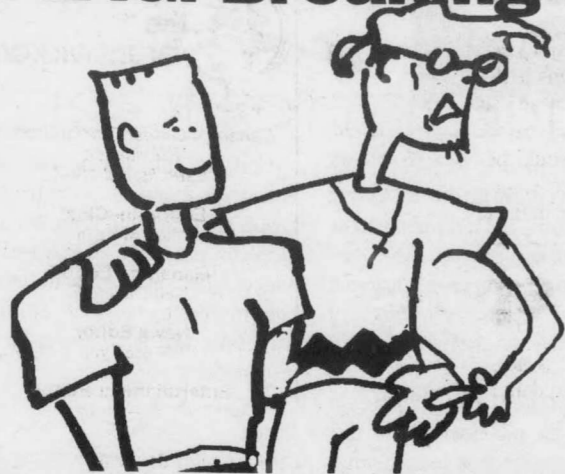


PFLAG: Breaking through the barriers of sexuality



Parents and friends supporting lesbians and gays

by Nelson Switzer
for The Brunswickan

It's about time that the world woke up from its unrealistic and close minded slumber.

Undoubtedly the world, and the society that dwells therein has bred a new definitive culture classified as the 'Gay population'. Not many years ago the suppression of gay activity in most major metropolises was widespread. Individuals of homosexual orientation were forced to maintain a profile of very low esteem; a statement which is heartfully supported by the restrictive measures of the armed forces of virtually every country. However times

have definitely changed.

Clearly the societal norms that were drafted like, the Constitution of '82, have reached the point for refocus and restructuring. For whatever reason, the globe has become an eclectic brew of sexual curiosity and openness. With this new sense of sexual awareness, the Gay populous has received an opportunity to enlighten themselves and those around them as to who they are and what they represent.

To some, the Gay population represent a collective attempt to depurify society, some believe it to be a source of humour and some believe it to be a completely unnatural lifestyle. Yet between the cracks of these factions,

one can find those who possess open minds and hearts, people who are ready to accept those whose lifestyle doesn't necessarily coincide with their own.

Unfortunately, there is much to be done in order to rid our midst of ignorant individuals who continue to bash, both verbally and physically, people who represent Gay liberation. An organisation called Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) has begun the work to educate the ignorant. Founded in 1981, the group has managed to spread itself throughout the United States and now here in Canada through Mary Jones, one of the many national speakers.

PFLAG and their staff have been diligently working to bring a chapter here to Fredericton and have successfully done so this fall with the help of Kerry Smith, chair of the Working Group on Sexual Orientation Education Committee. As one of North America's leading gay density populations there is no doubt that an organisation of this type is necessary here in Fredericton.

Kerry Smith is scheduled to be Master of Ceremonies at the first meeting for PFLAG. He holds a Masters degree in the field of Divinity and is a registered chaplain of the United Church. Although Kerry is not a practising

chaplain, he is dedicated to educating those willing to listen to issues surrounding sexual orientation. Although his group's objectives do not wholly coincide with PFLAG's, Kerry feels that, "by introducing PFLAG to Fredericton it will give those in need another source to turn to for both information and support."

PFLAG's philosophies are based on a set of three premises: support, educate and advocacy. The support is focused towards the parents, family and friends of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons and of course, to the homosexual population itself. The second educational premise has been developed in order to eliminate the ignorant aura that surrounds the homosexual identity. The advocacy portion of PFLAG's ideology has been founded to act as a lobbying body directed towards legislative and constitutional issues in order to

eradicate discriminatory actions currently practised.

PFLAG is holding its first public meeting Wednesday, September 27 at 7:00 until 9:00 in the evening at the Tartan Room of the Alumni Memorial Building. Mary Jones is scheduled to speak on behalf of PFLAG and is expected to detail the audience about PFLAG using her own personal experience, as the mother of a homosexual by discussing the modern day struggles encountered with respect to gay rights.

If human emotion of compulsion, the desire to progress, is truly what drives the human race to success then it is apparent that the need for education in all aspects of life is important. PFLAG's contribution to Fredericton is expected to be one of profound importance as the education of those with dimly lit bulbs will help the human race progress.

Scott appointed Vice-Chair of Human Rights committee

Press Release

MP Andy Scott has been elected Vice-Chair of the House of Commons Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. He has also been assigned full membership on the Health Committee after having served as an associate member for last year.

"I am very flattered that I have been offered the opportunity to serve as Vice-Chair of the Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. I am also looking forward to sitting on the Health Committee," said Scott.

The Committee reviews and reports on the reports of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. In addition, the Committee proposes, promotes, monitors and assesses initiatives aimed at the integration and equality of disabled person in all sectors of Canadian society.

"My background as a member of the board for the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled and other past involvements with disabled people will certainly prove to be an asset. Especially during the social policy review, when we must ensure that the particular needs of disabled people are addressed," added Scott.

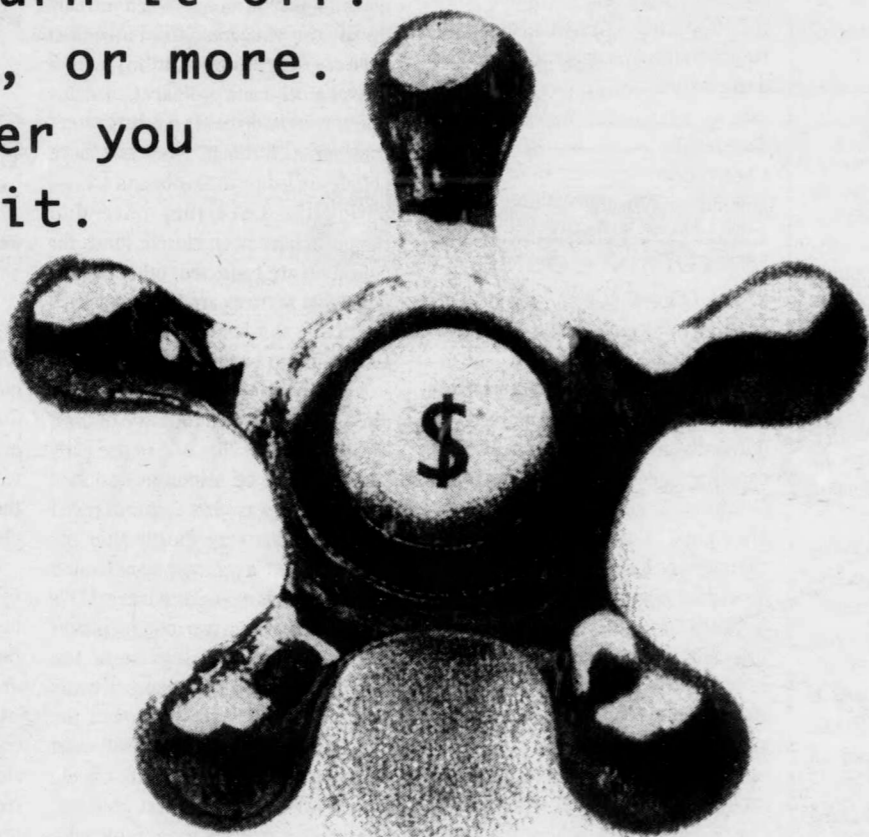
"I am particularly excited about my additional responsibilities as Vice-Chair of a committee. I see this as an opportunity for me to learn even more about committee procedures and I look forward to the challenge," said the first term MP. "I will be sitting on the steering committee, and dealing more closely with legislation. I will also be acting as chair when the need arises."

The Health Committee responsibilities is to monitor and review issues relating to the health of Canadians, as well as to look at the main estimates of the Department of Health and federal agencies related to health.

"Health Care has been an issue I've been following very closely since being in Ottawa, and I am looking forward to taking part in this debate as a full member of the Health Committee," Scott concluded.



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