

PFLAG TORONTO

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

February 2011 Newsletter

toronto.office@pflag.ca

PFLAG TORONTO VISION

PFLAG Toronto is a charitable organization that speaks for a more accepting Canadian society by providing support, education and resources to all people who wish to grow in their understanding of sexual and gender diversity.

Through our PFLAG Toronto Chapter, we actively assist in the recognition and growth of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer and questioning persons, and their families and friends, within their diverse cultures and societies.

Next Chapter Meeting

Wednesday
MARCH 2, 2011
7:30 p.m.

Kimbourne Park United Church
200 Wolverleigh Blvd.,
Toronto, ON M4C 1S2

2011 Bowling Fundraiser

Mark this date on your calendar for the PFLAG Toronto Bowling party.

Saturday May 14, 2011
at 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

at BOWLERAMA WEST
5429 Dundas St. W.



Raffle prizes for Bowling 2010

A message from your President

Change. We either wish change would come sooner or hope things never change. It all depends on the situation, doesn't it?

South Pacific is showing at the Toronto Centre for the Arts – at least I think that is the current name of the theatre in North York just north of Sheppard Avenue. The name keeps being changed!

South Pacific by Rodgers and Hammerstein had its debut on Broadway in 1949. Over sixty years ago this musical took Broadway by storm, and one song in particular was very daring in that the lyrics (below) were about hate, and prejudice and racism.

*You've got to be taught to hate and fear, You've got to be taught from year to year,
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear, You've got to be carefully taught.*

*You've got to be taught to be afraid, of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a different shade, You've got to be carefully taught.*

*You've got to be taught before it's too late, Before you are six or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate, You've got to be carefully taught!*

I had forgotten that song so when I heard the lyrics being sung recently on a Toronto stage they struck me quite forcefully, although as the parent of a gay man and a PFLAG volunteer, I applied the words to sexual orientation. It made me think that indeed hatred is not inherent, it actually does have to be taught!

This came to mind when I attended the Community Meeting on February 9th at the 519, organized by Enza Anderson to address the escalation of homophobic acts in the Village.

Some of these homophobic acts have been attributed to students of high school age, and during the Community Meeting a representative from the TDSB informed us that as per curriculum guidelines, in all Toronto schools, students in Grade 9 are being taught about anti-homophobia. Students turn fifteen (15) years of age in Grade 9.

Perhaps by age 15, it is too late to introduce anti-homophobia lessons. Perhaps we are missing an opportunity to help make change happen. Perhaps we should revisit our education system and ensure our young are taught positive messages in school about people who are in any way different, and that these messages be offered to students at a much earlier age - before they learn to mistrust, prejudice or even hate someone who looks, sounds or just appears to be different from them in some way.

It has been sixty years since Rodgers and Hammerstein challenged us with thought-provoking lyrics about racism. Things have changed since then. But more change is needed. Through your support for PFLAG Toronto you can help us to continue to help make change happen in our community

And if you haven't seen it yet, or it's been years since you saw it the first time, consider going up to Sheppard Avenue and enjoying this beautiful musical. The cast is superb, and a couple of them are wonderful young friends of mine who'd be delighted to know that PFLAG supporters are in the audience.

Irene Miller



PFLAG Pride breakfast 2010

Next Board Meeting

Wednesday
March 16, 2011
6:30 p.m.

Kimbourne Park United Church
200 Wolverleigh Blvd.,
Toronto, ON M4C 1S2

Message from the Secretary:

Our next fundraising event is in May for our Bowlathon. It should be a fun Saturday afternoon for everyone involved. If you are interested in donating a raffle prize, getting a team together, or perhaps sponsoring someone who will be bowling please email: toronto.office@pflag.ca with your contact information. You may even just want to drop by to support us and cheer everyone on!

Bev

PFLAG Toronto wants to offer a heartfelt 'Thank You' to the wonderful people who have recently made a donation to PFLAG Toronto. Your donations are allowing us to continue offering our 24/7 Telephone Support Line, our Monthly Support Meetings and our ongoing outreach and community support.

As a fully volunteer run organization, your donations make a direct impact in the lives of those who need our help.

If you would like to help, you can make a donation through the secure servers at CanadaHelps.org (charitable donation receipts are issued automatically), and if you wish you can specify that your donation remain anonymous, or you can choose to honour someone or a special occasion. Or you may send a cheque to PFLAG Toronto, 200 Wolverleigh Blvd., Toronto, ON, M4C 1S2. (charitable donation receipts will be issued for amounts of \$20 or more)

DONATE NOW <http://www.canadahelps.org/CharityProfilePage.aspx?CharityID=s70090>

Charitable Registration BN: 891493348RR0001



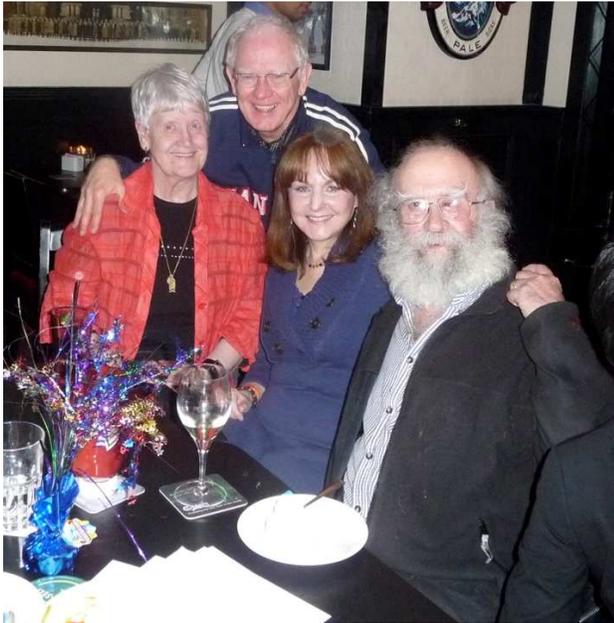
Jim, Ernie, Kristyn and Bev



Irene, Ernie and Kristyn

PFLAG Toronto board member Ernie Lacasse's 75th

Ernie Lacasse celebrated his 75th birthday with friends recently at the Churchmouse & Firkin on Church St. Ernie has been on the PFLAG Toronto board for about nine years. He started as the treasurer and now serves as a board member at large.



Pam, Jim, Anne and Ernie



Ernie and friends at the Churchmouse & Firkin

Coming Up

International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

May 17, 2011



International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia
2010

Community Meeting - 519 Church Street February 9th, 2011

Over one hundred community members came out to address the recent occurrence of homophobic acts in the Village.

We heard from community members who shared their experiences and indicated unease at the escalation in homophobic behaviour. Representatives from Toronto Police urged anyone who witnessed or experienced an act of homophobia or aggression to immediately contact the Police.

It had been reported that students from Jarvis Collegiate may have been involved and representatives from the Toronto District School Board spoke in general terms about anti-homophobia curriculum in all schools. Two Jarvis Collegiate students spoke about their experiences and gave good insight into the student body at Jarvis, and their perception of the negative attitudes held by some students in the school.

At the end of the meeting there was hope expressed that future meetings could be arranged directly with the administration at Jarvis Collegiate to discuss ways to help resolve the problem.

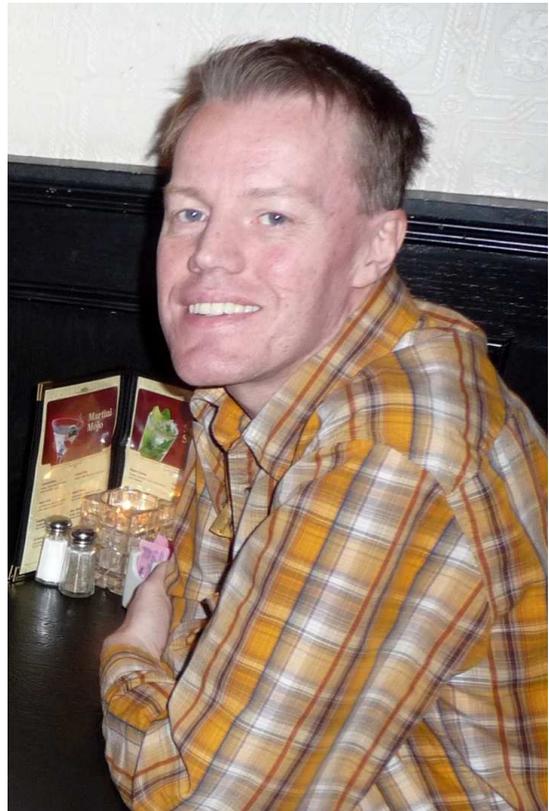
Thank you Enza Anderson for organizing the Community Meeting, creating a forum for discussion and inviting PFLAG Toronto to say a few words during the evening.

Irene Miller

'COMING OUT'

by

David Page



'Coming Out', announcing to the world and your nearest and dearest that you are gay is never an easy thing. I have heard horror stories from friends of how they were rejected by their families, friends and the all important icon to any gay man; their mothers!

My story is less tumultuous than some, but at the time was more difficult than anything else in my life. The hardest person for me to come out to was not my Mother or Father, or even the family dog or my grandparents.

At the age of twenty-one (at that time the legal age to be gay in the UK- 1989) I decided to do something about my nascent gayness. I decided it had to be a Friday, you can only, really, decide you're gay at the start of a weekend- somehow it's easier or made more sense to me at the time. I decided I would need to travel into the heart of London and go to Soho.

After two failed attempts on prior Fridays I finally managed the journey all the way into

Soho and aimlessly walked around until I found a bar called the 'Brief Encounter', it had a large pink neon triangle lighting up its name; I actually agonized for about ten minutes, wondering if this meant it was a gay bar. I started to walk in and at the last moment walked past the front door, then again I started to go in...But not quite. After fifteen minutes of nearly going in but not quite managing it I finally managed to stick my courage to the pink, fuzzy place deep inside all gay-men's hearts and walked inside.

I ordered a drink. A double. After about thirty minutes, when I finally stopped shaking, I realized that guys were looking at other guys; there were no whips or chains, no leather or handcuffs, nothing, in fact, that would make you worried or scared.

The rest, as they say, is history.

'Coming Out' to my mother was actually a non-event. I knew I had her love because of who I was; I just had to love myself first. I threw a party at my student digs in London, invited my mother, three of my closest gay friends and my sister (the only person who knew at the time) and locked them in the front room whilst everyone else drank in the kitchen.

After the hour of panic I walked in to hear the immortalized words from my mother, "But I really wanted grandchildren!"

Now, twenty-two years later I live in Toronto and see my mother several times a week (She followed me here from the UK- we've always been close). A member of the PFLAG board- if you've ever been to a PFLAG event you'll have met my mother; Pam, or at least bought a teddy bear wearing a rainbow scarf knitted by her.

Coming out to my mother and later the rest of my family was never hard for me; I think the hardest person to 'come out' to is always yourself.



Rainbow Scarf



Rainbow scarf and mitts

Pam's Knitting For Sale (Net proceeds to PFLAG Toronto)

Cost:	Rainbow tiger and teddy	\$20 (each)
	Rainbow mittens	\$10
	Rainbow scarf	\$40

Mailing costs are not included in these prices.

If you are interested in making a purchase send an email to Pam at pamreefairy@hotmail.com



Rainbow Tiger



Rainbow Teddy

THANK YOU

Thank's to all our Volunteers and Donors.