LEGACY DO I WANT TO LEAVE TO MY KIDS.

### River Glen



This is something of importance to me. I love my family. I worry about the future my grandkids will have. I also love the planet and the civilizations humans have struggled to create.

First off I have always considered myself an environmentalist. So I have for most of my life been thrifty. I am proud of consuming less. In that mindset, I stopped owning a car 19 years ago and use public transportation. I also eat lower down the food chain. Wild, not fish farm. I wear clothes until they nearly disintegrate and travel sparingly. I recycle, of course, over many years.

I hope I have furthered the embracing of diversity. My parents were white supremacists. I am proud to have a family that is made in part of people of colour. I like living in the Lower Mainland for the great diversity of people. I also have been anti-war all my life. I want prison reform and mental health and addiction treatments that meet the needs of our fellow citizens.

Another piece of my legacy, I hope, is being a feminist, politically engaged, queer culture contributor, advocate and appreciator. I love queer people of the world and hope my writing in Quirk-e and membership in the Surrey Pride Society will be helpful. I believe I have modelled trying to improve myself with education, modelled a commitment to being a caregiving person and advocate for positive social change. I am trying to be available to my family whenever they need me -- to care for babies, pets or plants. I also hope the kids remember my enjoyment of their ball games or anything else I could be in the audience for. Being present and the gift of time is important.



River, her daughter and son-in-law

Financially, I am hopeful that I can save as much as I can to leave to them, but with the cost of long term care that might not be possible. Therefore, I am serious about trying to stay healthy.

## CELEBRATING OUR QUEER LEGACY QUIRK-E

Back by popular demand, QUIRK-E presented two hours of stories and images celebrating *Our Queer Legacy* at MOS, the Museum of Surrey in Cloverdale, BC on June 7. In our fourth annual appearance, sponsored by Rainbow Seniors of Surrey Pride Society, we heard stories from 12 different authors, including a slide show of *QUIRK-E Through the Years* from 2006 to 2025.



We  
honoured  
recently

deceased members Chris Morrissey and Margo Dunn.

We shared the humour and the heartbreak of personal transformations. We applauded decades of efforts to make a world with greater safety for everyone in our beloved 2SLGBTQ+ community.





And from our travelling Quirkie, Paula, comes two travel experiences, quite different from each other:

## GOOD AFTERNOON VIETNAM

Paula Stromberg



Dear Quirkies,

Here in Vietnam we have grey skies and some rain, yet it's balmy. Debbie & I are having a sweet time. It's quite a different experience travelling with someone instead of exploring alone. Both styles have their charms. This time I have not met as many interesting fellow travellers . . . but of course sharing this venture with Debbie is wonderful. We are certainly having fun.

Below are photos & a bit of adventure news.



I invited Debbie to my annual volunteer sessions for English Conversation Confidence with a local language school. The students in the photo with me are between 11 and 13-years-old. All three are exceptionally smart. Last session I learned about Vietnamese pop stars and what makes 13-year olds swoon: cutest member of the boy band, 'Hi from the Bros'; Justatee singing 'Crazy Man'. Altogether a joyful time.

This is a darling robot in Seoul airport that transports one's carry-on luggage and leads you to your boarding gate after you scan your passport or flight reservation number. Great idea, but I saw only a few robots scampering around, so they must be a pilot program. No ride-aboard feature yet.



### Vietnam Valentine

A fleeing American pal from Connecticut (who does not plan to return to USA for at least 4 years) joined Debbie & me on a private boat taking us 5 km up the river to a Vietnamese-run gong & bowls sound-bath session.



### Good vibrations

Several despondent Americans I've met over here are making arrangements to stay in Asia indefinitely.





## VOLCANOS OF RAPA NUI (EASTER ISLAND)

Paula Stromberg



Located 3540 km west of Chile in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Rapa Nui is the most remote inhabited island on the planet, a triangle 23 km long by 11 km wide.

In comparison, Saltspring Island is a bit larger at 27 km long and 14 km wide.

CHILE: I am especially thankful today to be part of our precious Quirke group and look forward to my return. I've found this current trip to Rapa Nui/Easter Island difficult emotionally, hard on my spirit—as I'll explain below.

Instead of sending a list of travel hits, I'll open up on a personal level about how overwhelmed by patriarchy I'm feeling here (easier to recognize outside one's own homeland): So many places around the world, and especially here, I've been disheartened by the invisibility of women's contributions in the Manosphere.

Patriarchal explanations of Rapa Nui myths and history, as well as Christian crosses plopped atop many of the sacred volcanoes, ritual centres, etc. have left me feeling infernally infuriated. Few of the histories, fables, petroglyphs, or lectures presented on the tours here make reference to women, contributions by women — even the famous Rapa Nui BirdMan fertility rites feature a “man-bird” — and the stone Moais are presented as male. [At least, this is what I learned from predominately male official guides doing their best. Admittedly, I have been here just a short time and am woefully uneducated about the place.] But as remarkable as Rapa Nui culture is, women seem deemed to have contributed little.

Yes, patriarchy is a foundational tool of capitalism and women's role is to serve their male counterparts. But spending a week marinating in Rapa Nui patriarchy, then catching up on USA political news and also reading daily media reports about climate emergencies, poverty, housing crises, billionaire-rich getting richer, and femicides increasing in Chile and around the world, has left me (not uniquely) with nausea/terror about the state of our collapsing world..... AND at the same time, not to lose all will to live, we might strive to simultaneously hold the pleasure, the awe, magnificence of our world. To simultaneously hold joy and anguish equally: flowers generously bubble up out of the earth, Rapa Nui sky is deep blue, ocean shores are crystal clean thanks to so little industry besides strictly-managed tourism. We can care for each other.

Unfortunately I've picked to write this Quirke travel news on a day I'm not holding that duality in balance, instead feeling overwhelmed by breathing in the polluted effects of capitalism, patriarchy, misogyny: everywhere women have to be controlled to ensure the ease of male supremacy. This writing is unpleasant to read. I'm enduring my own volcano of indignant female rage. Not good

company today. Thank you for sticking with me, reading this far — and please enjoy the photos.



Rapa Nui, the indigenous name of 'Easter Island' (name changed by Christian colonizers) seemed to be a society based on ancestor worship featuring the famous stone Moais. Today indigenous groups, particularly on Rapa Nui, struggle with the Chilean government for their right to self-determination including the right of collective ownership.

### Orongo

Orongo, a sacred volcano on Rapa Nui: Orongo settlements were built exclusively for spiritual / religious purposes, and is the most important ritual centre on the entire island.



Trying to smile in a glass bottom boat while a bit scared following a bout of rough waves on our way around the coast of Rapa Nui, visiting offshore sacred sites. I'm sure I was never a Polynesian sailor in a previous life — what bravery and expertise to explore unknown oceans.

That reminds me— do watch the Netflix series, *Ancient Apocalypse*, for more theories about these famous civilizations.



Editor's note: Quirk-e is a writing group, but it is also an imaging group, as you can see from the full name, Queer Imaging and Riting Kollektive for Elders. Quite a few of us in Quirk-e create art of various kinds as well as write, so here are some thoughts on art, and we'll follow that with some of our work.

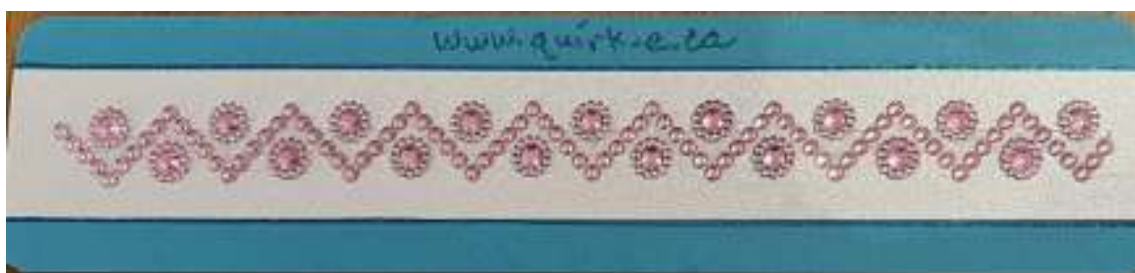
## WHAT IS ART?

### River Glen

Creative urges, thirst for culture, communication and the desire to find connection propel us on the journey to find the meaning of life in art. The people in every corner of the world feast their senses on the nourishment of imagination. Self-control, self-determination, and self-actualization are the offspring of a diligent practice. The unconditional reverence for the art makes the art illuminate the world. What is art?

Art is the force circulating through matter, animating, evolving and shapeshifting. As a river flows, so flows the magic of art to the sea of miracles. See through refreshed eyes how art is both the journey and the energy for the journey. What is art?

Amazing art can testify to the hopes, fears, triumphs and defeats of history. Like the skin that covers the flesh, bones and blood, art covers the body of civilization. Within it is concentrated and contained enough human spirit to last eons of time -- enough beauty or harsh truth to grow heart into a people, to beat the heart, to grow a brain and fire off neurons billions and billions of times, to fire off ideas, dreams, love, and more art.

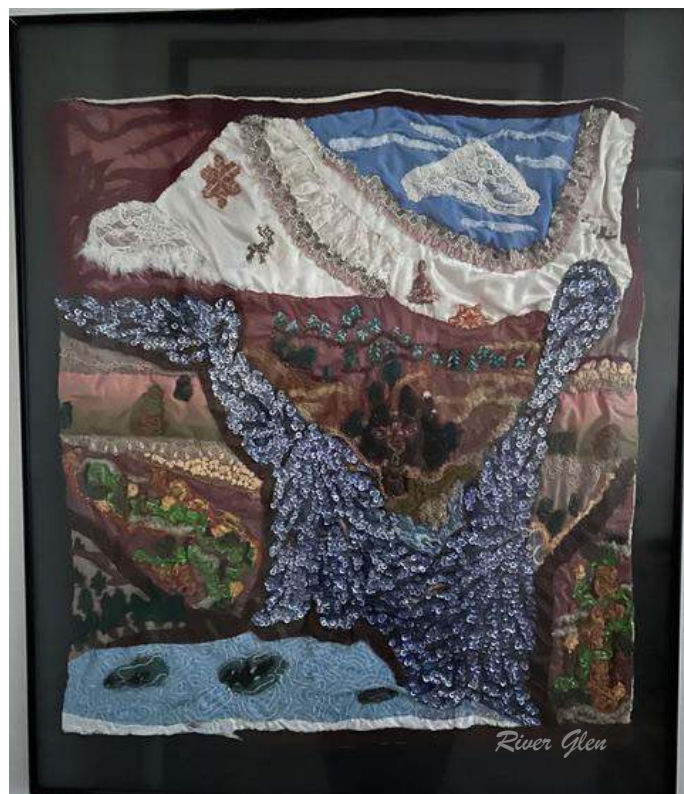


Cyndia Cole



## RIVER'S ART

River works in several mediums but most often in material. Here are three of her fabric creations plus a drawing her granddaughter did.



and her granddaughter's art . . .





## CYNDIA COLE'S ART

Cyndia and her partner **Angie Joyce** create hundreds of bookmarks and cards for Quirk-e to give away at our table at events, such as Surrey Pride, Aging With Pride, VDMF Vancouver Dyke March Festival and 411 Seniors Centre Presentation. Hours of work go into their lovely bookmarks, each one different, all bearing our website address: [www.quirk-e.ca](http://www.quirk-e.ca).



## CYNDIA COLE



Bookmarks  
and cards . . .





## MY LEGACY

Val Innes

I don't have children, so I won't leave a legacy of family when I go, but I do have a legacy: the friends I made and cherished over the seventy-nine years I have been alive, the art and writing I have created, the teaching I did for forty-three of those years, the fighting for queer rights from the time I came out in my twenties, and being an active member of Quirk-e for the last nineteen years.

As I said in the introduction to *Legacy*, we are a unique queer generation. We are the ones who marched, wrote, challenged and protested the homophobic and transphobic country we grew up in, and we changed the laws and much of the negative attitudes towards us in Canada. The way to make change happen is to be clear about what it is you want to see happen -- your goal -- and how that can be achieved: where do you need to be; who can you work with to achieve it; who will help, and at least, is there a decent chance that you might help achieve the change you want. Underlying that whole process is how important is it that the change is achieved, and the more important that is, the more prepared you need to be to put the effort into it. As a lesbian feminist, it was very important to me. Enjoying the process helped!

The first time that happened for me was when I came out to my family and friends, but as a teacher, I could not do so at work. Being a lesbian was illegal. I was lucky enough, since I played guitar, to be introduced to Heather Bishop and her circle of lesbian guitar players and singers, so I built a wonderful community for myself in the Winnipeg Lesbian community. And a year or so on, eight of us went to be part of the first Saskatoon Pride March. We were heckled, yelled at and threatened, but we marched, and we supported each other. It was the first of many marches, as the movement grew, some of them in Winnipeg, some in Ottawa, and some in Vancouver and Victoria. We became politically active, not only marching and protesting, but writing, sometimes working with Svend Robinson (who later, in 1988, became the first MP in Canada to publically announce he was gay) and Lesbian and Gay associations across Canada, against the laws and attitudes that supported the homophobic and transphobic country we lived in -- and we won. By 1969, the laws started to change:

- **1969:** The Criminal Law Amendment Act decriminalized homosexual acts between consenting adults over the age of 21 in private.
- **1977:** Quebec became the first province to include sexual orientation in its human rights code, prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in areas like housing and employment.
- **1978:** Amendments to the Immigration Act repealed the previous provision that barred homosexuals from entering Canada.
- **1992:** LGBTQ+ individuals were allowed to serve openly in the Canadian military.
- **1996:** Federal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation were introduced.
- **2005:** Same-sex marriage was legalized across Canada.
- **2017:** Federal protections against discrimination based on gender identity or expression were introduced. (Trudeau apologized for "state-sponsored, systematic oppression and rejection," saying "It is our collective shame that you were so mistreated. And it is our collective shame that this apology took so long -- many who suffered are no longer alive to hear these words. And for that, we are truly sorry."  
['Our collective shame': Trudeau delivers historic apology to LGBT Canadians | CBC News](#))
- **2022:** Conversion therapy became criminal under federal law. <https://nelliganlaw.ca/a-legal-timeline-of-lgbtq-rights-in-canada>

**For more information about getting LGBTQ2S+ rights in Canada, check out [2SLGBTQ+ Rights in Canada | The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)**

Another one of those occasions for seeing a change through successfully was when I was at Kwantlen College which became Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and I became the Faculty Association Representative from the Academic and Career Preparation faculty, which was something I enjoyed and believed in. After a time,



I realized that I probably could and should achieve having the Kwantlen Faculty Association have a LGBTQ+ representative for the Kwantlen faculty in general. The current President of the Association, I thought might be supportive of that, and she was. It took several years to work towards this goal and to talk people into it, but ultimately the Association voted in favour of creating an LGBTQ+ faculty representative, and I then became the first LGBTQ+ Kwantlen Faculty Association representative, at which point I could officially support LGBTQ+ faculty and Student Associations setting up in the various Kwantlen campuses. It takes time, effort and a clear vision of what you want to work for and who will be willing to help, but it is so worth it.



The black booth in the background is the KPU booth

At Surrey Pride this year, I was delighted to see the KPU booth and to meet those who were working at it, including Trina Prince, the director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Gender and Sexual Equity and Disability at Kwantlen – which came into existence after I left KPU. Start a process, and it continues.



KPU booth

Teaching is another part of my legacy, some forty three years of it,

(with an M.A in English and an M.Ed in Education and Counselling) all of it aimed at not only teaching skills in English and art that students needed, but at teaching people to be kind, politically aware and to think critically. Over the years, I have taught English and art as well as being a counsellor, at high schools in Winnipeg, the most notable of those, seven years at Argyle High School, an inner city, alternative school that was 97% Indigenous and which celebrated First Nations ceremonies throughout the year. In the seven years I taught there, successful graduation into university became the norm for our students. I also ran a support group for the gays at Argyle. So I touched some lives there.

Prior to that, I taught first year English for Brandon University in the Pas and Oxford House, both First Nations classes, where I both taught and learned a lot about First Nations history and people. I was outed as a lesbian at Brandon U., so that ended that contract. After Argyle, in 1991 I moved to BC where I became an instructor in Academic and Career Preparation at Kwantlen until I retired at the end of 2014. I usually taught in a continuous intake classroom with a math instructor and Fundamental instructor at several campuses over the years, making a real difference in our students' lives in preparing them for success in university or trades. We also taught them to be aware of federal and provincial politics and think through what they wanted to support.



Throughout most of my life, I have also been an artist, mostly painting in oil, acrylic or watercolour, but also creating stained glass and leather work as well as beading, which I learned to do at Argyle when, as art teacher, I brought a First Nations beading artist in to teach my class and me. So those creative works, too, I leave as part of my legacy. I also have a cottage on Fox Lake in Ontario that I helped build over sixty years ago. Along with that I will have a financial legacy; what I have will be left to my family, friends and various groups and charities.

In 2006, I was part of the initial queer writing group that Chris Morrissey started in Vancouver that became the Queer Imaging and Riting Kollektive for Elders, Quirk-e, when we refused to leave at the end of the

program! Claire Robson was hired by Chris for the initial writing group and then as the lead artist for Quirk-e, which I named when Claire ran a competition for group name. We met weekly – in person at Britannia Community Centre up until Covid, and since then, by zoom with a once-monthly in-person meeting once the Covid danger had mitigated. Over the years at Quirk-e, I have been part of producing several book anthologies, including co-editing *Together We Stand* with Don Martin, as well as seven Quirk-e Zines with River Glen and Gayle Roberts over the past five years. As a group we have also often performed publically and politically, most recently at Surrey Pride where we interacted with 350 people or more, giving out 100 website bookmarks, about 200 queer gifts and 75 slap bracelets, and 23 people gave us their email addresses to join our website.

In 2017, Claire left Quirk-e as lead artist, and we became truly a collective with, initially, 5 coordinators leading the group of about 25. Since 2017, I have been one of the coordinators. As part of Quirk-e, I have been able, by writing, speaking and performing, and by producing the Quirk-e zines, to add my voice to BC's queer movement to build and protect the rights of the queer community, something we cannot neglect, as we can see from what's happening to queer rights next door in the USA.



Another legacy we all inherit is the damage we have done to our environment, damage that is still continuing. Harris Taylor comments on one aspect of this.

## RED SKY AT NIGHT

Harris Taylor

Once upon a time, I was the camera assistant on "Heroes of the Wild", a television series about critters in danger and the humans who were dedicated to critter preservation. The program was about pacific sea otters on the northern end of Vancouver Island. The camera man was Rex, a crusty old grouch of a man who had been a sailor during WW II. He was also a sexist jerk who expected me to carry ALL of the camera gear, cook his meals and pick up his dirty laundry as well as be his camera assistant always ready to jump at his slightest twitch. Rex, myself and Bob, the flirtatious producer, were on the road together for four weeks capturing video footage of sea otters, the cutest darn critters on the sea.

Every evening after I cooked the dinner and washed the dishes, Rex would stride out onto the balcony and look skyward. He would proudly announce: "Red Sky at Night, Sailor's Delight!" or "Red Sky in Morning, Sailor's Take Warning!" My days were long and hard. I was a TV professional, but above all, a woman who was expected to take care of the men who I worked with. They spoke to each other but barked orders at me. And being Rex's dog to kick, I could not help but take great joy in mocking him by saying: "Red Sky at Lunch, Bananas come in a Bunch!"

It pissed him off but he couldn't exactly fire me in the wilds where he would never find another dog to kick who could *pull focus* on his big camera. *Pulling focus* is a precise skill. If you do it right, the shot looks great and so does the camera man. It also pissed Rex off that wherever we came ashore, I picked up the plastic litter that covered the beaches. Disgusting, I thought. But when I took the litter back to our lodge, the proprietor took it to the end of the dock and dumped it back into the sea. Another jerk, I thought. But it was the daily practice of staff to march big green garbage bags, trash, and kitchen scraps etc. to the end of the dock and dump it. Jerks!

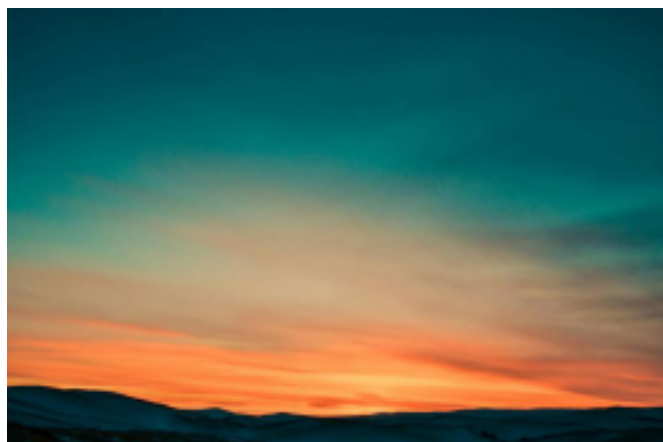






Photo by Lilian Carswell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Rex's nightly prognostications, followed by my smart-ass rebukes, continued to the very last day when our hired Zodiac boat came to pick us up. As we skimmed across the bay in the Zodiac, a small group of sea otters lay on their backs and waved goodbye to us. (It's uncanny but they really do that!).

Time for one last shot at Rex. As I said, "Red Sky at Lunch, Bananas come in a Bunch", we passed a bunch of bananas floating in the bay. I could not stop laughing till we got back to Vancouver!



### The Cold Hard Facts:

Sea Otters are affected by entanglement in plastic debris, and ingestion of plastics can cause blockage in their intestines, suffocation or the accumulation of harmful chemicals from the plastic itself.

Microplastics can absorb toxins which transfer to the fatty tissues of sea otters.

Plastic pollution contributes to the destruction of kelp forests, essential habitats for sea otters.

And carrying on the theme of climate change, here's a book review that's very pertinent to our Legacy.

## WHEN THE ICE IS GONE

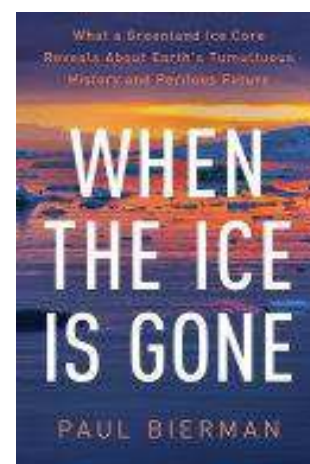
Lorri Rudland

Greenland is covered by an ice sheet that holds 217 times more water than Lake Superior, which is the third largest lake in the world. If all of Greenland's ice melted, sea level would rise by about twenty four feet. According to Paul Bierman, just under 10% of Earth's population lives within thirty feet of sea level. His fascinating book **When the Ice is Gone (2024)** reveals how ice-core and sub-ice sediment analysis "revolutionized our understanding of climate changes over glacial-interglacial time scales." It revealed that sometime in the last million years, Greenland's ice melted without people or high Co2 concentrations to allow plants to grow on the tundra.

Bierman warns that if the ice vanished before, it can vanish again, especially as our planet is warming so quickly. It will take from hundreds of years to a few thousand years to melt all of Greenland's ice sheet, but in the meantime the sea level will continue to rise, helped by the vanishing mountain glaciers and polar sea ice. Coastal cities such as Jakarta, Kolkata, Osaka, Tokyo, Hanoi, and Shanghai are at risk. Bierman adds that Venice's protective sea gate system could last from fifty to one hundred years, and Miami to about 2100 if CO2 concentrations continue to increase.

The coast of Virginia and the Naval Station Norfolk, base of the US Navy's Atlantic fleet, are being overtaken by rising water. To stop global warming and preserve the ice sheets, the Earth must "rapidly decarbonize." But even that is not enough, Bierman states. We need to lower the concentration of "atmospheric carbon dioxide" to cool our planet and stop the melt. We don't have the technology to pull carbon out of the atmosphere yet, but neither did we have other technologies. Better soil management, tree planting and protecting forests will help reduce carbon concentrations, but they are subject to the changing climate. "Greenland's ice vanished before." We need to "stop burning fossil carbon before the ice is gone again."

Paul Bierman, a geologist, and Professor of environmental Science, has written a compelling and readable scientific study of Greenland's climate history told through ice-cores. The book details the building of



Camp Century, a military camp, deep under the Greenland ice sheet for US scientists and support staff, from June 1959 to summer 1966, to execute ice-core drilling and then the decades long process of analyzing the cores.

## LOVE TAKES A LONG TIME

### River Glen.

One might say it is like a house that always needs cleaning again. Just like dust bunnies, spots on the mirrors or that gross accumulation in the toilet bowl, cleaning doesn't seem to stay done. Listless on her recliner Glen sighed feeling the weight of the effort needed to go into the kitchen and make herself lunch. With a heave and a ho like a sailor she pushed off and was soon dragging things out of the way as she took inventory of the bags in the freezer. Good there was a chicken burger, an old samosa and some frozen mixed vegetables in the corner of that bag. Tedious and uninspiring, but nothing a dab of srirachia sauce wouldn't help.



Glen wandered back to her chair, plate in one hand and a hot green tea in the other and placed her meal on the table beside her. On autopilot, she raised the remote, and muscle memory pushed all the correct buttons to find the news she had recorded. The news really wasn't something anyone should consume while trying to make the best of a meal. Ye gods, what a knife's edge the country, the world and her little life were now balanced on. She chewed and swallowed and watched and shook her head. The TV anchors had finished serving the miasma from depressing events and now were trying to help with a sappy human interest story. Yes, how nice for the sick kid to get ballgame tickets and some swag. Glen looked at the empty plate resting on her lap. I guess I'm finished, she thought, and heaved again up off the chair.

When the plate, fork and cup were deposited into the dishwasher, Glen looked at the calendar on the wall. She wrote her expectations there, also logged them on the phone, and the night before whatever she was supposed to do, she scribbled it on a scrap of paper. She wasn't remembering like she once had. From the kitchen, she looked back at the chair and the TV across from it. It would be very easy to just flop and get sucked into an episode of the too large number of series she was faithful to, some over 20 years. No, she squared her shoulders, pulled a deep breath into her mouth and decided to err on the side of self-care by going out for a walk. Maybe she'd hit the grocery store because, like the endless cycle of housework, the black hole that was a refrigerator never ceased to demand her attention and income.

It was winter. This meant a hoodie, a jacket, boots, her toque, mittens, her bag, the phone and the headphones. Glen always listened to audiobooks when walking or when on transit. She glanced at her watch noting the time and the sorry little number of steps she had logged up to that point. OK, she told herself, I'll walk the few blocks to the park and then do the loop. It was a mild day about -1 C and no wind; the sun was trying to shine through some high cloud. She had smiled and said hello to Wayne who was entering her building. He had said, "I took a few turns around the block," bouncing his cane in his hand. Glen had said, "Good for you I'm going to get some steps myself".

The residential neighbourhood had few pedestrians and way too many cars zooming around, but this is where she had landed, having got a good deal on her apartment. There was the nice park with its wooded trail that was a definite balm. This day, the path was snow covered and tree branches still had some white. It made the green of the mosses stand out rather luxuriantly. Somehow she followed the story on the headphones, thought about this and that, and noticed the birds, the man with a dog, and the rush of the little stream. Then it was slightly more of a grade, and that registered a complaint in her feet and legs. Life has its uphill stretches.



Glen had managed to have a decent night's sleep. In two days, she was going to tackle the commute of nearly two hours each way to visit Winnie, her friend, who had recently finished a courageous period of time living independently but precariously. It had only been a few weeks since a fall put Winnie in hospital, and now in long term care. Glen, Winnie's nephew and the concerned neighbours all had been confronted with their own feelings about going into care, wondering if leaving her there was cruel. None more than Winnie herself, but in the past several days at the transitional care place, Winnie had settled remarkably into happy. Glen felt a great sense of relief. Her love of Winnie had been a constant for many years. It had over time morphed from pals to Glen taking more of a caregiver role. Glen had gone every other day since the fall, but was thinking she was going to cut it to twice a week for another bit of time, and then once a week, if Winnie kept doing well.

The days passed. Some were not busy enough, and then there were two or three things in a given day. Funny how three things could feel onerous, even if they were simply more time consuming than physical exertion, and that a few days with nothing to do could make her feel like a castaway. Glen liked a day with just her music group, or a visit, or an appointment followed by one day of just being her only responsibility. But it sure seemed to pour or be a drought often.

Retirement requires determination. First, you need to determine what you can't live without, especially if you have pain or more fatigue than you used to have. Once the basic needs have been prioritized, then you can concentrate on getting enough exercise, mental stimulation, socializing and civic participation. At least, that is what Glen believed. She'd feel best about a day where she'd cover as many of these categories as possible without stress. Did she contribute to creating community in her 55+ building by helping put on a weekly social evening? Did she practice her new songs for the ukulele class or work on an embroidery? Did she phone a couple of older friends or give a FaceTime pep talk to her brother 2,000 miles away? Then there was signing petitions and passing important political info to her Facebook friends, or challenging random people on Facebook about their contempt for human rights or the natural world.

Settling back in the recliner after accomplishing the walk, some grocery shopping and a chat with a lady in the lobby, check, check and check, she ticked off a few of the day's targets in her mind. She allowed a wallow in social media for a while, and then got inspired to write a piece about how love takes a long time to grow. How love needs to fit your life circumstances. How strangers over time can become so very dear. How an expected baby can already be loved, and how fleeting the time to offer love might be. Yes, and how taking care of self is love, and fighting for justice is love of the idea of civilization. To love the natural world - that is medicine. Just like housework or buying provisions, the work at love can never stop if you want it in your life. Glen laid her phone down, eyes blurry, and realized it was definitely time to wrestle up something to eat again. She remembered she had bought stuff for spaghetti, and pasta always made her happy. The ongoing retirement of a single old lady, on the fringe of purpose, who will try some more tomorrow.



Photos supplied by River





## IMPERMANENCE AND CONSEQUENCE

River Glen

Our real participation in this thing called life feels so different from childhood to being old. I am using my remaining time on earth to comprehend as much as I can the idea of impermanence. In autumn I see all the efforts of trees fall away; winter allows what is underground to grow; spring bursts forth new growth and summer brings fruition. There is no point in trying to stop things out of our control, no point to not moving past loss and grief, no reason to not think what is new will come ready or not. Impermanence is built in, and it is good.

But everything is cause and effect. I have been here immersed in life for 71+ years. Even as a baby, I affected parents, other relatives and people my parents knew. With my playmates, the school yard crowd, the lovers, all the jobs I had over the years, I left pieces and waves of energy in my wake. I continue to reach out and to draw in the people, places, ideas, feelings and nature and human creations that abound. I am still causing ripples, making an impression, and letting things go. So yes, much of me is impermanent, but not without consequence.



Photo by River of her tattoo of an hourglass with wings...Time Is Always Flying By

Photo supplied by River

Editor's note: In Canada, we are affected by what happens in the rest of the world, particularly in the country next door, the USA. And in this time in history, that effect, as Ellen points out here, is frightening. This is the shaping of a North American legacy that very few in Canada expected or wanted. Elbows Up!

## SO MUCH FEAR, TOO MANY LOSSES

Ellen Woodsworth

Life feels like a roller coaster going too fast, people and principles thrown off in all directions.

On a glorious New Year's Day, my partner and I share our summer plans to go to a fair, remembering past rides on the roller coaster, eating cotton candy then climbing on to the swaying chairs, clinging to each other in the breeze of a hot afternoon. We were scared as the Ferris wheel ride seemed to have started early. We wondered what the year would bring, sharing what we hoped for, worried about the strength of the Conservative Party in Canada, but saw hope. We dreaded the upcoming US inauguration. I drew my annual Rune cards which exploded in the air. That had never happened to me before. Shocked, I couldn't continue.

On Jan 20, a day few in the world will forget, Trump was sworn in as President of the USA, and the richest man in the world gave him a Nazi salute. They immediately began to use the far-right Christian guidebook, Project 2025 to tear apart the last illusions of democracy. Robert Kennedy, an Anti Vaxer, was appointed head of Health Care, JD Vance a far-right sycophant of Trump's, head of Foreign Affairs and the unelected Elon Musk began tearing up millions of civil servant contracts. Thousands of purported illegal refugees were arrested and deported to jails in El Salvador; schools were ordered to stop the use of Diversity Equity and Inclusion. Gender was redefined as only male and female. Trump announced he would annex Canada making it the 51<sup>st</sup> state.



What had started as a crazy ride suddenly shifted to a horror show; screams were heard all over the world as policies, departments, human rights and jobs were flying out the windows of the White House where a TESLA, Musk's vehicle, was openly marketed. The wars against Palestine and Ukraine continued despite promises to end them, and billions of dollars of US military equipment continuing to be supplied. No one seemed to know how to stop Trump or even to understand what was happening, although everyone heard the screams and saw students, queers and others attacked while universities, quaking in fear of losing funding, were silent and court decisions were ignored. Then we saw ICE, the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency begin to round up thousands of refugees, deporting them to completely dehumanized prisons in El Salvador governed by notorious violation of human rights laws. We watched live on TV as Trump asked the El Salvadorian President for five more mega prisons for 'the home grown,' that is, US citizens.

By the time the first week ended there were unstoppable devastating daily announcements. There was no more USAid for world health putting people with Aids and other diseases at risk of dying and of spreading life threatening illnesses. Republicans with no expertise were put in charge of departments. Trump created fictitious reasons to announce enormous tariffs on China, Canada, Mexico and many other countries, destabilizing the global economy. Nothing seemed to be able to stop him. People were frozen in shock, with a deafening silence from the Democrats, except for Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) and Bernie Sanders who began travelling the country courageously speaking out. Finally, Harvard protested, refusing to implement the Diversity Equity and Inclusion regulations. Demonstrations began to rise across the US.

In Canada, there was an immediate reaction to the thought of being forced to be the 51st state and many began to fly and wear Canadian flags, refusing to buy American goods, joining an international boycott of TESLA, and millions refused to go to the US. Many were terrified that the Canadian Conservative Party, friends with Trump, was winning in the polls. Then, on March 9, the Liberal Party chose a new leader, Marc Carney, an internationally renowned banker, economist and environmentalist, who decisively stated firmly again and again that Canada would not be annexed. He announced that he supported the CBC, women, and queer rights and announced plans for much more affordable housing, but he also announced a cross-Canada pipeline and more money for defence. We wondered where the money would come from for militarism, which at \$49 Billion was already by far the largest part of the Federal Budget. What about the environment impact?



Slowly the polls started to show a shifting of support away from the Conservatives back to the Liberals. A Federal election was called for April 28. Our queer writing group created a Queer Election flyer which critiqued the five parties on the issues that are most important to us and distributed it across the country. Hope does come back. I began to plant snow peas, carrots, kale, lettuce, tall sunflowers, and my garlic emerged, although endless nightmares continued.

Just as the cycle of life is always turning, an old, respected, activist friend was hospitalized on a Saturday, and by Sunday, she decided not to prolong her life, choosing MAID. Tuesday morning, my closest cousin called in tears, telling me that her brilliant, urbanist, powerhouse niece is riddled with cancer and dying. She had just had a C section to deliver her baby, but no amount of chemotherapy at this stage could help her. At 2:00 AM I picked up her dad and partner, at the airport and rushed them through the dark, silent night to Surrey hospital. We opened her door to a room full of family; she looked so beautiful. She had just died. The baby was fine, but no one else was. Hours later, I slowly drove them to his sister's and headed home, in a state of shock and grief. The brilliant young woman, wife and mother was no more. For weeks I continued to think I saw her. Thursday night, Joy and I attended the Celebration of Life service for her sister-in-law's mother at the Arbutus Club. It was a lovely affair, with delicious food, shared stories of her hundred years of a life as a social worker caring for people. The rest of the week is a blur of daily gatherings of in-laws. We hosted the family on the day of the internment and then had a final meal. I put my cousin, in agony that she is no more, on the plane back to his farm full of memories of his dearly beloved daughter, her pink motorcycle, the room he had crafted for her from local wood, and her school photos.

I could barely look up from the week of personal grief to see headline after headline of the latest pieces of democracy stripped from US policy and practice, terrified as to what it would mean if the Conservatives won the Canadian election. I hadn't even the emotional energy to go to CEASEFIRE rallies. I cancelled meetings; I couldn't think straight and or remember anything. Every night I woke to nightmares. I planted more vegetables as shock and grief became the daily reality.

We decided to go to hear Naomi and Seth Klein talk about her book the "Shock Doctrine", wanting to be with like-minded people trying to make sense of the completely chaotic destruction of the remains of US democracy, sharing our fears for the future of the world. It was wonderful to hug old friends and corroborate our understanding of the local and global situation. On the way home, we talked about the Canadian election on Monday, but the traffic on 41st started to slow down and then came to a stop halfway down the block before Fraser. We heard ambulances and saw police cars, but after a long wait, the cars moved again. We were stunned as we passed chaos and disaster. We knew about the Lapu Lapu festival as we have many close Filipino friends. We started calling people to find out if they were okay. Everyone was in shock and grief at the slaughter of strangers caused by one person with mental health problems. The next day, the streets of Fraser at 43rd, 42nd and 41th were filled with mourning people, laying flowers and candles to remember the slaughtered. No one really knew why it happened. The politicians talked about needing more police. Saner people talked about the need for more mental health services. Torn between the horrific disaster and the Federal election the next day, I laid flowers and went back to help M.P Don Davies, worried that Don might lose his riding of decades, and the Conservatives would win the election. I was numb with fear and grief, but I knew I must help him. Monday morning, I got up at 5:30 AM to go to a polling station to observe the election for the NDP. I left at 1:30pm. There was nothing more I could do.

I knew I must try to pull myself together for my partner who was nominated for a YWCA Women of Distinction Award. I dressed up in black, silver and grey. The ballroom was full of good friends who greeted us with open arms and bouquets of flowers. We shared a delicious meal and heard from women speaking from their hearts about important new YWCA initiatives in housing and supports for single mothers. We were so fortunate to be surrounded by like-minded friends. We worried about the election results and the possible impact on our decades of work for women's liberation, queer rights and DEI. Driving home, we kept checking the election results, happy to learn Pierre Poilievre lost his seat, and it looked like a Liberal victory, at a huge cost to the NDP as a party. I am so thankful Don Davies won his seat.

Israel began bombing Gaza again, with tens of thousands of civilians already slaughtered; Trump abandoned Ukraine to negotiate a ceasefire with Russia by itself. India bombed Kashmir; Israel attacked Iran and on and on, while the billionaires make more billions fueling conflicts and destroying the environment. People are full of fear. The wonderful dreams, policies and social safety nets our generation fought for are being shredded in front of our eyes by the most powerful men in the world. The hopes for a better future for all grow dim. The Big Beautiful US Budget passed, ensuring the rich a golden future and millions poverty in prison and on the streets.

I planted some beets and potatoes at my friend's community garden. Then I went to a Nakba event to remember 1948 when so many Palestinians were displaced from their homelands. So many friends, great musicians, women modeling embroidered dresses, poets and delicious food from Tamam. I am filled with the strength and joy of numbers and decide I will start to work on a national event on Sept 21 the International Day for Peace. The roller coaster goes on and for a moment, I feel a glimmer of hope. I can do something. I will be 77 this week. I can stand with my friends for peace. Fascism will not stop without us linking our dreams and ideas in action together. When I die, I hope they will say I was one of the many who stood for peace and freedom during these dangerous times.





## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: THE ROAD TO EMPOWERMENT

### Lorri Rudland



The federal government of Canada pursued a racist and punitive policy of assimilation against Indigenous Peoples, as detailed in The Indian Act of 1876. Despite the effects of the Indian Act, combined with the lasting trauma of residential schools and an often racist Canadian culture, Indigenous Peoples of Canada have survived and are recovering strongly. We list some of their many accomplishments below in a small snapshot of Indigenous Peoples resistance to assimilation and racism.

**The following statements are excerpts from a speech by Chief Dan George, former Chief of Tsleil-Waututh Nation, BC, on July 1, 1967, speaking at the Canada's centennial celebration in Vancouver about what that day means to First Nations:**

"Oh Canada, I am sad for all the Indian people throughout the land...In the long hundred years since the white man came, I have seen my freedom disappear like the salmon going mysteriously out to sea...

When I fought to protect my land and my home, I was called a savage. When I neither understood nor welcomed his way of life. I was called lazy. When I tried to rule my people, I was stripped of my authority...

Like the thunderbird of old I shall rise again out of the sea; I shall grab the instruments of the white man's success – his education, his skills, and with these new tools I shall build my race into the proudest segment of your society...I shall see our young braves and our chiefs sitting in the houses of law and government, ruling and being ruled by the knowledge and freedoms of our great land. So shall we shatter the barriers of our isolation."

If he were alive today, Chief Dan George would see many indigenous MLAs and MPs in government across Canada:



Premier Wab Kinew

- In Manitoba, Wab Kinew, the son of an Anishinaabe chief from the Onigaming First Nations, has been serving as Premier, since Oct.18, 2023, and has been the leader of the Manitoba New Democratic Party (NDP) since Sept. 1, 2017. As of June, 2025, there are 26 Indigenous people serving in 8 provincial legislatures. In the territories, Indigenous persons form a majority of the representatives in the provincial governments of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. In the Yukon, there are 4 Indigenous MLAs.
- In the Federal government in 2025, 12 Indigenous Members of Parliament have been elected, including First Nations, Inuit, and Metis (CBC).
- Federal schooling has been shockingly bad, especially in the horror of "residential schools." The federal government is responsible for reserve schools and the provincial governments are responsible for all off-reserve schools. In 2016, the federal government provided 30% less to reserve schools (some schools don't have science labs or libraries) than the monies that the provinces provided to provincial off-reserve schools. BC, Alberta and Ontario are providing subsidies to reserve schools to supplement the underfunded federal government contributions. Through it all, determined Indigenous students have triumphed over many obstacles to get high school educations. Although only about a quarter of students living on reserves in Canada graduated from high school in four years between 2011 - 2016, some went on to Universities, and other educational opportunities. Indigenous peoples are successful in all occupations, on and off reserves. Some Indigenous Peoples do not make a habit of identifying themselves as Indigenous, and prefer simply to be recognized as accomplished in their chosen occupations.

**The Indian Act, enforced in 1876**, survives to this day with objectionable provisions. It was aimed at the control and assimilation of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada by extinguishing Indigenous self-government structures and prohibiting cultural practices.

- From 1884 to 1951, all ceremonies like potlatches and powwows were banned by The Indian Act, on the justification that these ceremonies prevented assimilation. Indigenous Peoples have reasserted their right to assemble and join in important cultural ceremonies such as the potlatch, powwow, and other events.
- Indigenous Peoples have developed organizations and connections within the reserves at local, provincial and national levels to strengthen their communities and advocate for change: Examples are the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), and the BC First Nations Health Authority, and include the re-introduction on reserves of traditional leadership structures.
- Bill C-92, Jan.1, 2020, explicitly affirms the right of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis to jurisdiction over child and family services. One important result is that Indigenous Peoples can now ensure that Indigenous children at risk can be fostered in Indigenous Homes, rather than being taken away by government services and placed in non-Indigenous homes.

Land claims are an area that progresses slowly but there is movement towards settlement of the claims, for example:

- BC is home to 202 First Nations, about one third of all First Nations in Canada. BC has settled over 665 land claims since 1973. An example of some settlements includes the Nisga'a, Tsawwassen and Maa-nuth First Nations which have finalized treaties with the governments of Canada and BC. In BC, on April 15, 2023, 5 First Nations also settled outstanding claims with the governments of BC and Canada from Treaty 8, originally signed in 1899: Blueberry River First Nations, Doig River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Saulteau First Nations, and West Moberly First Nations. And on April 14, 2024, BC recognized Haida Nation's aboriginal title over Haida Gwaii. As of now, there are about 250 "Specific" claims accepted for negotiation. About half of BC First Nations are not currently in negotiations.
- Canada as a whole, has resolved over 742 specific claims since 1973, working in partnership with First Nations.
- The benefits of land claim settlements are providing First Nations with capital to be invested in community and economic development, and the opportunity to develop their territories, under Indigenous leadership.
- Unfortunately some land claims have experienced unsuccessful outcomes such as failing to secure title to all of the land they claimed title to under government Treaty obligations.

Stewardship of the land, the air and the waters:

BC First Nations Spiritual Knowledge Keepers Gathering on Climate Change (Nov.2023). Prologue adapted from the words of Robert Nahane:

"Imagine as you read these words the sound of rushing water, of wind gusting through tree tops. Words compress experience into a single moment in time and space, yet life is boundless. As you think of the water and the Land, look inward – ask yourself what it feels like in your body.

Energy. We are of this Land. The Land is of us. Our knowledge lies in the Land, with our Ancestors, among the spirits, all around. Our medicines come from these Lands."

Indigenous Peoples have been at the forefront of protecting and advocating for the protection of the environment. One example is their fight to preserve old-growth forests in BC, particularly on Vancouver Island. They have used protests, blockades and advocacy for sustainable forest management practices that prioritize the ancient ecosystems. Indigenous First Nations have also been at the forefront of resisting pipelines on their land because of environmental concerns, for example, contamination of the water and the land, and concerns about violating their sovereign land rights.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) from 2008 – 2015, was organized by the parties of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.



- Its goal was to inform all Canadians about the history and lasting impacts of the residential school system on Indigenous peoples, while also facilitating reconciliation between Indigenous communities, churches, and the government.
- The TRC released 94 Calls to Action. In a 2023 update, by Yellowhead Institute, no Calls to Action were completed in 2023, and 81 Calls remained unfulfilled.

The Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry (MMIWG) from 2016 to 2019, was demanded by Indigenous Peoples, and particularly indigenous women.

- Its goal was to investigate and report on the systemic cases of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls, including sexual violence.
- The MMIWG released 231 Calls to Action. As of June 2023, only two Calls have been completed, and most, around 90%, have not even been started.

Sources: Chief Dan George, speech on July 1, 1967 at Canada's Centennial Celebrations in Vancouver.

📄 Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba (Wikipedia)

📄 Number of Indigenous people servicing in provincial legislatures (Saskatchewan legislative library; Manitoba legislative library, Alberta legislative library; Wikipedia, and government websites, for Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.

📄 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, by Bob Joseph

📄 Valley of the Birdtail, by Sniderman and Sanderson (for Education Information)

📄 Province of BC – Pathways to Indigenous Jurisdiction Information on indigenous peoples obtaining jurisdiction over Child and Family Services.

📄 Land Claims – Wikipedia, BC Treaty Review

📄 BC First Nations Spiritual Knowledge Keepers Gathering on Climate Change, Robert Nahane

📄 Advocacy and Stewardship, newspapers and Wikipedia

📄 Truth and Reconciliation Commission

📄 Murdered and Missing Indigenous Woman and Girls National Inquiry

## ELBOWS UP, CANADA!

Val Innes

Trump's repeated threat of annexing Canada to be the 51<sup>st</sup> state of the USA has met with massive resistance in Canada. 90% of Canadians do not want to be part of the USA<sup>1</sup>. And as I look at the havoc Trump is creating in his country, I would ask why would we ever want to be part of a country that is attacking civil rights, the rights and freedom of schools and universities, LGBTQ2S+ rights, and its citizens' ability to have Medicare or anything that helps disadvantaged people. Canada is not perfect, but it is head and shoulders above the States in caring for its citizens. Trump and the Republicans only care about the rich and making them richer. Full stop.



So Canada elected a government that should be able to deal with Trump and get our economy off its dependence on the USA instead of one that would suck up to Trump, and we look for economic connections elsewhere in the world -- and we prepare to do emotional battle. Fewer of us visit there, most of us buy Canadian whenever and wherever we can, and our elbows are definitely up. The centuries old relationship between our countries is broken and gone; the trust has been shattered by tariffs, by attitudes, and by threats. Elbows up, Canada!

1. [51st State: Canadian resolve in saying 'no' continues, while a massive gap between Trump & Americans is revealed -](#)



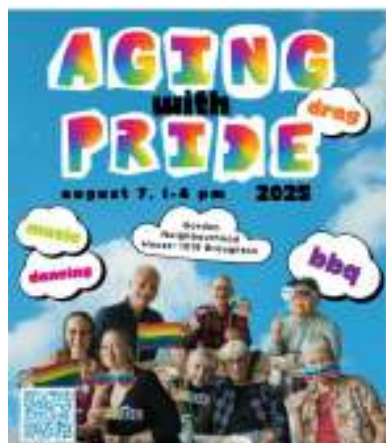
## THE 26<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SURREY PRIDE FESTIVAL 2025

### River Glen

We smiled all day long, my Quirk-e family, my Surrey Pride family, my family and people of all walks of life enjoying the festival. On June 28, 2025 we Quirkies held court at one of 50 + booths that ranged from community services and corporate sponsors to interesting vendors with all sorts of must haves for sale. Thanks to Cyndia and Angie, there was lots of free swag, and Quirk-e was up for it, giving away over a 100 handcrafted bookmarks, snap brackets, toys and temporary tattoos, and some printed copies of our last zine which were very appreciated.



Lots and lots of networking happened for hours. On the stage Surrey Pride was graced by Mayor Locke, councillors and other dignitaries. All taking place on the city hall plaza.



### QMUNITY'S "AGING WITH PRIDE"

Look for Quirk-e on August 7, at Qmunity's "Aging With Pride" event and come join us. It's Qmunity's biggest seniors' event of the year. The plan is for drag, BBQ, dancing and more. It will be at the Gordon Neighbourhood House, 1019 Broughton St., 1PM-4PM. It is always great fun and wonderful chance to see old friends and meet new ones.

And keep in mind **QMUNITY Gathers: In-Person Meet Ups**

55+ 2SLGBTQIA+ Drop-In Program. Come join us for in-person gatherings to network, share culture, and talk rainbow life after 55. All are welcome, we prioritise a confidential space.

#### QMUNITY Gathers: Gordon Neighbourhood House

- **When:** 1:00 pm, Every Monday
- **Where:** 1019 Broughton St, Vancouver, BC V6G 2A7
- Facilitated by Ben Wilder, QMUNITY Staff



**Qmunity** is a non-profit LGBT2S+ organization based in Vancouver that works to improve queer, trans and 2-Spirit people's lives, providing a safe space for them and their allies to fully self-express while feeling welcome and included. The new building under construction will be an even greater catalyst for community initiatives and collective strength.

Quirk-e has been in a mutually beneficial relationship with Qmunity for many years. Qmunity provides us with events that we can participate in throughout the year. In addition, Quirk-e's zine publications have been graciously printed and distributed by Qmunity.

Quirk-e looks forward to many more years of collaboration with Qmunity.

Qmunity- <https://qmunity.ca>, [reception@qmunity.ca](mailto:reception@qmunity.ca), 604-5307 ext. 100  
1-800-566-1170

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:dignityseniorssociety@gmail.com)
- Vancouver Pride Society <https://vancouverpride.ca/>
- Surrey Pride [surreypride.ca](http://surreypride.ca)
- Alex House [alexhouse.net](http://alexhouse.net),
- New West Pride <https://newwestpride.ca>
- Youth 4 A Change <https://www.youth4achange.net>

Collected by River Glen

A site River Glen thought you might be interested in is **Good News from LGBTQ Nation**  
<[newsletter@lgbtqnation.com](mailto: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.



# TREASURE OUR LEGACY

## AND WORK TO CHANGE WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE



Rachel Marie  
Martin

**QUIRK-E**   
Queer Imaging & Riting Kollektive for Elders