



Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project

Media Review  
2013-2014

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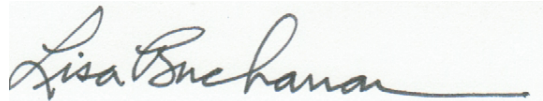
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# Introduction

In its nearly 20-year history, NSRAP has come to be known among local journalists as a respected and reliable voice for the LGBTQ community. Each year, we compile a Media Review of print and online media coverage with direct reference to NSRAP or other issues of importance to the LGBTQ community in Nova Scotia.

This year, NSRAP received news coverage around a variety of issues, including the syphilis outbreak, HRM's rejection of the Spirit Place proposal, and the brutal attack on Scott Jones in New Glasgow.

We are most proud of the role we played and coverage we received when the Department of Health and Wellness announced the details of MSI coverage for surgeries related to gender transition.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Lisa Buchanan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Buchanan  
Chair  
Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project

This review is not an exhaustive record. Where multiple news outlets covered the same story, only a few selections are included. Articles are presented in chronological order.

## June 2013

### ***Capital Health tackles outbreak of syphilis with 'plain language'***

The Chronicle Herald, 2013-06-21

By John McPhee | Staff Reporter

A syphilis awareness campaign will leave little to the imagination as health officials try to stem an outbreak of the sexually transmitted disease.

The public health branch of Capital Health will spend \$40,000 to encourage more people to get tested for syphilis through online and print advertisements and a poster campaign.

In consultations this year with community groups such as the **Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project**, public health officials were told to be “straight up” about the issue, said Carmen MacKenzie, a senior communications adviser with Capital Health.

“We were advised to talk about the facts, speak in plain language,” MacKenzie said Thursday after the campaign launch at the public health office in Dartmouth.

The campaign uses what appears to be every conceivable street term for oral sex, which is a common way of transmitting the bacteria that causes syphilis.

A website (thehardfacts.ca) has been created and posters will be placed in the men’s washrooms of five Halifax pubs and restaurants starting next week. As well, advertisements will be placed in alternative newspapers, and on websites and smartphone applications that people use to arrange sexual encounters.

The overriding theme will be get tested, particularly if you have symptoms such as red body rash or a single painless genital ulcer.

“We know that condom use is a significant issue and some campaigns talk about (prevention),” MacKenzie said. “That’s still an important message that we don’t want to get lost here, but it’s really about getting tested.”

And in a first for Capital Health, an online lab requisition form will be posted on thehardfacts.ca.

The form will be partially filled out, including the name of the district’s medical officer of health, Dr. Richard Gould, who will oversee testing. The requisition can be used at any Capital Health blood-testing clinic.

Since 2008, 153 men and two women between the ages of 18 and 72 have contracted syphilis in Halifax, according to an epidemiological study done by the public health branch.

If untreated, the disease can cause muscle co-ordination problems, paralysis and gradual blindness. The late stage damages organs, including the brain, blood vessels and liver, eventually resulting in death.

Deaths are rare these days because treatment using a specialized type of penicillin is usually successful, Gould said in an interview Thursday.

But the outbreak in Halifax can only be stopped if the people who are spreading the disease can be reached, he said.

“One of the ideas of this campaign is that, if you think you’re at any risk, any symptoms, get tested and we’ll get you treated. As soon as you’re treated, basically within a month or so, you’re not infectious,” Gould said.

Because people can be reinfected, those at risk should be retested every three to six months.

## July 2013

### ***Race-related hate crimes down, up for sexual orientation***

Global News, 2013-07-11

By Ben MacDonald

HALIFAX – A new study released by Statistics Canada shows a decrease in police-reported hate crimes for the second year in a row.

From 2010 to 2011, overall reported hate crimes decreased by five per cent.

Although hate crimes motivated by race, religion or ethnicity all fell, according to the statistics, the number of hate crimes associated with sexual orientation went up by approximately 10 per cent.

The change in numbers has raised some concern for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

But, there is also some uncertainty as to why these numbers are going up and it may not be for all the wrong reasons.

“The numbers clearly are concerning to us, to see any upward trend is certainly something we want to pay attention to” said Kevin Kindred of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP).

“But, there are elements of that that could be for good reasons — either that more people are willing to report crimes to the police or that the police are more willing and more able to see crimes as being motivated by hatred, whereas maybe before they would have been ignoring that factor,” Kindred explained.

According to the report, hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation had the highest proportion of accused under the age of 25.

Young adults were the most likely to be either the victim or the accused and offenders were predominately male by an overwhelming 92 per cent.

## Listen to dynamic speakers at TimeOUT lecture series

Metro, 2012-07-18

By Jane Doucet

metronews.ca  
Thursday, July 18, 2013

PRIDE WEEK 15

# Listen to dynamic speakers at TimeOUT lecture series

JANE  
DOUCET  
For Metro

Part of the Halifax Pride Festival lineup of events includes the always popular TimeOUT lecture series. Since 2005, the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP) has partnered with Halifax Pride to present a series of free lunchtime lectures and discussions.

This official Pride Week event is an opportunity for the public to hear some dynamic speakers reflect on the legal, political and social issues affecting the LGBTQ community.

"Pride is an important time to celebrate the victories of our community and have fun, but also to contemplate issues and think about history and the future," said Kevin Kindred, a NSRAP spokesperson and one of TimeOUT's speakers.

When it comes to choosing programming, Kindred said they look for topics that are both relevant and interesting.

### Contemplating issues

**"Pride is an important time to celebrate the victories of our community and have fun, but also to contemplate issues and think about history and the future."**

Kevin Kindred, a NSRAP spokesperson and a TimeOUT lecture series speaker

"We try to find speakers who are doing good work that is getting noticed and also those who are flying a bit lower under the radar."

Each lecture will take place at noon at the Spring Garden Road Memorial Public Library.

Here is the lineup:

July 23: Queer Health Research. What is it and why does it matter? A presentation on queer health research and its impact on health care and daily lives. Members of Queer Health Research NS will discuss the importance of evidence-based research with examples of local queer health research.

July 24: Queer Spiritual Paths. Researchers Brenda Hattie and Brenda Beagan explore themes they have been

discovering in interviews with members of the LGBTQ community. These include harm versus solace and support, leaving old faith traditions and finding new ones, spiritual versus religious, and religion and cultural identity.

July 25: Talking Trans. Trans citizens and their allies struggle to find pronouns and other language that reflect gender's shades of grey. Community educator Nolan Pike will discuss "ze, they, hir" and other ways of talking trans.

July 26: Damned Lies ... and Activism. How the enemies of equality distort the truth, and why we do, too. Halifax lawyer and activist Kevin Kindred examines the lies and myths used on both sides of the queer rights debate.

## ***Doing the right thing***

Chronicle Herald, 2013-07-20

By Lois Legge | Features Writer

Gay rights activist's strong sense of social justice is rooted in his Catholic upbringing and drive to help others

Kevin Kindred's been trying to do the right thing for as long as he can remember.

Serving as an altar boy in his Saint John, New Brunswick, church.

Delivering food to the poor with his devoutly Catholic family.

Ripping homophobic posters off the walls of a Toronto university.

In many ways, he's still the good Catholic boy who sang in the church choir or fundraised for World Vision.

Except, he laughs, "for the believing in God part."

"I'm very much an atheist and yet there is something intrinsically Catholic about me. ... It's just something about the sense of morality, the sense of guilt."

The sense of social justice, too.

And the sense of "responsibility" that's propelled the 36-year-old Halifax lawyer into everything from the fight for same-sex marriage to the recent victory for transgender rights in Nova Scotia.

It's a need to "save the world" that sometimes keeps him up nights and has its roots in a religion that still considers his sexuality a sin.

But perhaps not so unexpected for a boy who grew up in a working-class family with a "general expectation that we have a responsibility to take care of each other."

During his 10 years of volunteerism with Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project, Kindred's tried to ensure no one in the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) community feels "other" — outside the protection of the law or the bounds of human dignity.

Over the past year, he led the advocacy group's efforts to secure gender identity and gender expression protection under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. And in November, the province agreed to amendments the activist says have already made a huge difference in transgender lives: encouraging more people to stand up for their rights, helping secure equal housing and employment and smoothing the way for a seven-year-old girl, who identifies as a boy, to join an all-boys soccer team.

He and other Rainbow project volunteers later convinced the province to fund gender reassignment surgery through MSI, although Kindred says he didn't lead that lobby.

The slim, bespectacled activist feels "fulfilled" to have played a role in such milestones.

But even as he enthusiastically gears up for Halifax Pride Festival (July 18-28), he avoids that word when talking about his own accomplishments.

"I don't know about pride," the one-time philosophy major laughs, sitting in his neatly appointed apartment near the Halifax waterfront, near books he figures he'll never have time to read.

"That's not a very Catholic word but I ... feel a sense of fulfilment when there's something that I feel is necessary and to be just evidently the right thing to do, and to see that happen and to feel

like I've taken some small part in it, I find very satisfying. It temporarily assuages that nagging guilt about not doing enough to make the world a (more just) place."

Kindred grew up in a place where he could see social justice — those meals for the poor and fundraisers for the disadvantaged. But he also always knew that being gay wasn't accepted by the Catholic church.

He had an inkling about his sexuality early on but didn't come out until he'd almost finished his undergraduate degree in philosophy at University of New Brunswick, a program that also included a few courses at University of Toronto, where he inadvertently got his first taste of activism.

He remembers feeling especially welcome on campus thanks to a Positive Space campaign, the distribution of posters which basically declared buildings gay-friendly zones.

He walked by one poster every day on his way to class. Until he noticed something different.

"Someone went down and replaced those Positive Space posters with something that looked the same but was saying like 'gays and lesbians positively need Christ in their lives' and 'being gay is a sin' and blah, blah, blah ... so I went and took it down."

He took it inside the building, which turned out to house the student newspaper, which asked him to write a story about what had happened.

The "liberating" experience lead him to further activism when he entered University of New Brunswick law school ... in Fredericton, where he took part in protests about gay bashings and the then-mayor's refusal to declare Gay Pride Week.

He moved to Nova Scotia in 2001 and joined the Rainbow project 10 years ago where he's served as everything from go-to media spokesman to chairman (several times) to now, past chairman. He's also chairman of the Atlantic Fringe Festival and dabbles in standup comedy (which he'll perform during the festival), even though he calls himself "the least talented member of Halifax's arts community."

He loves the challenge of trying to make people laugh.

And he loves using his legal expertise for something far more serious.

And while he's used that knowledge to help further gay causes, Kindred's also seen devastating setbacks, most tragically the beating death last year of fellow gay activist and friend Raymond Taavel.

The case is still before the courts. And the loss is still deeply felt within the local LGBT community.

But Kindred says Taavel's life serves as an enduring model for the gay rights movement.

"Raymond's life was about love and caring, ... about finding peace and resisting hate and resisting anger and I think that that message really helped shape the community's response to Raymond's death, and since then has also helped shape the way that our community defines its own values.

"Perhaps because we see ourselves in the light of Raymond's life so much now, there is an emphasis on conciliatory action and on finding the peaceful solution and not the confrontational solution, finding the things we have in common with those that oppose us rather than trying to build bridges out of walls."

The same messages he learned a long time ago.

“The Prayer of St. Francis,” he says. “Make me a means of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is anger, let me sow joy.”



Kevin Kindred, chair of the Rainbow Action Project, says the group is happy to hear that the provincial government will fund gender reassignment surgery. (Ryan Taplin / Staff)

### ***Candlelight vigil for Halifax Pride ‘time to remember those we’ve lost’***

Metro Halifax, 2013-07-22

by Haley Ryan

Halifax Pride may have begun a few days ago, but for Kathy Walsh the real start to Pride Week happened on Monday evening as dozens of people stood in silence, their candles flickering in a soft breeze.

Walsh, the chair of Halifax Pride, hosted a candlelight vigil on the steps of the Spring Garden Road Library to honour those who’ve died and reflect on the decades of people fighting for gay rights.

“It’s the time to remember those we’ve lost ... and to let them know that we’re still here, and they’re with us,” Walsh said after the event.

Although Walsh said Raymond Taavel was not a focus of the vigil, the death of the popular activist last year “changed my world dramatically.”

Taavel was beaten to death outside the Menz Bar on Gottingen Street in April, 2012.

“It has left mark on our entire community,” Walsh said slowly as she looked to the ground. “He touched so many people in this city, and this province.”

Among the vigil speakers was Kevin Kindred, spokesperson for the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Committee.

"I'm sick of being asked ... why we need Pride anyway," Kindred said during his speech, "As if that privilege was written in stone, as if that it wasn't dependent on us constantly reasserting to the community that we are here, and we play a valuable role."

Kindred said the week is a time to "take celebration seriously" and remind everyone Halifax would be a "sadder and darker place" without the gay community.

Susan Redfern traveled from Winnipeg specifically for Pride Week, and said the vigil was a way to reflect.

"It's paying my respects, never forgetting what other people went through for me, and so I need to carry that forward," Redfern said.

### ***timeOUT for Pride***

The Coast, 2013-07-26

by Simon Thibeault

Pride may be all about celebrations, but it's also about conversations. Since 2005, the timeOUT Lectures have been held at the Spring Garden Road Library on all sorts of topics, from queer history to HIV, trans rights to sex. Put on by Halifax Pride and the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project, this year's crop of topics include spirituality, health, activism and language.

Kevin Kindred has been organizing the event since 2006. According to him, the lecture series originated as a cultural component to Pride.

"We've tried to have a wide range of topics, some very academic, some quite political and others designed just to shed some light on important work being done within our communities," he says. "We get good feedback every year, particularly to the idea of rounding out the fun and festivities of Pride with a little serious thinking as well."

This year's crop of speakers includes Nolan Pike, who will be hosting a discussion called "Talking Trans" (Thursday, noon-1pm). For Kindred, it's important to talk about topics that individuals in the queer community deal with, such as gendered language and the use of non-gendered or trans-specific pronouns such as they and ze instead of he or she. "It's a subject of some debate, and it fits right in with the education work that Nolan has been doing for some time with the Youth Project," says Kindred.

Kindred will also be on the podium this season, talking about the fight for equality for the LGBTQ community. "Lies, Damned Lies...and Activism" (Friday, noon-1pm) touches on how sometimes information get misconstrued. "I think it will be fun to unpack some of the more common points of misinformation," says Kindred, "and contemplate a little bit why we encounter so much of it in this kind of work."

### ***Found in trans\*lation***

The Coast, 2013-07-26

by Simon Thibeault

The province says it will pay for sexual reassignment surgeries, but details have yet to be finalized.

Kimberly Macdonald is an attractive young woman with a good job. Like most women in her early twenties, she's flirtatious, funny and happens to do a killer Amy Winehouse impression.

And like most people in their early twenties, Macdonald was expecting to live part of her life in debt. But her debt wouldn't be due to student loans or a mortgage---her monetary woes were much more personal. Kim was planning on having to spend over \$25,000 to go out of province to undergo sexual reassignment surgeries (SRS). Sexual reassignment surgeries cover a broad band of procedures that can be applied to either feminize or masculinize one's appearance. The costs of these surgeries vary, from a few thousand dollars to tens of thousands of dollars. And that doesn't cover the post-surgery care, or the travel expenses to have these surgeries done, because these procedures are performed out of province, usually in Quebec or Ontario.

It is worth noting that not all people who identify as trans\*---with the asterisk, trans\* is an umbrella term for individuals who do not feel that they are the gender they were labeled at birth, including those who identify as transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, gender variant and more---feel the need for surgical interventions.

In Macdonald's experience, however, she feels that to be a woman she "must look the part." That includes taking hormones which have given her curves, but going under the knife is essential to helping her feel whole.

"It's important to me so I can fully transform and feel the same way inside and out," she says. When the Nova Scotia government announced in June that it would be covering SRS, Macdonald's life changed. "When I first heard, I was shocked, but after a few hours it hit me and I cried for joy," she says.

But the government's announcement is barely a month old, and the infrastructures needed for these services to be provided within Nova Scotia are barely being put into place.

"The department is in the planning stages regarding gender reassignment surgery," says Tony Kiritsis, media relations advisor for the Department of Health and Wellness. "More information on these and other details will be released at a later date when they have been worked out and confirmed."

At this time, the number of services, support staff and surgeons required for these procedures have yet to be determined. "Part of the issue is that we don't know what is going to be covered," says Anita Keeping, a nurse specialist with prideHealth, an organization within Capital Health that supports and addresses the health concerns of the rainbow community. prideHealth recently put out a Trans Health Guide to provide both patients and health care practitioners with clear information about the needs and supports of and for those who identify as trans\*. But right now, it's a waiting game for everyone to see what will happen next.

"We have no idea whatsoever which surgeries they will perform," says Keeping. "I'm glad the decision was made that it would be covered, but I don't want people to get their hopes up thinking that next month they can get surgery. We're not there yet."

In the meantime, Kimberly Macdonald is patiently hopeful and thankful for the recent decision to fund SRS.

"I know a few people that unfortunately had to put themselves in debt and take out loans to pay for their surgeries," she says. "Most people put that kind of money down to buy a house, so now I have an equal opportunity to be a productive member of society by being myself."

## August 2013

### ***Rejection of Spirit Place put LGBT seniors at risk***

Halifax News Net, 2013-08-02

by Jacob Boon

HRM's rejection of the Spirit Place development leaves few options for LGBT seniors.

"It's a disappointing development for a great project," says Kevin Kindred, board member with the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project. "It's hopefully going to continue as an initiative. It continues to be a need our community is very concerned about."

Halifax regional council rejected the proposed seven-storey building on Tuesday, by a vote of 10 to 6. Councilors argued the development's height violated zoning regulations, and would have been out of place on Windsor and Willow streets.

Conceived by the congregation of St. John's United Church, Spirit Place would have included affordable housing, a church, and community space for LGBT seniors.

Elderly LGBT individuals can feel more vulnerable as they age, often lacking the traditional support networks of spouses or children to help care for them. Entering a retirement community can cause severe anxiety and fears about disclosing their sexuality, as seniors are thrust into unfamiliar social groups.

"They're being forced to live in a community with people not chosen by them," says Kindred. "That's a frightening prospect."

The NSRAP has been studying the needs of elderly LGBT individuals in Halifax for the last few years. Kindred says the lack of support, and fear many face are very real issues — both for those already living in seniors homes, and those who see retirement on the horizon.

"It is important to understand how diversity impacts our senior population," says Denis Peterson-Rafuse, Nova Scotia's Minister of Seniors. "How we respond to characteristics such as sexual orientation and gender identity impacts seniors' ability to age well. We have made it a priority to ensure equitable, inclusive and affordable access to provincial services."

Peterson-Rafuse says her department has become involved in a number of projects supporting LGBT seniors — including positive aging grants for seniors in assisted care facilities, supporting LGBT community history projects, and raising awareness of the issues facing sexual minorities during the recent Silver Economy Summit.

All of that will be of little comfort to the community members who had been championing Spirit Place. The west-end church, vacant for the last five years, will remain as such until the St. John's congregation can put together a new proposal.

Though not formally involved in Spirit Place's conception, Kevin Kindred says he and others in Halifax's LGBT community will continue to support the project, whatever its next stage happens to be.

# October 2013

## ***LGBT community rallies behind Scott Jones***

The News (New Glasgow) | 2013-10-15

by Adam MacInnis

The LGBT community both locally and across the province is rallying in support of Scott Jones, the 27-year-old man who was stabbed in New Glasgow over the weekend.

While police have given no indication that it was a hate crime, friends and family have said they believe that Jones was singled out in the attack because he is gay.

Jones was stabbed multiple times and has been left paralyzed as a result. He is recovering in a Halifax hospital now.

"It was just horrendous (what happened)," said Gerard Veldhoven, a local gay rights activist in Pictou County.

He said attacks like this do make the LGBT community a bit worried about possible attacks. He said his family has often expressed concern for his safety because he's so vocal, but thankfully he's never experienced any violence.

He believes the attack is an indication that more needs to be done to educate people on the sexual orientation and to promote further tolerance.

Veldhoven believes that the best way to address the problem of intolerance is through education. He said he plans to write the minister of education an open letter demanding that something be done to include sexual orientation in curriculum for younger grades. He believes that as young as Grade 4 students can start to learn that families can have different make ups including two dads or two moms without getting into great details.

"These things are not changing fast enough in my mind," he said.

Veldhoven works with Gay-Straight Alliances at Northumberland Regional High School and North Nova Education Centre. Even in those groups he said there are people who are afraid to show up because of the stigma they might receive.

"Discrimination is still quite high in the school systems," he said. "All these things have to be addressed."

The **Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project** (NSRAP) is also extending support to Jones, his family and friends and the New Glasgow LGBT community following the stabbing.

"We are mindful that there have been allegations of homophobia attached to this crime and will be paying close attention to the outcome of the police investigation, as will our whole community," NSRAP Chair **Lisa Buchanan** said. "We want to be sure that police and prosecutors are looking at the possibility that it is a hate crime."

Statistics Canada has reported hate crimes targeting people for their sexual orientation are on the rise across the country and that they tend to be more violent than other hate crimes.

"Our community takes incidents like this as a serious reminder that homophobic and transphobic hate is still out there," said NSRAP spokesperson **Kevin Kindred**. "We know that these attacks send ripples through the entire lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community."

“We want members of our community in New Glasgow and across the province to know that attacks on our people only strengthen our resolve to build a stronger LGBTQ community, educate the public, and end homophobic and transphobic hate and violence.”

### ***Activists seek to support stabbing victim Jones***

The Chronicle Herald | 2013-10-15

by Monica Graham

A group that promotes equality for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities has offered its support to Scott Jones, paralyzed last Saturday after an early morning stabbing.

The **Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project** is taking seriously allegations that the attack on Jones arose from homophobia, said project chairwoman **Lisa Buchanan**.

Jones, 27, an openly gay choir director, church organist, pianist, and music teacher, was out with friends to celebrate an art gallery opening in New Glasgow when a man stabbed him twice in the back and slashed his throat.

Jones is being treated in a Halifax hospital and is paralyzed from the waist down.

Shane Edward Matheson, 19, of Trenton was arrested Sunday and charged with attempted murder, aggravated assault and possession of a dangerous weapon.

Canadian statistics show a rise in hate crimes targeting people for their sexual orientation, said group spokesman **Kevin Kindred**. As well as in number, the level of violence is also increasing, he said.

“We’re very hopeful that police are open to the possibility that (the Jones assault) is a hate crime,” Kindred said.

There is no separate charge for “hate crime” under Canadian law, but it is determined after the conviction of a crime. If evidence shows that a particular crime was based on the perpetrator’s hatred of a minority, such as gay men, then it would be a hate crime. The designation would affect sentencing.

There is never one simple explanation for a crime, so investigators should explore every possibility, Kindred said.

The Rainbow Action Project wants to support Jones, whether he was attacked because of his sexual orientation or for some other tragic reason, Kindred said.

“We are part of the same community,” he said.

Kindred commended New Glasgow area people for their support of Jones.

There is violent crime everywhere, but not every place has the same sense of community, he said.

“That’s the real New Glasgow.”

## ***Dal transgender student claims harassment from staff***

CBC News | 2013-10-27

Transgender student Jessica Dempsey says she was harassed on several occasions by food service staff

A transgender student at Dalhousie University says she has been harassed by workers at the campus cafeteria.

Dalhousie student Jessica Dempsey, who was born male, began her physical transition two years ago. She said that's when her problems started on campus.

She said some faculty and staff have made her uncomfortable.

After her first complaints were made against the food service staff at Dalhousie's Shirreff Hall residence, a dining hall manager apologized in an email in July.

The complaint was then passed on to staff in the school's Human Rights, Equity and Harassment Protection office.

Staff then went through sensitivity training to ensure both management and staff were aware of human rights.

But Dempsey said nothing has changed.

"They called me by my old name and then they called me Jessica. And then the person asked me if my boobs are real ... I said 'Excuse me?'"

She said it has become so bad that her school work is suffering and feels her safety is at risk.

"You know I was told they did a training session one day but I shouldn't be asked these questions," she said.

"It wasn't my job to educate the entire campus. All the pressures of trying to transition, plus do my studies -- it affected my school work too."

Dempsey finished some of last year's work late and has lost some of her funding.

She is now staying at a shelter because she said she feels safe there.

Dempsey said she hasn't filed any more complaints with the human rights office at Dalhousie but she is considering filing a complaint with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

**Kevin Kindred, with the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project**, said this kind of discrimination continues to happen.

"We hear it in obtaining services and also in employment and people trying to seek housing so sort of all across the board we hear stories of trans people facing discrimination," he said.

CBC News attempted to contact Aramark, the company responsible for food service at Dalhousie, but they did not return our call.

A spokesperson for the human rights office at Dalhousie University said the school can't comment on individual cases for privacy reasons.

# January 2014

## ***Khyber launches campaign for OUT events***

Chronicle Herald | 2014-01-14

The Khyber Centre for the Arts, 1588 Barrington St., Halifax, has launched an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign (<http://igg.me/p/609712/x>) to raise \$2,500 for *OUT: Queer Looking, Queer Acting Revisited*.

*OUT*, opening 7 p.m., Jan. 31, and running to Feb. 28, comprises an exhibit of LGBT ephemera dating back to the 1970s, curated by noted activist and curator Robin Metcalfe; a catalogue; a panel discussion on the evolution of queer identity; and a cabaret that is a revival of the original shows that once took place at the Turret Club from the 1970s to 90s.

*OUT* is organized in collaboration with the NSCAD Queer Collective and the **Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project**, and is supported by Venus Envy, Drala Books & Gifts, McInnes Cooper, Bruce Greenfield and Boris Kablar.

Perks for contributors include limited-edition hand-printed-posters, as well as an original painting by Canadian artist Garry Neill Kennedy.

## ***Get OUT***

The Coast | 2014-02-13

by Veronica Simmonds

The younger activists in the NSCAD Queer Collective connect with the established queer community with the upcoming *OUT: Queer Looking, Queer Acting Revisited*.

"The history of lesbian and gay activism in Halifax has been, to an extraordinary degree, a history of creating and contesting spaces." Robin Metcalfe wrote this in 1997 in his essay on the exhibition *Queer Looking, Queer Acting: Lesbian and Gay Vernacular*, which was held at the Mount Saint Vincent University Gallery. That show chronicled the visual culture of Halifax's queer community. It displayed the ephemera that Metcalfe and others had saved over years of activism---the buttons, posters, placards and props that told the story of their community.

Almost 20 years later, the exhibition and its catalogue are being revived and the younger generation of queer activists in Halifax are connecting with their history. "The publication which we're republishing has been important as the main social historical text of the queer community movement in Halifax," says Metcalfe. It tells the story of the Turret.

In the 1970s, the Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE) owned and operated the Turret Room of the Khyber (then known as the Church of England Institute). This space was the centre for queer organizing at that time.

"It is sort of mythic in the imagination of queer Halifax," says Metcalfe. "It was a beautiful space, it was a space that we owned and controlled---and it was unusual at the time, the queer community in Halifax was unusual in that we had one large central organization which was the activist organization and also the organization that controlled the main queer social space in the city, which meant that the city also had significant resources because we had a fair amount of income coming in from that social space."

The history of the Turret is now inspiring a new generation of young queer activists in Halifax. The NSCAD Queer Collective has been reaching out to Metcalfe and other older members of the community to connect with this history. Last year, in collaboration with artist Emily Davidson, they hosted a Turret Resurrection as part of the Khyber's Member Show. They decorated the space based off of archival photos, held a disco, a cabaret and a community discussion with older activists.

"It's been amazing to discover this really cool history of activism in Halifax," says Genevieve Flavelle of the Queer Collective. "To hear about the Turret and how they ran that bar and produced profits that they could use for activism is really inspiring to me as a younger activist."

Flavelle connects strongly with Metcalfe's statement about the importance of space. "The queer community is the kind of community that really needs physical space to gather," Flavelle says. "It's not like other political communities where it can exist more online. We need gay bars and we need community spaces and what was amazing about the Turret was that it was all of those things it was a social space, it was an organizing space where they had meetings they had all of this different social and political programming. We really don't have that in the queer community at present so we end up organizing in very temporary spaces."

The reissue of the catalogue will also include work from the younger generation--- Flavelle and Beck Gilmer-Osborne have written an essay about the Queer Collective and their resurrection of The Turret and Rebecca Rose has written a piece about more recent activism in Halifax. It will be launched on February 14 as part of Pink Triangle Day.

The remounting of OUT: Queer Looking, Queer Acting Revisited will include ephemera from the new generation as well. That show has been postponed due to the temporary relocation of the Khyber Arts Society.

**OUT: Queer Looking, Queer Acting Revisited** catalogue is seeking donations to fund publication at <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/out-queer-looking-queer-acting-revisited-catalogue>

## February 2014

### ***Halifax gay rights advocate, actor says Ellen Page is a role model***

Chronicle Herald | 2014-02-15

by Michael Lightstone

Actress Ellen Page's [public declaration Friday](#) that she's gay was "a big statement," says a Halifax gay rights advocate who's a longtime actor.

"It's huge," Hugo Dann said Saturday. "It's significant on a lot of levels."

Dann said Page's Valentine's Day announcement, during a LGBT conference in Las Vegas, was made by a young woman working in a tough business that can be unforgiving.

He said the Oscar-nominated actress, who is originally from Halifax, is in the top tier in Hollywood. Page would have had much pressure on her not to come out, said Dann, a professional actor for 35 years.

"Her credibility in Hollywood is reliant on her ability to be liked and accepted by a mass audience," he told The Chronicle Herald. "She's a brilliant actor, but quite regardless of that, for

films that cost tens of millions of dollars to make, that have to be insured, it's a very big thing" to state that you're gay, Dann said.

"I cannot imagine that there is an agent in Hollywood who would actually say to their clients: 'Yeah, come out. It'll be great for your career,'" he said with a laugh.

"There may be some, but I find it difficult to imagine."

Dann, a member of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project, said he was speaking only for himself.

Page, 26, told delegates at the lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual conference that concealing her sexuality — hiding who she is — has caused her years of emotional pain.

In an articulate, heartfelt speech that referenced her own youth and addressed other young people, she acknowledged being "tired of lying by omission." Page said her fear of coming out had caused her spirit, mental health and relationships to suffer.

Dann said Page is a role model.

"There are people of her age who've had to leave home because of homophobia — Nova Scotian kids 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 years old — because they were not accepted by their parents," he said.

"That's still a reality for people, I would say, anywhere in the Western world."

Dann said young people "will definitely look up to her."

He said Page's admission about the toll the issue has taken on her personal life "is a very real thing for somebody who has achieved all the markers of what society would call success, and still have to go through this. So that's very significant."

Page got a standing ovation during her address to the delegates.

## April 2014

### ***Sex reassignment surgery funding begins in Nova Scotia***

CBC News | 2014-04-01

Provincial government makes good on promised surgery funding following last year's about-face

Nova Scotians will now have access to funding for sex reassignment surgery as the provincial government makes good on a promise it made last summer.

The province announced in June it intended to begin providing coverage for the procedure.

"Transgender Nova Scotians face unique challenges in the health-care system, as they do in life," said Health and Wellness Minister Leo Glavine in a press release.

"I hope this will help those for whom sex reassignment surgery is an important part of their transition."

The funding covers eight types of sex reassignment surgeries, all related to the removal and reconstruction of external and internal organs or characteristics.

"Gender confirming surgery is an important part of a successful transition for many transgender people," said **Kate Shewan, vice-chair of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project.**

"These are medically-necessary procedures and have been proven to improve health, well-being and quality of life."

Last June, the province did a quick about-face, backtracking on its initial decision not to provide funding for sex reassignment surgery.

In justifying the province's decision not to pay for the procedure, then-Health Minister David Wilson cited a lack of high-quality research about the effectiveness of outcomes.

One week later the government backtracked, agreeing to pay for the surgery after reportedly reviewing the medical evidence and the policies of other provinces.

According to a news release, Nova Scotians interested in accessing public funds for the procedure can begin by talking with their family doctor.

More information is available online.

## May 2014

### ***Trans men surgeries set for Montreal***

Chronicle Herald | 2014-05-07

by Laura Fraser

Lindsay Zwicker cannot wait to carelessly peel off his shirt and then leap into the ocean on a humid summer day.

The dream could come to pass next year; Zwicker plans to undergo chest surgery so that his body will reflect the man inside it.

He said he can sometimes conceal the feminine aspects about his appearance — today with a vest and close-fitting jeans.

"But it would be nice to be able to be perceived correctly," he said over coffee recently. "Meeting a new person, I'd be able to just meet them as myself rather than a sort of anomaly science project, which I feel like sometimes."

The province just announced it will send trans men to Montreal until it determines whether local surgeons can do the surgery. Four other sexual reassignment-type surgeries would be performed there as well.

Zwicker, 29, celebrated the province's announcement in April that it would fund sexual reassignment surgeries, only to learn no one had the local expertise to perform chest masculinization, which the Health and Wellness Department defines as a mastectomy that spares the nipples.

While there are surgeons who perform the operation on women having breast tissue removed to prevent or treat cancer, it's unclear whether anyone has done the operation on a trans man looking for a different outcome.

The department hopes to draft a list of local surgeons within the next year who can perform the procedure here. Doctors performing the operation on women may have transferable skills or require a small amount of training, said the department's director of policy and planning.

"But until we have a list, we think it's best for patients that we send them to ... Montreal, where we know that the expertise exists," Christine Gibbons said.

The province has not set a cap on the number of surgeries it will fund each budget, estimating that four to eight people will apply every year.

Since this is the first year that sexual reassignment surgery will be publicly covered, there may be a higher uptake to clear the backlog for those who had been saving or could not afford the surgery themselves, **the vice-chair of the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project said.**

Kate Shewan said the group supports the government's decision, because it will connect patients with experts in this field.

### ***Speak Up and Speak Out fights back against homophobia, transphobia***

Global Halifax | 2014-05-14

by Julia Wong

HALIFAX – About 150 people gathered in downtown Halifax Wednesday night to rally together in the fight against homophobia and transphobia.

The rally in Victoria Park was called Speak Up and Speak Out and is meant to align with the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, which takes place on Saturday, May 17.

Event MC Rebecca Rose said the province has made strides in helping the LGBTQ community, such as financing sex reassignment surgery, but there is still a long way to go.

"I think as a province, city and community, we still need to work on trans rights," she said.

"We still need to make sure we're working on gender markers [on ID], which really makes it difficult for trans folks that don't fit into the gender binary or whose biological sex doesn't match up with the gender they're presenting. There's still a lot of work we can do with trans issues, gender identity and gender expressions."

The rally also featured Scott Jones, who made headlines last year after saying he was attacked because of his sexual orientation.

Scott, who is now paraplegic because of the attack, is spearheading Don't Be Afraid, a campaign against homophobia.

"This is phenomenal and it really speaks volumes of the support in Halifax," he said looking around at the crowd. "It means more support and gives us more momentum."

Rose said everyone needs to work together to make sure LGBTQ people feel included and wanted in the community.

"We need to work on ending transphobia and homophobia and making queer and trans members of our community feel safe in all aspects of our society, in our schools, on our streets, in our public parks and in our hospitals."

## ***‘Ambassadors for our community:’ Large crowd attends anti-homophobia rally in Halifax***

Metro | 2014-05-14

by Scott MacIntosh

A gathering of nearly 200 people huddled around Victoria Park on Spring Garden Road in Halifax on Wednesday evening, with many smiling, shaking hands or embracing one another with hugs, as part of a rally organized by the **Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project**.

The not-for-profit group, which serves the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) population in Nova Scotia, was celebrating the upcoming International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

The message was clear from special guest speaker Scott Jones on the chilly evening in Halifax.

He says the only way to change these phobias is to talk about it frequently and openly.

“They’re just walls and you can bring them down much easier than the walls of a house,” he said, adding that it needs to be a tireless effort.

“We stick together at these rallies, but when we leave we need to be individual ambassadors for our community.”

Jones, who is openly gay, was brutally stabbed in the back twice and had his throat slashed last October in New Glasgow, in what some believe was a hate crime. He is now a paraplegic, but also has a new outlook on life.

Jones and his friends have since started the “Don’t Be Afraid” campaign because he says he wanted to turn this negative situation into an opportunity to examine and relinquish the fears that surround intolerance.

The rainbow-painted signs for the campaign have been sprouting up all over the globe and have seen promotion from such celebrities as the Backstreet Boys and Rick Mercer.

Money raised will go directly to setting up educational and awareness programs in Atlantic Canada.

Jones says coming from a small town he had preconceived judgements about his own community, but after holding an awareness event, the people of New Glasgow surprised him.

“I really thought the campaign would not be well received there because we don’t talk about it (homosexuality), but it was the complete opposite, everyone was engaging in conversation and left feeling inspired.”

The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia takes place Saturday, with events in more than 120 countries across the globe.

## ***Rallying to transcend walls of hatred***

Chronicle Herald | 2014-05-15

by Mary Ellen MacIntyre

The sun went behind the clouds and the temperature dropped as a crowd gathered to mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia in Halifax on Wednesday night.

But the man in the wheelchair didn’t flinch.

"I've never spoken at a rally before," said Scott Jones, who has used a wheelchair to get around since he was stabbed in the back after leaving a New Glasgow bar last October.

Soft-spoken, with an easy smile and friendly manner, Jones, who is gay, believes his attacker stabbed him because of his sexual orientation. Shane Edward Matheson, 19, of Trenton pleaded guilty to attempted murder and is to be sentenced in June.

Jones told the crowd that members of Halifax's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community gave him great support "when I needed it most."

The choral and piano teacher has been thrust into the limelight since his ordeal, and in the minds of many, he has risen to the occasion.

"I've been working with Easter Seals Nova Scotia and their motto is Working Toward a Barrier-Free Nova Scotia," he told the crowd.

"We need to be careful about the walls we put up."

Racism and homophobia are all walls of fear and hatred, he said.

"But they're just walls and you can bring them down much easier than the walls of a house. All we have to do is talk about it."

Jones urged members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community to become "individual ambassadors for our community."

"When I was in (the intensive care unit), I was the most afraid I've ever been in my life."

He feared dying and being disabled, but he mostly feared what happened to him might happen to someone else, he told the gathering.

While in hospital, Jones said, a friend asked him for a slogan that would sum up the message he wanted to send out and the Don't Be Afraid campaign began. The campaign aims to encourage a discussion about homophobia and hopes to inspire people to truly be themselves.

The rally included speeches by Pedram Niakan, a gay Iranian refugee sponsored by the Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia. Niakan spoke of the fear members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community feel in their own countries.

"I love my mother and father, but I was afraid they would not love me," he said.

But they continued to love him even after they found out about his sexual orientation, Niakan added.

"All my friends know and they still love me, but my government (in Iran) doesn't."

In Canada, he said, he's not afraid to be who he is.

### ***Change is everyone's responsibility - Rally against homophobia and transphobia***

Halifax Media Co-op | 2014-05-15

by Stephanie Taylor

K'JIPUKTUK (HALIFAX) – For Scott Jones, the way to end homophobia is to talk about it.

"It's just so easy, right," the 27-year-old told the crowd gathered at Wednesday's anti-homophobia and transphobia rally. "If you hear something that's ignorant, homophobic or transphobic, please have the courage to open up a discussion about what was said."

Jones was one of the six speakers who addressed the more than 100 people who rallied at Speak Up & Speak Out, an event organized by the **Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project**, in recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia on May 17th.

The crowd of LGBTQ members and community allies cheered Jones as he shared his personal story of overcoming the fear that before made it difficult for him to talk openly about homophobia. He rallied on behalf of his campaign Don't be Afraid, an anti-homophobia organization that he started last October, while he was hospitalized from a stabbing that left him paralyzed.

"We've come a long way, but there's still a long way to go," said **Kate Shewan**, the rally's co-organizer and vice-president of the rainbow action project. She hoped Wednesday's event would increase peoples' awareness and open their eyes to the issues that are affecting the trans community everyday.

Changing immigration policies to allow for more LGBTQ asylum seekers to gain refugee status and improvements to transgender health care were two calls for change speakers put forth.

In April, the province announced it would extend health coverage for eight types of gender reassignment surgeries. The decision was a big step for trans healthcare, but Shewan says there is still a major lack of support for people during the lead up to surgery. One of her main concerns is the shortage of staff to assist patients through the assessment and counselling process.

Making it easier for Nova Scotians to change the gender markers on their identification is the next step in fighting discrimination, said trans activist Jessica Durling. The first year University of King's College student has collected more than 400 signatures on her petition that asks government identification and medical records to honour someone's chosen gender identity, not their birth sex.

"We need to make it that transgendered people live as their preferred gender, free from discrimination and free from outings with things like buying a pack a cigarettes because of the sexual identity on their ID's," Durling said.

Shewan believes young people are going to be the voice of change for the future. She says increasing the education of LGBTQ issues in schools will lead to better acceptance and understanding of the diversity of gender identities.

Members of the Youth Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping teens deal with gender identity issues, challenged Wednesday's crowd to stand up for queer students.

"There's a lot of fear and a lot of intolerance in schools," said 18-year-old Youth Project member Josh Jenkins. "It's really difficult, especially for people who are coming to terms with who they are."

It is everyone's responsibility to stop the fear and discrimination of gay and trans people was the rally's overwhelming message. At the end of the event Jones asked the crowd to gather around him and pose for a picture, holding different coloured pieces of paper representing the pride flag, to show that change takes a community.

"We talk about (homophobia and transphobia) here, but we need to be able to talk about it elsewhere, Jones said. "When we leave this rally we need to be individual ambassadors for our community."

## Non-Print Media Coverage

Newsmaker Interview: Pride & DOMA

CBC News: Halifax at 6:00 | CBC, 2013-06-27

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Canada/NS/ID/2394752278/>

“Stranded Senior, Transgender Surgery, Your Feedback”

Maritime Noon | CBC Radio, 2013-07-02

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/Local+Shows/Maritimes/Maritime+Noon/ID/2395533885/>

“Hate Crimes Report”

The Morning Show | Global News, 2013-07-17

<http://globalnews.ca/video/722619/hate-crimes-report>

Spirit Place Decision

Mainstreet Nova Scotia | CBC Radio

News at Six

CTV News Atlantic, 2013-10-14

Maritime Morning with Jordi Morgan

News 95.7, 2013-10-15

<http://www.news957.com/2013/10/15/tuesday-october-15-845am/>

The Rick Howe Show

News 95.7, 2013-10-15

Halifax Evening News

Global Maritimes, 2013-10-15

<http://globalnews.ca/video/904334/halifax-evening-news-oct-15/>

“Perilous Wait”

Maggie Rahr, Atlantic Voice | CBC Radio, 2014-01-17

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/Local+Shows/Maritimes/Atlantic+Voice/ID/2430674133/>

Re. Pride Flag at City Hall during Olympics

News at Six

CTV News Atlantic, 2014-02-09

Re. Ellen Page Coming Out

CBC News, 2014-02-15

Re. SRS Coverage (Interview with Kate Shewan)

The Rick Howe Show | News 95.7, 2014-04-03

Re. SRS Coverage (Interview with Kate Shewan)  
CTV Morning Live I CTV Atlantic, 2014-04-04  
<http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=319307>

Re. International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia (Interview with Kate Shewan)  
The Morning News I Global Halifax, 2014-05-14  
<http://globalnews.ca/video/1330230/the-morning-news-may-14>

Re. International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia (Interview with Kate Shewan)  
CTV News Atlantic, 2014-05-14