

# OUTWORDS



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



**APRIL 2008**

## CLGRO Annual General Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting

May 3, 2008  
Saturday, 12-5 pm

Location:  
519 Church Street Room 23  
Toronto Ontario

Access:  
The 519 Church Street building  
is accessible.

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

## OUTWORDS ELECTRONIC

We are now able to send *Outwords*, the CLGRO Newsletter, electronically. If you wish an electronic copy of *Outwords* to forward to friends and potential new members, or if you want to save trees and CLGRO postage and mailing costs by receiving your newsletter through e-mail, just send an e-mail to [clgro@web.ca](mailto:clgro@web.ca) saying so.

## HEALTH

### Ontario Rainbow Health Resource Centre Now in Formation

On the evening of March 13, 2008 the Sherbourne Health Centre (SHC) hosted a 'Preview Evening' regarding the formation of the new Ontario Rainbow Health Resource Centre (ORHRC) for members of CLGRO and the Rainbow Health Network (RHN). Funding for the Centre will come from the Ontario Ministry of Health. The recently appointed director of the Resource Centre and former manager of the LGBT Services Program at SHC, Anna Travers, provided a presentation that featured an overview of the broad health issues and concerns of the LGBT populations, followed by a preliminary look at the early stages of the Resource Centre's formation.

Questions and discussion then took place in which it was learned that the roll out of the new Centre would happen slowly to allow for careful consideration on how to proceed and the new staff to become acclimatized and engage in ongoing discussions regarding the Centre's work.

This event follows recent ads for three (3) positions at the ORHRC of which at press time, the interviewing process has been completed, with the official hiring taking place shortly. The positions to be filled include Coordinators for Web Site and Communications, Education & Training, and Knowledge Transfer and Policy, with an Administrative Assistant being hired later on. In the meantime, CLGRO's Nick Mulé, chair of RHN, is in ongoing dialogue with Travers regarding developing a presence within the 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), an objective of the ORHRC proposal to ensure LGBT voices at the

local decision-making level across Ontario.

We will continue to report on the development of this exciting provincial initiative that will go a long way in coordinating the various health and wellbeing issues, needs and concerns of LGBT Ontarians

## CONSULTATIONS

CLGRO has participated in the following consultations over the past few months:

-- **Statistics Canada 2011 Census Content Consultation:** in which CLGRO once again called for the inclusion of a question on sexual orientation as well as gender identity for the next Canadian census to take place in 2011.

-- **Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Gender Identity Policy:** in which CLGRO supported the strengthening of policy that better recognizes the needs and protects the rights of transsexual and transgender people within the work of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

-- **The Canadian Museum for Human Rights:** in which CLGRO called for the inclusion of the history and ongoing struggles of Canada's LGBT populations in the proposed museum as well as its educational resources.

## MINUTES SUMMARY

At the Steering Committee Meeting held January 5, 2008 in Toronto we discussed the provincial election which was won by the Liberals. There was much support for our position opposing funding of separate

schools. Work is progressing more slowly than we had hoped on our project to address homophobia in the schools with the provincial government and with our efforts to establish a new website. We are happy to see that progress is being made toward the establishment of the Ontario Rainbow Health Resource Centre which will be housed at the Sherbourne Health Centre in Toronto. CLGRO and the Rainbow Health Network worked to get the Center started and will have continuing in-put.

We decided to revise our submission regarding Age of Consent legislation which died in the last parliament but has been reintroduced to the current parliament and is now being considered in the Senate. We will request the opportunity to make a presentation to the Senate Committee.

Efforts by the Trans Health Lobby Group to get gender identity included in the Ontario Human Rights Code, which we support, were discussed and we also discussed some recent human rights cases. We continue to monitor progress being made regarding the new Human Rights Code. Plans are in progress to celebrate the International Day Against Homophobia on May 17, 2008. We are wondering about the International Lesbian and Gay Association international conference to take place in Quebec City around the same time and which we would like to attend. In-put was provided to Census Canada in response to their call for content consultations.

**IDAHO  
International Day  
Against Homophobia**

**CLGRO to Host International Day  
Against Homophobia Event**

At press time CLGRO was in the preliminary stages of making plans to host an event to commemorate the International Day Against Homophobia annually recognized on May 17<sup>th</sup>. This day commemorates the World Health Organization's (WHO) dropping of homosexuality as a mental illness. This year's theme is 'Healthcare', thus, CLGRO will be partnering with its reference group the Rainbow Health Network (RHN) to feature a panel of

speakers, food and an opportunity to network and socialize. The tentative date for this event is scheduled for Wednesday, May 14, 2008.

For further details closer to the time, call CLGRO or check out RHN's website at [www.rainbowhealthnetwork.ca](http://www.rainbowhealthnetwork.ca).

**ILGA**

Dear friends,

ILGA recently agreed to send Stephen Barris, ILGA Communications Officer, to Quebec to report on the situation regarding the organization of the ILGA World Conference 2008. His report was received and discussed on March 7, 2008.

After due consideration of the findings in the report and the obligations that ILGA has in holding a World Conference, the Executive Board of ILGA decided to postpone the Conference until later this year.

Stephen's report confirmed the impressions of the current lack of preparedness at this late date and the lack of funding necessary for the Conference to take place. In order to proceed with the organization of the Conference, ILGA would have to assume the substantial financial risks and would have to seek funding to cover most of the costs at extremely short notice. Even if this was successful, it would be impossible to make all the arrangements to have a quality Conference that responded to our needs and obligations as well as to the needs and aspirations of our worldwide membership. It is also clear that participation from the Global South through scholarships would be very limited, at best, and this is a fundamental component of an ILGA World Conference.

ILGA wishes to thank all those who volunteered and worked towards organizing the Conference and particularly to the CGLQ (Coalition gaie et lesbienne du Québec) for their efforts. We are aware that the new leadership of CGLQ enthusiastically took over this challenging task at a late date and committed to pursuing the task as far as possible.

ILGA is now making a formal call for new proposals from ILGA member organizations for hosting the World conference later this year.

Rosanna Flamer-Caldera and Philipp Braun Co-Secretaries General  
On behalf of the Executive Board of ILGA

Founded in 1978, ILGA is a federation of over 600 groups in over 90 countries campaigning for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) rights

Please send any response or question to me directly.

Trevor Cook  
Executive Director, ILGA  
[trevorcook@ilga.org](mailto:trevorcook@ilga.org), [www.ilga.org](http://www.ilga.org).

**JOURNAL OF  
LESBIAN STUDIES**

Volume 11, nos. 1-2 of The Journal of Lesbian Studies has been published. The journal is also available on line <http://www.haworthpress.com/store/SampleText/J155.pdf>.

When lesbian issues and interests overlap with queer issues, the unique needs, concerns, and interests of lesbians can get lost in the shuffle. The Journal of Lesbian Studies helps sort through the confusion, fostering new lesbian scholarship without cutting ties to grassroots activism. The journal gives the lesbian experience an international and multicultural voice, presenting book reviews, poetry, letters to the editor, debates, and commentaries.

The Journal of Lesbian Studies examines the cultural, historical, and interpersonal impact of the lesbian experience on society, keeping all readers—professional, academic, or general— informed and up to date on current findings, resources, and community concerns. Independent scholars, professors, students, and lay people will find this interdisciplinary journal essential on the topic of lesbian studies!

Patricia Cruz  
Women's Project Coordinator  
ILGA [www.ilga.org](http://www.ilga.org)

## SCHOOL SURVEY

### First National Climate Survey on Homophobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools

We would like to ask you to consider participating in a survey research project designed to explore the experiences of homophobia and Transphobia of students in Canadian Schools.

*Originally we expected to hear only from students currently in high school but so many adults have responded that we've opened it up to people who are no longer in high school. We would be very happy if adults would participate, and ask that they answer as though the questions refer to their last year in high school.*

The aim of the project is to document the realities of life at school for both straight and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit, Intersex, queer, and questioning (LGBTTIQ) students in Canada, with the goal of providing policy makers and educators with information that will help them make schools safer and more respectful. We also plan to report on what we find through our survey in education conferences and scholar journals and distribute it widely through the work of Egale Canada. The survey is anonymous and can be completed online or printed at [www.climatesurvey.ca](http://www.climatesurvey.ca).

If you have concerns about how the project is being conducted you may contact me or Ms. Kerr Murkin, Ethics Administration Officer, at [k.murkin@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:k.murkin@uwinnipeg.ca) or (204) 786-9058. If you are willing to tell youth you work with about our survey, or host a survey session, or would just like more information, please contact me directly.

With thanks, and best wishes  
Catherine Taylor, Ph.D.,  
Principal Investigator  
Faculty of Education, University of  
Winnipeg 204/786-9893 or  
[taylor@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:taylor@uwinnipeg.ca)

## AGE OF CONSENT

CLGRO made a presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs regarding Bill C-2 on February 22, 2008. Despite our efforts, the legislation has subsequently passed the Senate in a vote of 19 to 16. Two of the Senators who listened to our presentation voted against it. Following is the presentation:

My name is Richard Hudler and I am representing the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario (CLGRO). We oppose Part 2 of Bill C-2, "Increasing the Age of Consent."

CLGRO is a not-for-profit incorporated body made up of about 20 lesbian, gay and bisexual groups and hundreds of individual members across the province, founded in 1975. We have also sent a written submission. Thank you very much for giving us this opportunity to address the Committee.

I recently saw the Minister of Justice on television supporting this Bill and expressing his dismay that anyone could oppose the protection of young people. We could not agree more, if this Bill protected young people but we contend that it does not.

The information attending this Bill clearly indicates that it relates to *non-exploitative* sexual activity. Existing legislation already protects people under the age of 18 from *exploitative* sexual activity. Rather than protect, this legislation only takes away the right to choices young people have held for over a hundred years.

The short title of this Act is "Tackling Violent Crime." Consensual sexual activity is not a violent crime.

This is an Act that purports to respect and promote the rights and values reflected in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, then proceeds to withdraw rights on the ground of age. Is age not a ground in the Charter for which people are protected from discrimination?

We do not believe the Criminal Code should be used to regulate consensual sexuality. We believe that this legislation

is not intended to protect but instead to control young people and is an effort to re-assert religious and moral values in Canada's laws and public policy by using the institutions of the State to stringently regulate sexual morality. This is something we are very familiar with in the lesbian and gay communities.

We can appreciate that very young people might not have the decision making abilities to consent to sex, but research indicates that up until the age of 12 it is easy to observe distinct developmental stages in cognition. After that, however, maturity of thinking has only modest correlation with age. So by the time young people are reaching the physical age to engage in reproductive sexual activity, their cognitive development has been consistent with their physical development.

If we are going to claim that they have not reached a state of maturity to be making these decisions for themselves in our society, we are admitting that we have failed them by not providing adequate sex education resources. The Canadian Council of Ministers of Education reported in 2003 'that the average age of first sexual intercourse was 14.1 years for boys and 14.5 years for girls'

The close in age zone and the marriage exception show that the government acknowledges that young people have sex and are able to make decisions about sex. Yet it presumes to regulate the choices young people are allowed to make.

For gay people this is particularly concerning. My first lover was 17 years older than me. And this is common. It is dangerous, considering the attitude toward sexual orientation in schools for a young person to attempt make sexual contact with a peer.

Education is needed in the schools to change that situation but is vehemently resisted by the very groups who support this legislation. It concerns us that this legislation evades the need for better and more comprehensive sex education in the schools. Which we contend would go much further toward protecting young people than criminalization of their sexual behaviour. Developing their self-esteem, self confidence and self agency is a much more important way to protect them.

Research overwhelmingly indicates that the social site of danger continues to be the family and the perpetrator is one that is known to the victim. Leaving sex education in the home does not protect young people.

There is already widespread concern within lesbian, gay and bisexual communities about the unequal enforcement of the current provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with sexual relations. Gay and lesbian sex is disproportionately targeted or being seen as a more serious matter warranting more severe punishment than sexual relations involving members of the opposite sex. In our view, this legislation will make this discriminatory situation very much worse.

We worry that young people will not feel free to ask questions about sex, knowing that the activity is illegal, and that counsellors will be afraid to discuss the topic with them for the same reason.

A young person involved with a person beyond the 5 year range will be afraid to even casually discuss this at home, knowing that all their parents have to do is call the police to end the relationship. Support and counselling at home will also be lost.

It disturbs us that no mention is made in this legislation to correct the inequity in the law for anal sex for which the age of consent is set at 18; this despite the fact that the law has been found unconstitutional in several jurisdictions. This factor sends a strong message to the gay community that hostility toward same sex relationships is a motivating factor behind this legislation.

In summary I would say that we believe this law endangers young people more than it protects them. It shows disdain for them by making decisions for them rather than consulting them and providing adequate educational resources. It is an attempt to undermine human rights and the separation of church and state. We believe that the Age of Consent aspect of the legislation should be withdrawn.

## 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!

## ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

*Outwords* is published three times a year by CLGRO, the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario. Except for editorials, the views expressed in *Outwords* 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!

Contributors to this Newsletter are: Richard Hudler, Nick Mulé, David Smith, and Tom Warner.

## 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](mailto:clgro@web.ca), website: [www.web.ca/clgro](http://www.web.ca/clgro)

## CLGRO MEMBERSHIP FORM

**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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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\*interest only is used for operating expenses.