



## 2010 Annual Activity Report

## **The NOVA SCOTIA RAINBOW ACTION PROJECT...**

*... seeks to foster change in our communities and our society at large so that people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are valued and included. We will achieve this through community development, networking, outreach, education, and political action.*

\*\*\*

NSRAP is open to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities who are supportive of our mission and objectives.



## **Board of Directors 2010**

### Executive Committee (Officers):

Matthew Numer, Chair  
Lisa Buchanan, Vice-Chair  
Sean Foreman, Treasurer  
Christina Hunt, Secretary  
Catherine Meade, Member-at-Large  
Kevin Kindred, Past-Chair

### Directors:

Robert Allan  
Scott Comber  
Elaine Craig  
Gaston Saulnier  
Nathaniel Smith  
Lucas Thorne-Humphrey

Staff: Executive Director: Hugo Dann



## **Community Partners**

AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia  
Allies at Dalhouse  
DalOut  
Halifax Pride  
Halifax Regional Police Diversity Committee  
Halifax Sexual Health Centre  
The Youth Project  
Menz Bar  
Northwood  
Nova Scotia Department of Seniors  
Pride Health  
Safe Harbour Metropolitan Community Church  
St. John's United  
Trans Family Association  
*Wayves*

## **Business Partners**

Wired & Lit Design  
Via Rail  
Rosemary Porter  
Menz Bar  
The Company House



# Message from the Chair

**Matthew Numer**

*Seeing the reflection as we look to the future...*

It is hard to believe that a year has passed since I had the dubious honour of leading the directors of NSRAP. During this time I believe that we have captured a renewed vigour to work to promote the causes of social justice and equity specific to the Queer community. Yet, as we continue to push the “gay agenda” forward, I believe that we have only begun the great work that is ahead. In fact, our accomplishments this year are merely a glimmer of our propensity to achieve a more authentic form of equality in our society. It is with some reticence that I recount this past year because despite our best efforts there remains a cloud of homophobia that remains. While it cannot be argued that as a whole our society has made great strides toward acceptance and inclusion, we certainly are not there yet!

While the details of our year’s achievements will be captured in the latter portions of this document I would like to emphasize a few key accomplishments. It is clear to me that the energy of new board members has motivated us all to continue to strive for what, at times, may seem like fairly intangible results. The new board members have been supported and encouraged to take leadership roles by the steadfast commitment of the longer-term directors. It is through their insight and guidance that the stage has been set for newer directors to perform their advocacy work. Indeed during this time of transition I am always astounded and refreshed by the board’s willingness to change and grow as the challenges that face us are never stationary. A second key feature of the past year is the board’s visionary decision to hire Mr. Hugo Dann as Executive Director of NSRAP. This position has never existed previously in the organization and both through the director’s knowledge and insight and Mr. Dann’s tireless commitment it has proven to be an excellent move. If it were not for the faintless efforts of the directors during previous years to put NSRAP in a stable financial situation, this move would not have been possible.

I am also extremely happy to announce that this year marks the re-initiation of the NSRAP membership. It is imperative that we keep and maintain membership in order for communication, support and volunteer coordination to be manifested. The response thus far has surpassed my expectations as we currently have over 40 members with applications consistently being submitted. The solid foundation and commitment of the membership will be the cornerstone of our work as we seek to foster change in our various communities.

I would also highlight the fact that our current work within the LGBT Elders community has already brought about significant recognition within and outside our community. We have recently released the report from our April gathering which details our plan to work with LGBT Elders. In addition, the seniors’ community has come to recognize our contribution to this field. We were recently contacted to assist an assisted-care facility in dealing with issues related to sexuality. This inquiry was completely separate of the organizations we set out to work with. I believe that this request is a direct result of our efforts and proves that often the difference we are making often goes unseen.



***A Vision for the Upcoming Year***

As we continue to move forward I see the upcoming year as a period of stabilization and increased focus on the activities in which we are currently engaged. I believe that we have set an aggressive agenda for ourselves which will require increased commitment from the boards, staff and membership alike if we are to accomplish our goals. Indeed, it is imperative that we continue to move into facets of society in which conditions of homophobia and heterosexism are seldom explored or resisted. Our current work with LGBT Elders is one of many avenues through which we can make positive change for our community.

Regarding the organizational structure, in recent months NSRAP has shifted again to a committee structure to foster an environment in which we can actively engage with the various issues we are dealing with. In addition, I believe that this structure will allow for the membership and other volunteers an avenue to more actively participate in the endeavours of NSRAP. In the coming months, it is my intention to change the full board meetings to a bi-monthly occurrence with regular meetings of committee between. It is my hope that this reorganization will provide increased opportunities for ground-level activist work to be carried out by our volunteers.

Lastly, I would like to close by setting a \$30,000 fundraising goal for the upcoming year. While I realized this more than doubles previous years, I believe that it is essential to fund the causes we are committed to both with our efforts and with our giving. We are a small organization with great work to do and having achieving this goal will enable us to accomplish some of that great work.

My thanks to the board, our executive director, the membership and the community at large for supporting this work and for your tireless commitment to the causes of equity and social justice for the Queer community.



# Message from the Executive Director

**Hugo Dann**

Last summer I was contracted by NSRAP to compile the data from the Community Centre Survey and to prepare the final report; that report is available here today and will soon be on our website. While involved in researching and writing that report, I also organized the reading of *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later*, and I collaborated with NSRAP Chair, Matt Numer, on preparing NSRAP's successful application to the Department of Seniors' Positive Aging Fund. In January, thanks to the Board, I officially began my term as Executive Director. The job description of NSRAP ED is a work-in-progress, but it seems to fall into three main categories: political action, community development, and fund development.

## Political Actions

Political actions have involved responding to the Hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, about the removal of material relating to LGBT rights and history from Canada's citizenship guide (see below). We have had further contact with Mr. Kenney's department about proposed changes to Canada's refugee policy, which also involved discussion with the LGBT Immigration and Refugee Coordinator at Toronto's 519 Community Centre. Refugee and immigration should be an area of interest for NSRAP in the near future. Last month, while on hiatus in Ontario, I contacted all Nova Scotian M.P.s about Bill C-389, Bill Siksay's Private Member's bill on Transgender rights (see below). The bill successfully passed its second debate and has been referred to the Commons' Justice Committee.

In May, Matt Numer and I met with the Hon. Ross Landry, Minister of Justice, and Krista Daley of the NS Human Rights Commission; the topic being Quebec's development of an official policy to counter homophobia in that province. The discussion is ongoing and the possibility exists for future collaboration between NSRAP and the Government of Nova Scotia on this issue.

The May 17 rally in Grand Parade Square was extremely well attended. People posted video links on YouTube and the event received national exposure through Xtra's parliamentary reporter Dale Smith's online column at xtra.ca. Thanks must go out to everyone on the planning committee, all the speakers, community partners and especially to DaPoPo Theatre, The Women Next Door and the youth of the Gay Straight alliance Network. However, there was criticism from some members of the community that the event was too heavily "political" and too lightly "politicized." It is true that with Scott Brison, Ross Landry, and Jennifer Watts all speaking, there were an unusual number of elected officials present. It may be that the event should return to a being one where politicians listen, rather than speak.

## The LGBT Elders Initiative

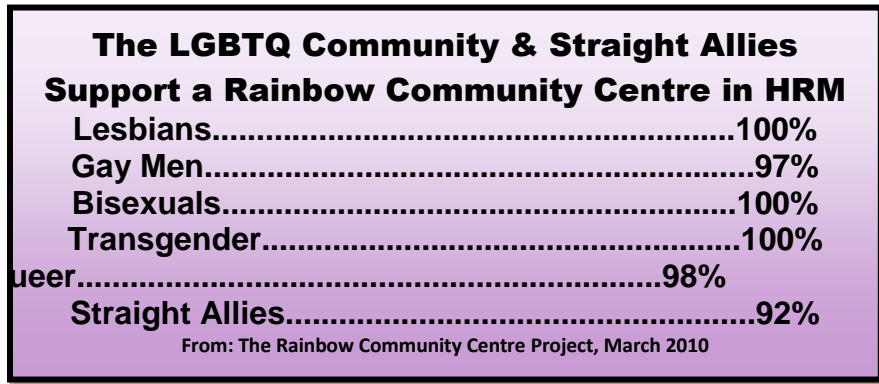
Our most important initiatives at present are the Community Centre Project and the LGBT Elders Initiative. As part of the latter, we hosted *A Gathering of Elders* in April with the aim of hearing from LGBT community members over 50. A report on that meeting is now available. We also arranged for LGBT Elders to attend a performance of Thom Fitzgerald's play *Cloudburst*. Pot-luck suppers at Spencer House are being planned and more outings are also an option. Yesterday we had our first meeting with staff at Northwood about the next phase of this project, ensuring that



long-term care facilities are safe and welcoming for LGBT residents. We wish to thank the staff at Northwood and Spencer House, the NS Department of Seniors, Lee-Anne Poole and emotion Pictures for their help. It is also important to acknowledge the invaluable volunteer contribution of Lynn Murphy. Lynn facilitated the discussion at the first gathering, helped prepare the report, and was a source of inspiration throughout. She is a great light in our community!

#### Towards a Home for the LGBT Community in Nova Scotia: The Rainbow Community Centre Project

The Community Centre Report is out there, it's been sent to all LGBT organizations in the province, and is now available for download on our website. It contains no surprises. In cities where there are such facilities, they make a real and positive difference for their LGBT communities. In Nova Scotia, our community wants one. Now the hard work has to begin, and I am grateful that Robert Allan is taking the lead on this.



## Message from the Executive Director (continued)

### Fund Development

At Matt's instigation NSRAP produced the fundraiser *Wine Roulette* in April, 2010. The event was well attended, and people had a good time. NSRAP increased its profile and raised some money in the process, all worthy objectives for a fundraiser. With some modifications, I would certainly recommend that the Board consider making this an annual event. Many thanks to Via Rail for their auction donation and to Rosemary Porter for her very generous Bid!

I also attended a day-long fundraising seminar put on by the Tatamagouche Centre that will, I hope, prove to be of tangible benefit to NSRAP in the coming year.

NSRAP is making its first forays into the world of corporate partnerships; however we have already been very fortunate in the support we have received from enterprises within the LGBT Community.





Like every LGBT non-profit in Halifax, we wish to thank Maggie Haywood and Venus Envy. We also want to thank The Company House for their help in providing wheelchair accessible venues for The Laramie Project and the Gathering of Elders and for donating their space for our Wine Roulette fundraiser.

Doug Melanson and David Landry provided a donated office space at Menz Bar, without which the Community Centre Report could not have been written nor the Laramie Project produced. NSRAP is extremely grateful for their generous commitment to our community.

Finally we also need to thank the extraordinary contribution of Wade Carroll of Wired & Lit Design. Mr. Carroll has made a very beautiful website for us and we are very proud to have this gifted artist as our resident designer.

### **Conclusion**

I wish to thank the Board of NSRAP, particularly our Chair, Matt Numer. It has been both a privilege and a pleasure to work for and with them. I look forward to more challenges; more projects; and a stronger queer community when the day is done.

Fund development and community development are inextricably connected. As community-based organizations, the money we raise increases our capacity to do our jobs better, and that means serving our communities better. As our organizations become stronger, so do our communities and so do the individuals living and working within. To all of you who have given to NSRAP, to the youth Project. Or Halifax Pride or the ACNS, whether your gift is on the scale of Menz Bar's or a \$20 membership or volunteering a few hours of your time, and that includes virtually all of us here this evening ... THANK YOU!!



Hugo Dann  
Executive Director  
Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project



## Letter 1

The Hon. Jason Kenney  
Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism  
325 East Block House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6  
March 9, 2010

Dear Minister Kenney:

I write to you on behalf of the Board of Directors and the membership of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project.

It has been a difficult time for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Canadians who care about immigration and refugee issues. Already concerned by your appointment last March of Mr. Doug Cryer to the Immigration and Refugee Board (Mr. Cryer's opposition to LGBT rights being a matter of record), we were further troubled by the absence of any mention of our rights and history in Canada's citizenship guide for new Canadians, *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*

Now we have learned that they were in fact originally present, but removed at the express insistence of your office. It further appears that you misrepresented the role of your office in this to Helen Kennedy of Egale Canada. According to Ms. Kennedy you characterised this revision of Canada's history as "an oversight" and assured her that it would be corrected in subsequent printings. Yesterday, during Question Period, you took "full responsibility" for the guide's content, yet consistently refused to confirm that the deletions from the Guide concerning LGBT rights would be reinstated.

Minister Kenney, LGBT Canadians fought for decades to win those rights your office chose to cut out of the guide. This is particularly troubling in light of the many refugee claimants who flee to Canada from countries where homosexuality is still outlawed and harshly punished. In addition to rendering several million LGBT Canadians invisible, omitting these equality provisions from the Canadian Citizenship Guide (the most important document your department produces) does great harm to all minorities. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects all Canadians from discrimination, including people of colour and people of faith.

We urge you immediately to commit the Government of Canada to reinstating all references to the decriminalization of homosexuality, the passage of the Civil Marriage Act, and the equality guarantees enshrined in the Charter. Finally, if you cannot be the Minister of Citizenship for *all* Canadians, regardless of their race, creed, sexual orientation or gender identity, we urge you to consider resigning your office to one who can.

Along with all Canadians who care about minority rights, we await a clear and quick response to this issue. Respectfully yours,

Matthew Numer  
Chair, Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project



## Letter 2

Hon. Peter Gordon MacKay; Hon. Scott Brison; Hon. Mark Eyking; Hon. Geoff Regan; Mr. Scott Armstrong; Mr. Roger Cuzner; Mr. Gerald Keddy; Mr. Greg Kerr; Ms. Megan Leslie; Mr. Michael Savage; Mr. Peter Stoffer

House Of Commons Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

June 8, 2010

Greetings:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the membership of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project I am writing to urge you to support Bill C-389. Mr. Bill Siksay's Private Members' Bill will extend explicit human rights protection to transgender and transsexual Canadians. We see this as important legislation with a direct impact on improving the lives of all Nova Scotians.

In the first debate, Ms. Leslie, you spoke eloquently on behalf of the legislation (as did Ms. Chow and Mr. Oliphant); your own experience working on behalf of the transgender community should be an invaluable resource for your fellow Nova Scotian parliamentarians from all parties. In that debate, members of the government raised questions about the definition of gender identity and whether the legislation was actually needed. There is a growing body of case law surrounding definitions of gender identity. Voting in favour of C-389 will bring it to the House Justice Committee where such questions can be properly addressed in the detail which they deserve.

Regarding the need for the legislation, it is the sad truth that transgender and transsexual persons frequently face devastating prejudices, often from public servants, as they seek to access necessary medical treatments, complete the legal transition from their natal gender, and to find housing and employment. Transgender Nova Scotians face greater economic and social marginalization than any other members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community.

It is the strong wish of NSRAP that all Nova Scotian Members of Parliament will vote in favour of this bill. We feel that this legislation will not only provide an excellent educational tool in the fight against transphobia, but will make a real, positive difference in the lives of many Nova Scotians.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us by return email or at the number below. We greatly appreciate your consideration on this important matter of human rights for all Nova Scotians.

Sincerely yours,



Hugo Dann  
Executive Director, Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project

Cc. Mr. Bill Siksay



## **NSRAP Committees and Reports**

### **Health Committee**

**Chair, Lucas Thorne Humphrey**

### **Communications Committee**

**Chair, Lisa Buchanan**

### **Gala Committee**

**Chair, Catherine Meade**

### **Elders Committee**

**Chair, Scott Comber**

### **Community Centre Committee**

**Chair, Robert Allan**

### **May 17 Committee**

**Chair, Hugo Dann**



## **Health Equality for All**

### *Health Committee 2009-2010*

In the fall of 2009, NSRAP's newly-formed Health Committee began working towards health equality for the LGBT population in Nova Scotia through our mandate of community development, networking, outreach, education, and political action. This committee is currently building its membership and liaising with healthcare providers, government, and community stakeholders in Nova Scotia to identify and accomplish specific goals for the 2010-2011 year. The current areas of focus for the Health Committee include, but will not be limited to, transgender health, and the organ and blood donation bans for many LGBT people. With its creation and surge of interest both within the organisation and in the community, the Health Committee is expecting significant accomplishments for the upcoming year.

## **Connecting**

### *Communications Committee, 2009-2010*

Since first meeting in January, the Communications Committee has been guided by efforts to make NSRAP more visible by re-branding and reengaging with the community.

The committee's major project has been a redesign of the NSRAP website to be launched in time for the Annual General Meeting. Graphic designer Wade Carroll has been instrumental in making a new website become a reality. In addition to the website, the committee has also increased NSRAP's online presence through use of Facebook and Twitter.

The year has seen several ways for NSRAP to keep the community up to date on its activities. NSRAP has secured space for a monthly feature article in Wayves magazine. Our membership list also receives a monthly e-newsletter.

The Communications Committee is responsible for assisting with promotion of all NSRAP events. In addition to his work on the website, Wade Carroll has served as graphic designer for the LGBT Elders meeting, Wine Roulette, International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia, and the upcoming Gala.

In the coming months, the committee's work will be focused on Pride Week and the Gala.

## **There is Still Work to be done**

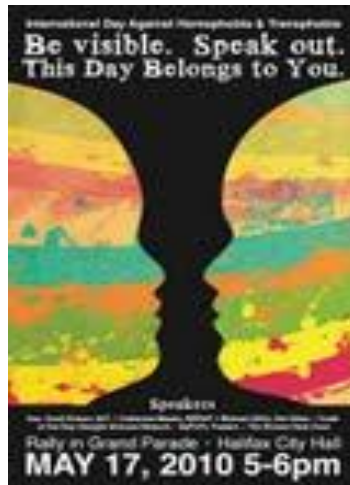
### **International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, May 17**

We as a community have achieved a lot, yet as NSRAP Director Catherine Meade observed, "There is still work to be done." We cannot forget that discrimination still exists; that it is a long journey from legal equality to social equality. Earlier this year, there was a homophobic attack at an LGBT dance in Sydney, Cape Breton. To reach out to this community, NSRAP members traveled to Sydney to join Cape Breton's LGBT community for their events marking International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Additionally, more than 500 people gathered in Grand Parade in Halifax to mark the May 17. Attendees had the opportunity to hear Justice Minister Ross Landry, M.P. Scott Brison, HRM



Councillor Jennifer Watts and others, and to enjoy the performances of DaPoPo Theatre and The Women Next Door. We stood together for a moment of silence, recalling those who have been victims of hate. In the spirit of Harvey Milk, the rally concluded with hope and the joyful, exuberant chants of queer youth, “The Queerios” from the Youth Project and the Gay Straight Alliance Network.



## **Celebrating our Community Heroes**

### *6<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala, 2009*

NSRAP's Sixth Annual Fundraising Gala was held on Saturday, October 3, 2009 at the Harbourfront Marriot Hotel in Halifax. The Gala, themed “Beyond our Borders”, was emceed cleverly and expertly by Candy Palmater. Our keynote speaker was John Fisher, of ARC International, who traveled from Switzerland for the event. The recipient of the 2009 Rev. Darlene Young Community Hero Award was Kim Vance. Ms. Vance is a former NSRAP Board member who now works with ARC International, an organization focused on advancing LGBT rights throughout the world. This award is to honour a Nova Scotian who has made a substantial contribution to the progress of LGBT issues in Nova Scotia.

The 2009 NSRAP Gala brought in \$13, 742.89 in revenue from ticket sales, donations and the sale of auction items. The net proceeds were \$5, 875.45. Many thanks to Matter Numer, Lucas Thorne-Humphrey, Lisa Buchanan, Nathaniel Smith and Sean Foreman, who served on the 2009 NSRAP Gala Committee and who played truly integral roles in the success of the event.

## **Towards a Home for the LGBT Community in Nova Scotia**

### *The Rainbow Community Centre Project*

We received an HRM Community Grant to survey the LGBT community and hold a Town Hall meeting with our community partners concerning the establishment of a community centre in



Halifax. The results show that LGBT Nova Scotians overwhelmingly feel that they need a physical, non-commercial space to provide both a social outlet and community services. NSRAP is working collaboratively to establish such a centre in Halifax.

## **Halifax Pride 2009**

*During the 2009 Pride week celebrations, NSRAP presented four lectures on important issues facing the Rainbow Community, including:*

*Sex, Laws, and the Bedrooms of the Nation*

Has the state really removed itself from the bedrooms of the nation? Kevin Kindred, lawyer and past-chair of NSRAP, reviews everything you ever wanted to know about sex & the Criminal Code, but were afraid to ask.

*Schools, Out*

How is the struggle for diversity and equality playing out in classrooms in Nova Scotia? Gérard Cormier, Staff Officer for the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, will bring us up to speed from the perspective of teachers and their representatives.

*Healthy Transgendered Lives*

With transgender health specialist Dr. Gail Knudson.

*Activists Camp Out*

"Camp Out" organizers will give an overview on the inspiration and evolution of Camp Out! 2009, a weekend exploring LGBT activism in the Maritimes, past and present.







NSRAP marches during the Halifax Pride Parade, 2009

## Looking Forward

### *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later*

October 12, 2009 marked the 11th anniversary of Matthew Shepherd's murder in the small town of Laramie, Wyoming. *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later* is a play that focused on the effects this young man's death had on his community. Along with theatre companies and LGBT community organizations on five continents, NSRAP participated in offering this historic world premiere on the 11th anniversary of Matthew Sheppard's death. NSRAP's work in presenting the play was recognized in the Nova Scotia Legislature.





## Wine Roulette: A Fundraiser

• N • S • R • A • P •  
nova scotia rainbow action project  
presents

Premiere Wines & Spirits  
**WINE  
ROULETTE**  
with Sommelier Drew Curlett

April 30, 2010  
7-10 pm  
The Company House  
2202 Gottingen St

*Silent auction featuring  
deluxe trip for two on Via  
Rail to Montreal and other  
fabulous items*

Tickets \$35/person  
\$300/party of 10

For reservations call:  
(902) 444-3206  
email: [nsrap@nsrap.ca](mailto:nsrap@nsrap.ca)

For more info contact NSRAP: (902) 444-3206 or visit [www.nsrap.ca](http://www.nsrap.ca)  
All proceeds to benefit the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project



## **Contact NSRAP**

Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project  
NSRAP Office, Studley Gymnasium  
6185 South Street, Dalhousie University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

(902) 444-3206

[nsrap@nsrap.ca](mailto:nsrap@nsrap.ca)  
[www.nsrp.ca](http://www.nsrp.ca)

