

I attended the Pride AGM and I have a very different view from most of the posts I have read. The one article duplicated and published by every media outlet from CBC to C.H. to Metro and the admittedly biased report published on the Halifax Examiner do not tell the whole story.

I was not recruited to attend by the AJC or anyone but decided to come after reading mainstream articles on the QAH proposal. I firmly believe that this proposal was inappropriate to the spirit of Pride and is anti-semitic. It was good to see the large turn-out, of the rarely seen these days, larger Gay community of Halifax. Yes there were members of the local Jewish Community there to vote against the proposal but there were also many people who were not of the LGBTQ2 community, i.e Dalhousie Students For Palestine there too for the pro side. I and many others were profiled as "straight, old, white men in sports coats". Really? A LGBTQ2 organization profiling people? Never mind your stated mandate of supporting Gay elders but when we show up and the vote doesn't go your way we are invalidated.

Many of you in the 30 year old hipster crowd on the NSRAP Board may have not seen my face in the last 10 minutes but here's who this "straight, old, white guy" is.

I'm 60 years old now. I came out 35 years ago before many of you were born. I was a board member of Aids Nova Scotia, at the height of the HIV crisis, I lost my best gay friends to HIV. I worked for years to raise money on the ANS Art fundraiser to raise money for amongst other things, monthly expenses for people living with HIV. I own one of the oldest gay-owned businesses in this Province and have been an outspoken gay business owner over these years. My business has been a supporter of The Youth Project, NSRAP and we support Halifax Pride through advertising in the annual Pride Guide.

So to say I am mystified by being described after all these years as a "straight old white guy" is an understatement but shows to me that the NSRAP board members who threw their loud and insulting comments during the meeting were not there to represent the wishes or opinions of the larger Nova Scotia Gay community but their own fringe political views.

The idea being put forward that this was a Straight take-over of Pride Halifax is wrong. What you saw Wednesday night, was people like me being heard. People who do not agree with your simplistic view of a very complex situation in a very complex part of the planet. You speak as though your personal political views are universally recognized. The Israeli LGBTQ community is something for us to be proud of, as an island of freedom and acceptance in a region of hate and murder towards their own LGBT communities. I would welcome pamphlets to be handed out at Halifax Pride to promote tourism to the wonderful LGBTQ communities of Jeddah, Baghdad or Damascus. It is time now for the QAH to look at a fresh approach, one that builds bridges and common ground, as in this country that's what we do and that's why we are a model for the World.

You as the Board of NSRAP would do well to take note, listen and reflect on whether you are in fact in touch with the people you are there to represent, if you are to represent the whole Gay community in this Province. The conduct including tears and vitriolic name calling by several of the NSRAP Board members at the meeting Wednesday evening was unbecoming of members of a Provincial Board and as such they should now consider their resignations. Leave your political views outside and serve the community you claim to represent.

Willem and the Board of Halifax Pride who sat on the head table on Wednesday evening, did a very good job in very difficult circumstances and deserve our utmost respect.

The Pride Festival was always meant to be an open celebration, welcoming and not exclusionary and should remain that way, period.