

OUTWORDS



CLGRO

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

CHRIS BEARCHELL

IN MEMORIAM

CHRIS BEARCHELL

August 16, 1953 - February 18, 2007

A NATIONAL ICON

A well attended and moving Memorial Celebration of Chris Bearchell's life and pioneering work took place on Wednesday, March 21st, 2007 at the 519 Church St. Community Centre.

Following are some notes prepared by Nancy Nicol for the memorial announcement:

Chris Bearchell, 53, died on Feb. 18, 2007, in Vancouver General Hospital, after a lengthy and courageous battle against cancer. Her recent home, until two weeks before her death, was on her beloved Lasqueti Island, near Vancouver Island, B.C. Chris spent many years of her life in Toronto, where she made a major contribution to social justice, human rights and LGBT organizations.

"They think that when they pick on us that they're picking on the weakest. Well, they made a mistake this time! We're going to show them just how strong we are. They can't get away with this shit anymore! No more shit!"

Chris Bearchell

(protesting the bath raids, midnight, Feb. 6, 1981, Toronto)

Chris Bearchell is a towering figure in the history of gay liberation, a courageous and compassionate woman who was in the forefront of founding the first lesbian and gay organizations in Canada. Chris cared deeply for human rights and fought for those who were most marginalized in society. Those of us who today live with greater openness and

freedom in our lives owe much to this brave soul.

Chris became involved with the anti-Viet Nam war movement, and the pro-choice movement (the Campaign to Defend Dr. Henry Morgentaler) while still a teenager in Edmonton in the late 1960s. At the end of the '60s Chris moved to Toronto and became involved in the emerging gay liberation movement. In 1976-77, she was on the coordinating committee of GATE, the Gay Alliance Toward Equality in Toronto, (with Tom Warner and Brian Mossop). Chris was also instrumental in establishing the GATE Lesbian Caucus. She began writing for the Body Politic, (TBP) in 1975, Canada's voice of the gay liberation movement. Chris joined the Body Politic governing collective in 1978 and stayed until the paper's demise in 1987. Chris also co-founded the Lesbian Organization of Toronto (LOOT). She was at the founding meeting in 1975 of the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO) (now Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario (CLGRO)) and became one of its key players. Chris became the first Chair of the Committee to Defend John Damien, a former jockey and horseracing steward who was fired in Ontario in 1975 solely for being gay. John Damien's case was the first test case that fought for the inclusion of non-discrimination against lesbians and gays in the Ontario Human Rights code. During 1978 Chris became involved in the Coalition to Stop Anita Bryant and in Lesbians Against the Right (LAR).

Chris is survived by Irit, Andrew, Will Collin, Penny, Konnie, Jim and many, many more close friends and family.

For more information about Chris Bearchell, please go to The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives: www.clga.ca.

April 2007

CLGRO

Steering Committee Meeting & Annual General Meeting

May 5, 2007

Saturday, 12-5 pm

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

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

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

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

Welcome MCC London A new CLGRO Member Group

LONDON ONTARIO

On January 29th the London gay community held its second Community Building Forum at the Aeolian Hall. Preliminary reports were received and discussed in three areas, the development of a communications network, the establishment of a community centre and the overall direction of the GLBT community in London.

The consensus of opinion was that priority should be given to communications, as the most likely

"deliverable" to be achieved in the near term. Unfortunately there was no election campaign at the time. Politicians were not looking for votes, so they were not in attendance.

The next meeting date was left open, and future deadlines will be set once volunteer members for an informal Board have met. The persons in attendance agreed to leave immediate future developments in the hands of a steering committee and an informal Board which is being formed from volunteers. At the time of writing the informal Board has been expanded to six persons.

Metropolitan Community Church of London is taking a significant role in these developments, and support is being received from MCC at District International levels.

London LGBT Community Building Forum Update

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE WIDELY

Please be advised that the process for forming the LGBT Steering Committee has been completed. The committee will be meeting for the first time on Sunday March 25 with the intent to begin to articulate a vision and mission and identify an effective community reporting strategy. The Steering Committee includes:

Natalie Hebert	Leisl Biebesheimer
Ryan Campbell	Carl Bryan
Brian Lester	Barry Smith

Other individuals have expressed interest in working with the committee in an advisory capacity and they will be called upon based on their specific skills and as dictated by priorities of this initiative

We would like to thank everyone who expressed interest in contributing to the development of this initiative.

BUDGET

Generally the CLGRO budget for the 2007/2008 fiscal year will follow the same lines as the budget for the 2006/2007 year except that we will not plan to hire a political action coordinator, opting instead to hire only for specific projects. Also, we have decided to give up our office and move operations to a work area at the 519 Community Centre

(519) which will reduce our rent payments considerably.

Most of us already do our work at home and on our own computers and we should be able to manage without a full office. The work area at the 519 will enable us to maintain our not for profit corporate status. With the exception of the Steering Committee Meetings, our meetings are already usually held at the 519. Now that we seem to be able to complete the Steering Committee Meetings in one day, we expect to be able to hold them at the 519 as well.

We will continue to budget money to upgrade our website. Once that is completed we will hopefully be able to balance our budget and not need to keep drawing on our assets. A complete budget will be approved at the Annual General Meeting.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Bill 107, an act to Amend the Ontario Human Rights Code has passed in the legislature with amendments. The law does not fully implement the Cornish Report and there are concerns about lack of appeal process, but the amendments generally addressed our concerns. They struck out contract services and charging fees, and provided money for a Human Rights Legal Support Centre. The Centre will report to the Minister, send a budget every year and will have accountability. Access is supposed to be available throughout the Province.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission will be able to intervene in more cases where there are concerns about systemic discrimination. The time limit for filing a complaint will be extended from six months to one year. There are concerns about the extent to which funding will be provided for legal representation at tribunals. A lot will depend on who is appointed to run the centre and we will need to monitor that.

We have been informed by the Commission that they will continue processing and resolving discrimination complaints for some months to come (the Government has indicated that Bill 107 will not be proclaimed in force for up to 18 months). They are starting a pilot project aimed at increasing the efficiency and shortening the processing times of the complaints system. The emphasis is

on fixed mediation dates and fact-finding meetings.

Once Bill 107 comes into force, individual cases will go directly to the Human Rights Tribunal. Support for those complaints will be provided by the Human rights Legal Support Centre. It is anticipated that the Tribunal will hold public consultations as it works out the new process.

HEALTH

Queer Health Matters: A Health Fair for the LGBTTQ Communities

The Rainbow Health Network (RHN) (an advisory group to CLGRO) will once again be partnering with the Sherbourne Health Centre in presenting the fourth annual community health fair, Queer Health Matters: A Health Fair for the LGBTTQ Communities. Queer Health Matters will be held on Saturday April 21st, 2007 at Sherbourne Health Centre, 333 Sherbourne St., Toronto (1 block south of Carlton St., east of Allan Gardens) from 11.00 am – 5.00 pm. This **FREE** event is designed to appeal to all members of our diverse and vibrant communities. 185 community members attended in 2006.

The goal is to inform the Toronto LGBTTQ communities of the local health care resources available to them, while at the same time promoting awareness of important health issues.

We would like to invite you to join us in a day of celebrating the health and well-being of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender and queer communities by participating at this health fair. The Queer Health Matters programming featuring **research** project presentations, health/wellness **workshops**, facilitated group **discussions** and other related programming will run from 12.00 – 5.00 pm.

International Day Against Homophobia

Plans Under Way for International Day Against Homophobia

At press time plans were underway for CLGRO to participate in celebrating International Day Against Homophobia

(IDAHO). This will be taking place on Thursday, May 17, 2007. This year's theme deals with combating homophobia in the sphere of early childhood and in the education field. Contact the CLGRO phone line for more information closer to the date.

IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE ISSUES

There has been no response to a call for input on next steps sent out with the minutes of the November 7, 2006 meeting hosted by CLGRO on immigrant and refugee service provision and rights which was described in the last newsletter. It does not appear, therefore, that there is a need for continued efforts on the part of CLGRO to coordinate the network of more than 50 individuals and organization which attended or have expressed interest at the time the meeting was called and since.

This exercise has been very helpful to CLGRO. We now have a much clearer understanding of the complex wide range of concerns which brought these issues to our attention. As well, we have a much better resource list for referrals of individuals seeking assistance. It also appears that what seemed to be some temporary gaps in services are being filled. We plan to be represented at the launch of *Among Friends*, an initiative which is "designed to support community-based agencies in creating more positive spaces and services for LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer) refugees and immigrants," hosted by Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre, the 519 Church Street Community Centre and CultureLink. The initiative is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the launch takes place April 3, 2007 at the 519 Church Street Community Centre.

Since CLGRO is not in a position to provide direct services to individuals, we see our role as being primarily that of assisting with advocacy, which many groups providing direct services are unable to do because their funding sources are related to charitable status. We have added our name in support of some efforts drawn to our attention by ARC International (www.arc-international.net), a project-driven organization, based in Canada, designed

to make a contribution to the development of a strategic international Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender human rights agenda.

Below is the text of a letter which CLGRO has sent regarding Bill 280, a private members bill brought forward by Nicole Demers, M.P. to ensure the enactment of appeal procedures for refugee applicants. This bill was brought to our attention by Amnesty International and individual support can be provided at http://www.amnesty.ca/take_action/actions/online/support_bill_C-280.php.

Dear Ms. Demers:
I am writing to you on behalf of the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario to express our support for private member's Bill C-280 An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (coming into force of sections 110, 111 and 171) which was introduced by you and had first reading on May 12, 2006. We wish to thank you for introducing this legislation which we consider extremely important.

It has come to our attention that some refugee applicants who are gay and may even face execution if they are returned to their homeland risk being told by Refugee Board Members that they can live in their native land in secret and that is sufficient reason to deny their application. This is far too serious a matter to be left to the discretion of one person alone, which has become the situation with the failure to implement the Refugee Appeal Division in the 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

We have fought long and hard to end this requirement of secrecy in Canada and are too aware of how devastating such a requirement can be. We understand that the lack of an appeal on the merits has been criticized by international bodies including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We must not allow the good reputation Canada has earned for being an accepting and nonjudgmental destination for people seeking refuge from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation to be destroyed.

Thank you again for introducing this legislation
c.c.: (Hon.) Diane Finley,
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

MINUTES SUMMARY

CLGRO Steering Committee Meeting, January 27, 2007

In follow-up from the last meeting, we sponsored and were represented at a successful Bisexuality Day event in Toronto, we have assisted with attempts to improve the police complaints system through membership on the Toronto Police Accountability Coalition and by supporting a successful individual complainant, and we were able to make a presentation regarding proposed changes to the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Other actions we have taken since the last meeting include signing a petition regarding blood services, supporting the universal decriminalization of homosexuality and signing a UN joint non governmental organization statement, and providing moral support to a group of high school students encountering difficulties forming a Gay Straight Alliance.

We regret that our Political Action Coordinator, Arti Mehta will be leaving after she has completed work on the upgrading of our website. She has our best wishes in her new employment at the Access Alliance Health Centre.

On-going projects we are working on are a celebration of Anti-Homophobia day in May, looking into challenging the charitable status regulations, fundraising is always a major concern and we welcome any suggestions, we helped organize and co-chaired a meeting on immigration and refugee issues and are looking at next steps, we agreed to write in support of a bill to implement appeal provisions in refugee cases, a submission was sent to all MPs regarding proposed changes to age of consent legislation, we are developing efforts to address education issues, and we continue to address health issues through representation on the Rainbow Health Network .

New projects we are looking at include a liberation project proposal involving a conference with an edited anthology of the presentations on a liberationist perspective of queer communities, we would like to send a delegation to the International Lesbian and Gay Association World Conference in Quebec

City in May 2008, and we are preparing to find ways to get our concerns addressed in the provincial election.

AGE OF CONSENT

Although CLGRO, the Sex Laws Committee and the Age of Consent Committee all sent submissions to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and asked to make a presentation, none were invited. We eventually managed to get one time slot when another group declined their invitation. We agreed that the Age of Consent Committee should be the one to present because it is a youth lead committee. Their presentation is taking place as this newsletter goes to press.

PLANNED GIVING

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

FROM THE MAILBAG

Conferences & Workshops

Therapeutic Conversations: May 17-19, 2007, The University of Toronto (St. Mike's College). Questions: Mariana Sussi 416-203-9768, www.therapeuticconversations.com.

World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) 20th Biennial Symposium September 5-8, 2007 in Chicago Ill. USA. www.wpath.org/20061stAnnouncement.htm.

Volunteers/Help Sought

LGBTTTIQ women wanted for psychology study regarding coping strategies of queer wimmin who have had experiences of sexual assault. Contact Alins Sotskova, alina416@yorku.ca.

Research Project on bisexuality, mental health and emotional well being. Contact bisexual_health@camh.net, 1-866-371-6667.

Research on sexual minorities' exposure to prejudice and discrimination and affect on health and well-being. University of Saskatchewan. Contact www.socialjusticeresearch.com.

Queen's University research for people who are married or cohabiting. Contact Sexual Health Research Laboratory at 613-533-3276, shrl@post.queensu.ca.

University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) is collecting data regarding the intimate and sexual relationships of men who have sex with other men in Canada. Contact www.blais.uqam.ca.

University of Lethbridge, Alberta studies to help understand more about relationships between sex, sexual orientation, and behaviour. Contact doug.vanderlaan@uleth.ca. Survey at <http://people.uleth.ca/~doug.vanderlaan/sostudy.html>

Contributors: Richard Hudler, Nick Mulé, David Smith, Tom Warner

About the newsletter

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

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

About CLGRO

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

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

I want to be part of CLGRO!

Enrol me as a member right away!

- Here's my 40.00 one-year membership fee.
 I'm a student or unwaged so here's my \$20 membership
 I'd like to donate\$ _____ to CLGRO
 I'd like to donate \$ _____ to CLGRO's trustfund.*
 I'd like to join CLGRO's monthly giving program and donate \$ _____ each month by postdated cheques (enclosed) or credit card.
 Please charge to visa mastercard
Number _____ Expiry date _____
Signature _____
Name _____ Telephone _____
Address _____
Town/Province/Country _____ Postcode _____
E-mail _____

*interest only is used for operating expenses.