



Happy Holidays from the Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee



left to right: Darlene Bown (co-chair), Karen McVeigh, Tim Rattel (communications officer), Jon Yano, Thom Marshall (co-chair), Gretchen Dulmage, Debbie Lawrance, Bert Munn (assistant communications officer), Melissa O'Sullivan (HEU equity officer)

'Tis the season to talk religion



TIM RATTEL
Editorial

So... my mother wants me to go to church with her on Christmas Eve, as she does every year. And every year, I feel distinctly uncomfortable going – not because I'm against the faith I grew up with, nor am I against being spiritual – but because, as a gay man, I never know how a particular group feels about my sexuality, especially when going into any religious setting.

Whether or not one will be accepted or should hide his/her identity is a constant question on the minds of many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Two-Spirited, Intersex, Queer or Questioning persons in most daily situations, let alone in a religious one.

Yes... 'tis the season to talk religion.

For many LGBT* individuals, growing up in a religious tradition is a mixed blessing. A faith can instill spirituality, ethics and charity. It can also inspire shame, self-loathing and insecurity. All too often, members of the LGBT community have come away with the latter, forcing them to dramatically re-evaluate their identity when they are mature enough to do so. Fortunately, many LGBT persons are able to make this transition and are stronger for it. But for young people, it robs them of the self-confidence that should be part of their formative years.

As members of a progressive union, we often look to community allies in working toward social justice. Indeed, many religious organizations do incredible social work in their communities. HEU members can assist these groups, work within our own faith-based organization, or find allies for social justice. HEU members can also bring their sense of fairness, openness, tolerance – *acceptance* – and share it with others during the holidays and throughout the year.

So, this year, I want to give my mother a definite “no” to attending church on Christmas Eve. I always feel like the odd man out. However, my partner, who grew up in the same religious tradition and is definitely more spiritual than me, is suddenly saying that he wants to go.

Gearing up for International Day Against Homophobia campaign – May 17



THOMAS MARSHALL
Co-Chair Report

It's exciting to know that this report is going in the second edition of the *Pride Pages* since the new committee was formed. HEU members and other allies – who had a chance to see our first edition – told me it was a great new look. Kudos to the committee's communications officer Tim Rattel for his hard work.

At a recent meeting of the Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee (LGSC), a unanimous vote to change the name of the committee to the Pink Triangle Standing Committee was successful. The reason for this change is to be more inclusive of our LGBT members, and hopefully encourage more participation from the membership. Look for the constitutional amendment seeking to change our name at the next HEU convention in 2008.

The last bit of news I have to share is about the Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee's campaign to link with the annual International Day Against Homophobia on May 17. The focus of the 2008 campaign will be on health issues facing the LGBT community, which is a perfect fit for HEU and the LGSC. The committee is really excited about the lead role that we will be taking. There will be a lot of information going out to you over the next five months, so keep a look out for this event.

December 1 was World AIDS Day – a time to remember that this epidemic is still rampant especially in Africa. In 2007, there were an estimated 2.1 million AIDS-related deaths worldwide, and 33.2 million people living with HIV, according to recent statistics.





LESBIAN AND GAY STANDING COMMITTEE'S 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
- 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, phone us at **604-456-7192, ext. 3** or call toll-free at **1-800-663-5813 ext. 7192**. ALL CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.

HEU members support community event



left to right: Debbie Lawrance, her partner Irma Bijdemast and dogs.

September 23 was the 22nd Annual AIDS WALK for LIFE in Vancouver's Stanley Park. The HEU Team was one of the four top fundraisers bringing in close to \$8,500 in pledges. Kudos to HEU member Debbie Lawrance, who raised nearly half that total.

“What a **rewarding** and **life enriching** experience it was to raise funds for the AIDS Walk. It was such a **wonderful feeling** to personally raise a grand total of **\$4,000**. I am blessed to have a wonderful social circle, colleagues, friends and family that really stepped up to the plate to support this **very important cause**. It's lovely when others share in your enthusiasm, support your plight and **donate to people in need**. I was also very honoured to be a part of the very special HEU Team of fundraisers. It was a **huge success**. This is what life is all about: **giving of yourself** to the best of your ability in every way. Cheers!

~ Debbie Lawrance

International Day Against Homophobia: why it's important

As Thom Marshall discussed in his co-chair report, the LGSC will be participating in the 2008 International Day Against Homophobia (IDAH) campaign. While the actual day – May 17 – is several months away, the issues it will highlight are ongoing.

Each year, the Fondation Émergence, the agency behind the IDAH, identifies a theme for its campaign. The 2008 focus will be addressing homophobia in the health care field.

The Fondation Émergence has identified four areas in health care that need more awareness:

Participants in the health care field: health professionals and those providing service must be aware of LGBT realities and needs in order to provide proper service.

Mental health and suicide: As I mentioned in my editorial, LGBT individuals often go through a difficult period of adapting to their sexual orientation. As with many young people going through an identity crisis, this is a critical time when thoughts of suicide, or suicide attempts, occur if individuals have difficulty coping.

Procreation: Methods of procreation must be free of discrimination and accessible to the LGBT community.

Aging: The first generation of LGBT persons, who have primarily been able to live their lives openly gay, are now becoming senior citizens. For those accessing seniors' centres or residing in care homes, they need to be free of judgment and be provided with a safe retire-

ment situation. It is inconceivable that they should have to go back in the closet after living proud lives.



www.homophobiaday.org

The LGSC is excited about the 2008 focus on health, and is working on a number of initiatives as a lead up to the May 17 International Day Against Homophobia.

First, the LGSC has developed a logo for use in HEU's campaign against homophobia. We are also working on publishing pamphlets in conjunction with the LGBT Vancouver Centre on health matters for various constituencies of the LGBT community.

As well, we are reviewing the policies in health agencies as they relate to the LGBT community in an effort to develop educational material that will hopefully provide awareness, understanding and respect in health care delivery to the LGBT community.

I encourage all HEU members to watch for our initiatives, and to actively develop an awareness of diversity (in its many forms) in your workplace providing leadership and fostering respect.

Tim Rattel

LGBT members at Cupe National Convention



left to right: Thom Marshall (LGSC co-chair & CUPE Pink Triangle rep.), Tim Rattel (LGSC communications officer), Victor Elkins (HEU, 2nd VP), Kevin O'Neil (Vancouver Coastal Regional VP)

PRIDE PAGES IS A PUBLICATION OF THE HEU LESBIAN AND GAY STANDING COMMITTEE.
Communications Officer/Editor: Tim Rattel • Layout: Elaine Happer

You can receive *Pride Pages* by writing to: *Pride Pages* c/o HEU Provincial Office 5000 North Fraser Way Burnaby, B.C., V5J5M3 • We invite your articles, pictures and letters to the editor.