



members on the town,
at events and in the
community



OUT & about



STUART MCCREEDY, editor

Google made me gay

To give you the back story on my editorial, the inspiration for this came from attending a Tourism Vancouver seminar about online reputation and social media marketing.

It talked about the importance of word placement and resulting searches. I applied some of this knowledge in googling myself. Using my name only, I didn't appear until several pages into the results. However, when I googled with my name and "gay", I was the top five results; same thing happened when I used the word "union" along with my name. Even a Twitter feed from 2009 popped up in the results.

The point I'm trying to make is that so much information is already in the public domain and that these proposed new laws would allow internet fishing expeditions based on who might be perceived to be opposed to any government policies or agency views. They would give the power to individuals in positions of authority to use and interpret my published words and thoughts into ammunition to use against me by circumventing the judicial system and existing privacy laws as they see fit.

Private parts

The media has recently spotlighted the proposed and previous federal legislation regarding access to individual's internet history under the name of "Internet Surveillance" without a search warrant. I'm glad that awareness was raised as to what was actually being proposed. Proponents of the new legislation were shut down and labelled without any productive discussion.

You may think this doesn't affect you, but note that recent proposed legislation did not actually mention the word "predator" in the text of the bill, even though it was described to the media using that attention-grabbing word.

Every device and system that we use leaves a footprint. Your computer, smart phone and even complete networks. Try googling your own name. You might find nothing. Then try again, but add a word, such as gay or union. Did you ever write a letter to a newspaper or comment on a blog? Try your name with one of the keywords and see what happens. Using a simple search, this is public information.

We need to question legislative bills that threaten to take away the balance of our privacy and civil liberties without consent of a judge. They open the door to interpretation and application of laws using individual or group preference. Are you willing to give police and national security forces almost unfettered power to trace any activity under the guise of national protection without impartial judicial involvement? There needs to be extensive and balanced discussion, but this has not occurred.

In solidarity,

Stuart



From the co-chair's desk



KAREN MCVEIGH
committee co-chair

The Pink Triangle Standing Committee met in the fall. We submitted a number of bargaining demands – including staff education on LGBT issues, gender-neutral washrooms, respect in the workplace and anti-bullying – all of which were passed by HEU delegates at the facilities bargaining conference in November.

Now, we just wait and see if they make it to the bargaining table.

We also put in a demand for overtime by seniority. Three PTSC members attended the bargaining conference – two of us were elected through our locals and one was selected by the PTSC. The only thing that I found is that there is still no equity represented on the elected bargaining committee. That's something we need to work on.

I attended a Canadian Labour Congress meeting in December, where part of the meeting looked at ways to get other unions to send members to CLC functions. Our next meeting is in March, where we'll be planning our action agenda for the year.

We have Convention this year, so we'd like to put something forward to change the Constitution to allow for more LGBT delegates to attend conferences that affect us.

Our committee also needs to decide what pride events to support this year, what to plan for International Day Against Homophobia on May 17, and how to continue reaching out to our HEU LGBT sisters and brothers.

In solidarity, Karen

International Day Against Homophobia – May 17

May 17 is the landmark date for members of the LGBT community. It was on that day that the World Health Organization finally removed homosexuality as a mental illness from its list of diagnoses.

The International Day Against Homophobia Organization proposed May 17 as an annual day to draw attention to the damaging effects and dangers of homophobia. On July 29, 2006, during an international LGBT human rights conference preceding the World Outgames in Montréal, the Declaration of Montréal was read by tennis legend Martina Navratilova and adopted by delegates. In part, the declaration calls “on all countries in the world, and on the United Nations, to recognize and promote the 17th of May of each year as the International Day Against Homophobia.”

May 17 became the official date recognized around the globe as International Day Against Homophobia.

FOR MOR INFORMATION, VISIT:

<http://www.homophobiaday.org/>

Facilities Bargaining Conference supports Pink Triangle bargaining demands

By Cheryl Wright



Well, I attended my first Facilities Bargaining Conference in November, and I must say the experience was memorable and an eye-opener.

The beginning of my wee journey from Penticton to Vancouver began with a frantic race to the airport. Yes, I was late; extremely late. After realizing I had my departure time wrong, I only had 20 minutes to get on my plane. I barely remember sitting in the backseat of the speeding cab, beating myself up, and just praying that I could make it.

However, I clearly remember pleading with the airport clerk to please, please radio the crew to let me on, and after a spectacular sprint to the plane with the clerk running behind me trying to zip up my freshly inspected luggage (ugh), I was amazingly onboard!!! While feeling very frazzled and looking for my seat, I heard someone blurt out, “Would you hurry up and sit down. You're gonna make us late!” I looked up, and to my relief, it was one of my HEU sisters. I couldn't help but laugh.

I attended the bargaining conference representing the Pink Triangle Standing Committee along with Sister Karen McVeigh, our co-chair. The 2.5 days were filled with many bargaining demands that were passionately brought forth by our HEU brothers and sisters. We had 281 delegates representing 135 locals.

Also, on our agenda, was to elect a new bargaining committee, and it was a privilege to be part of something so important. There were 28 candidates running, and we had to choose 10, so to say the least, we had our work cut out for us. The candidates were able to have a forum, where they could give a short speech; the voting was a long process, but in the end, we had successfully elected our new bargaining committee and alternates.

There were roughly 650 demands. We were able to pass 250 of them, including the three that the Pink Triangle Standing Committee submitted. They were: anti-bullying training, LGBT seniors' issues training, and unisex washrooms. Our committee was very pleased that these demands had made it to the floor. There was some debate on these demands. Karen spoke passionately on the need for education and training, and Brother Victor Elkins spoke on the unisex washroom demand, referring to transgender workers, patients and community members and on how important it is to be able to feel safe to use a washroom, and by supporting a gender-neutral washroom they would feel safe.

There was also an abundance of fine entertainment. I enjoyed the slam poets Adelene and Scruffmouth, and singer Shari Ulrich. They all shared in their unique way, delivering inspiring poetry and amazing songs about humanity and kindness.

The conference flew by so quickly for me, and it was hard to believe how much was accomplished in so little time. The experience was great, and I look forward to attending the next one.

NOTE:

Facilities bargaining is currently underway. Be sure to check HEU's website for updates.