



## Committee Report



BERT MUNN  
co-chair

Since January, the LGSC has participated in a number of successful events to raise its profile in the community. The big push this year was the International Day Against Homophobia on May 17 with its health care theme: "Homosexuality is not a sickness." There was a lot of planning to bring all our committee's activities to fruition on schedule.

At the beginning of the year, the LGSC distributed "How Does Your Workplace Rate?" surveys to health employers across the province. Results were compiled and sent to all of B.C.'s MLAs. I would like to thank our HEU equity officer Melissa O'Sullivan who helped me with this task, and Sister Darlene Bown whose initiative got the ball rolling.

On May 5, Sister Karen McVeigh was on Co-op Radio for a 15-minute interview to discuss committee events leading up to IDAH. She was successful in getting the word out to the public in a very organized and knowledgeable way as Karen has been on the committee from the beginning.

Posters and pamphlets from Fondation Émergence (the Quebec agency that promotes Canada's IDAH) were sent out to every HEU local in the province, and a full-page HEU ad ran in the community newspaper *Xtra West*, which reached another 30,000 people in the province.

On May 12, members of the LGSC and the HEU Provincial Executive attended the Vancouver Gay and Lesbian Centre's IDAH breakfast at Vancouver's Coast Plaza Hotel. Sister Debbie Lawrance organized HEU/LGSC's involvement in this event. She had a wonderful display table with HEU information, and also the *4 Health Matters* pamphlet – co-produced by HEU and the Centre – which covers a range of health issues for the LGBT community. Guest speakers addressed issues such as aging, First Nations concerns, and health. HEU president Fred Muzin also gave a powerful speech about social justice.

## Individuality, diversity and shared cultures



TIM RATTEL  
Editorial

The terms "gay" and "lesbian" do not begin to represent the diversity of HEU's Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee, nor the many constituencies that define our identities as other than heterosexual. As in the broader lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community, we are an umbrella group for those who do not conform to the dominant straight society. This includes those who self-identify as bisexual, transsexual, transgender, two-spirited, intersex, queer, questioning, among others.

These designations are not about sexual practices, but rather about communities and shared cultures. They are no different than racial groups defining themselves in relation to the dominant culture. As with race politics, individuals in the LGBT community can fall into various states of being. Some are visible, some can "pass" (a term used for those who don't fit into a homosexual stereotype), and some are political.

Inevitably, identity blends race, sexuality, culture and experience to create a complex individual. Every individual has a complex cultural and personal history, and deserves to be explored, known and validated with an open mind and generosity of spirit.

In October 2007, I attended the CUPE National Convention as an HEU delegate. During a break, it was announced that all those wanting to vote in the National Rainbow Committee were to sign up. Dutifully, I searched for and found the Rainbow Committee's sign up table only to discover that the CUPE Rainbow Committee is what we at HEU call the Ethnic Diversity Committee.

The rainbow is well-known as an LGBT symbol: a representation of the pride and diversity of our community. For many people around the world, it also stands for diversity, hope, peace – values that many equity-seeking groups share.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the rainbow flag and Vancouver's Pride Parade, held on August 3. Happy Pride!

## UPCOMING LGSC EVENTS

- Vancouver's Pride Parade on August 3 – HEU joins the Multi-Union Pride contingent
- AIDS Walk fundraising dance on September 19 – Wise Hall, 1882 Adanac Street Vancouver, starting at 8:30 p.m. with a live DJ. Thanks to Sister Gretchen Dulmage for coordinating the dance, along with other committee members.
- AIDS WALK for LIFE on September 21 – getting underway at Stanley Park. Please come and join HEU's team.

This edition of *Pride Pages* marks the first full-year that the LGSC has produced quarterly issues of its newsletter – and with a new format. Also exciting is our new and improved website <Pridepages.org>. Thanks to web developer Laurie McConnell for donating her time and Tim Rattel who maintains the site.

Have a safe and happy Pride from your sisters and brothers in the LGSC.



The Hospital Employees' Union Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee cordially invites you to:

AN HIV/AIDS FUNDRAISING DANCE

WISE HALL

1882 ADANAC STREET, VANCOUVER

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

DOORS OPEN AT 8:30 P.M.

TICKETS: \$15

Join us for an evening of fun with a live DJ, 50/50 draw, door prizes, and much more...

Proceeds go to the AIDS WALK for LIFE 2008 HEU Team to be donated with their pledges to the B.C. Persons with AIDS Society.



Sponsored by the HEU Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee





## International Day Against Homophobia • Breakfast •

The International Day Against Homophobia Breakfast was put on by the Vancouver Gay and Lesbian Centre and held at the Coast Plaza Hotel. HEU and the LGSC were major sponsors of the event.



from left: Tim Rattel, Bert Munn, Gretchen Dulmage



from left: Davina Peters, Karen McVeigh, Linda Shulz, Nicole Robinson



from left:  
Debbie Lawrance,  
Karen McVeigh,  
Fred Muzin



HEU president Fred Muzin



Provincial Executive members  
from left: Fred Muzin, Carolyn Unsworth, Ken Robinson

## Putting the 'bi' in visibility



GRETCHEN  
DULMAGE

I navigated away from the image, but I kept coming back. The implicit paradox (proclaiming one's bisexual orientation by wearing a sign on one's shirt, while declaring that "nobody knows") is a pretty good joke. I experienced the image as a paradigm for my personal experience of the societal/cultural phenomenon of "bisexual erasure."

I find that we bisexuals seem to have a unique and common experience: marginalized as deviant in straight society, and often not fully accepted in the queer community. When some lesbian/gay individuals or groups talk about "visibility", bisexuals are not included. Too often, through words or deeds, we get the message that there are no bisexuals, just people who are too confused or lacking in courage to identify as gay or lesbian, and who are desperately (or greedily) hanging onto "heterosexual privilege" ready to go back in the closet and slam the door at the first sign of adversity.

Currently, sexuality is often viewed as a continuum from heterosexual to homosexual with people fitting somewhere on the scale, depending on their degree of attraction. In this model, everyone is – to a greater or lesser degree – bisexual.

Law professor Kenji Yoshino argues that this model erases the bisexual identity as a unique experience. He researched bisexuality and proposed that we not look at sexuality as binary, but rather as three categories: asexual (people who do not experience sexual attraction), monosexual (people who are sexually attracted to only one gender: gay men, lesbians and heterosexuals) and bisexual (people who are

Recently, while surfing pride sites on the net, I came across a photo of a woman wearing a T-shirt with the caption "Nobody Knows I'm Bisexual". The image stuck in my mind. I enjoyed the wit and humour, yet it also made me feel uneasy.

sexually attracted to men and women).

Yoshino also questioned if bisexuals were "invisible" because of relatively small numbers. However, all of his research indicated that bisexuals exist in greater numbers than gays and lesbians. Therefore, it is ironic that we often feel



TIM RATTTEL PHOTO

marginalized in homosexual and heterosexual societies.

"Visibility" – the conscious practice of manifesting as "Out and Proud" in as many realms of our lives as possible – is a vibrant and necessary step toward claiming our place in culture and society, for ourselves and future queer generations.

We expect that "visibility" won't always be easy, and that some heterosexual groups and individuals might feel strongly that we should be denied our due under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, or at least have the decency to keep our queer orientation to ourselves.

Whatever the cultural weather, we expect and count on support from other LGBT people, and all those seeking equity in our common goal of creating a fair and tolerant society.

## LGSC ISSUES AND INFORMATION LINE

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!** *Did you know that we have...?*

- a confidential HEU LGBT Issues and Information telephone line:  
**604-456-7192, ext. 3**, or toll-free  
**1-800-663-5813 ext. 7192**
- an HEU pride website –  
[www.pridepages.org](http://www.pridepages.org)
- a quarterly newsletter, *Pride Pages*
- a Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee that meets three to four times a year to work on all types of things for you

- community events and campaigns that all are invited to attend or become involved in
- an equity conference every two years with registration open to all LGBT members

Email us at [glesbian@heu.org](mailto:glesbian@heu.org), phone us at  
**604-456-7192, ext. 3** or call toll-free at  
**1-800-663-5813 ext. 7192.**

ALL CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.