

## Elderberries July Newsletter



Are you finding club music too loud and too fast? Does it seem far too long since you saw old friends, or met new ones near your own age? You may be looking for a group like the Elderberries. The initiative behind this group comes from the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project's Elders Committee, and the Group's objective is to provide a social get-together for LGBT people aged 50-plus while at the same time giving the group information and support on subjects specifically related to LGBT elder issues.

This month, we will not be having our usual Potluck Social, instead we will be gathering as a group to watch the Pride parade on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will meet on South Park Street along the fence of the Public Gardens across from the Smiling Goat. We will meet at 12:30 to pick a place and socialize while waiting for the parade. Bringing a folded chair would be a good idea.

Flag raising ceremony will take place at Grand Parade location on July 20, 2017 kicking off the Pride festivities for 2017.

**Northwood extends the invitation to our good friends at Elderberries to join us for our Pride Flag celebrations at both the Halifax and Bedford locations, (yes, there will be cake!!!) And to walk with Northwood at the annual Halifax Pride Parade. If you are interested in joining Northwood in the parade, contact: [PrideParade@nwood.ns.ca](mailto:PrideParade@nwood.ns.ca) (902) 454-4531. Flag raising ceremony will take place on July 20th at 2:00 pm at Northwood.**

**In the News:** Eldon has been a member and has spoken at a couple of Elderberries events:

<http://www.sackvilletribunepost.com/community/2017/6/13/sackville-man-recognized-for-60-years-of-ministry-with-united-ch.html>

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**Our last potluck social:**



**The Elderberries June meeting ...June 11, 2017**

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As you can see by the photo I took from high atop the "Northwood Penthouse" It was a beautiful day...which I assumed wrongly would keep people away from a meeting as they explored the wonderful Nova Scotia beaches.

Well now, that was a surprise! I, assumed (and you know what that means eh!) wrong.. and I also assumed they might think this was going to be a much needed, but boring discussion. Was I wrong, yet again??? oh YES! REMINDER TO ME (and...btw..to many of us!!)...STOP ASSUMING!!!

This meeting was a rousing meeting and everyone had much to contribute...it was informative and extremely interesting...Breaks in between discussions were very welcomed by the delicious fare that was set out for us, by us. We continued on with the discussion and had to remind ourselves it was time to clear out of the penthouse as some others were due in soon.

Very well done..and for a beautiful summers day well attended. We hope to get back to this subject another day in the following months.

PLEASE..please.....FOR ALL OF OUR FANTASTIC ELDERS OUT THERE AND THEIR FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND ALLIES...do not hesitate to write in and let us know what you think we need to discuss in the future...We certainly like to have lively and much needed discussions for all!!!

**ELDERBERRIES TEXTING CODES:**

ATD - at the doctors.

BFF -best friend fell.

BTW -bring the wheelchair.

BYOT -bring your own teeth.

FWIW -forgot where I was.

GGPBL -gotta -go, pacemaker battery low.

GHA -got heartburn again.

IMHO -is my hearing aid on.

LMDO -laughing my dentures out.

OMMR - on my massage recliner.

OMSG -oh my! sorry, gas.

ROFLACGU-rolling on floor laughing and can't get up.

TTYL -talk to you louder ;~)

Anita Martinez

**Book of the month:**



**Summary:**

Folksy and fresh, endearing and affecting, *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe* is the now-classic novel of two women in the 1980s; of gray-headed Mrs. Threadgoode telling her life story to Evelyn, who is in the sad slump of middle age. The tale she tells is also of two women--of the irrepressibly daredevilish tomboy Idgie and her friend Ruth--who back in the thirties ran a little place in Whistle Stop, Alabama, a Southern kind of Cafe Wobegon offering good barbecue and good coffee and all kinds of love and laughter, even an occasional murder. And as the past unfolds, the present--for Evelyn and for us--will never be quite the same again... "Airplanes and television have removed the Threadgoodes from the Southern scene. Happily for us, Fannie Flagg has preserved a whole community of them in a richly comic, poignant narrative that records the exuberance of their lives, the sadness of their departure. Idgie Threadgoode is a true original: Huckleberry Finn would have tried to marry her!" --Harper Lee, Author of *To Kill a Mockingbird* "A real novel and a good one... [from] the busy brain of a born storyteller." --The New York Times "It's very good, in fact, just wonderful." --Los Angeles Times "Funny and macabre." --The Washington Post "Courageous and wise." --Houston Chronicle.



**sRecipe of the month:**

### **Curried Pork Balls on Rice**

**In a medium bowl, combine a package of lean ground pork with ½ cup of oatmeal, salt and pepper, and herb of your choice - oregano, basil, rosemary are good choices.**

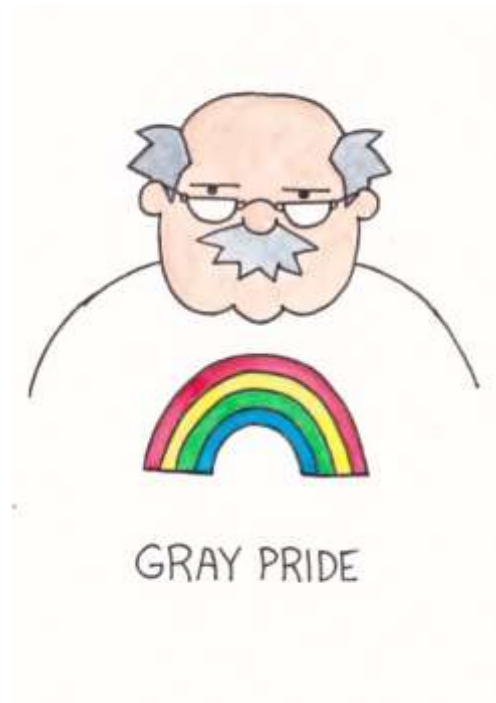
**Form into small balls.**

**Heat 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil in a large saucepan until hot.**

**Add pork balls and brown thoroughly. Add diced vegetables – mushrooms, onion, sweet pepper, zucchini (small green and yellow) and brown pork balls.**

**Meanwhile, mix ½ cup of flour and 1 tablespoon of vegetable stock mix with 2 cups of 2% milk. Stirring with a whisk works best.**

**Add ¼ cup of butter to the meat mixture. When melted and mixed add the milk mixture. Stir constantly while the mixture thickens. Add more milk or cream to get the right consistency of sauce. Serve over rice and add a side of salad or steamed asparagus in lemon and butter.**



**Ken and Wayne invite the Elderberries to our home at 2124 East Petpeswick Road in Musquodoboit Harbour on August 13<sup>th</sup> 2017. This will be a beach/potluck social. Bring your favorite dish for everyone to share. Our home has two steps leading into the house and four steps leading down to the backyard. Raindate will be August 20<sup>th</sup>. Please r.s.v.p. before August 1<sup>st</sup> to [kv782915@gmail.com](mailto:kv782915@gmail.com).**

**Something new coming to Halifax:**

<http://www.metronews.ca/news/halifax/2017/03/28/community-road-train-pitched-for-downtown-halifax.html>



**Do you have anything that you want to buy/sell or give away? We will be featuring a section that enables members to send info to me ([hector151@hotmail.com](mailto:hector151@hotmail.com)) and I will feature it in the Newsletter. Take a photo and a short write-up of the item you want to send.**



### Being Gay in Pre- Internet in Japan (Part One)

Japan and I had a rocky beginning. I flew over there not knowing if I had AIDS.(The blood test was still in process.) In 1988 I'd had an affair with a PWA using safe sex practices. But at the VG's STD clinic a homophobic employee I'd consulted said I had it! There was widespread hysteria about AIDS at the time. It was deemed a miserable death sentence. I ended up having an attack of excruciatingly painful muscle spasms and taken on a stretcher by ambulance to the VG Emergency.

From '83 to '88 I'd been eking out a living as a security guard. My kid brother, Fred was in Osaka making money hand over fist in the Japanese English Teaching boom. He urged me twice to join him. (He'd loan me the money for a return ticket.)After that ER visit, I said yes. But en route, I wrestled with the idea of committing suicide on my stopover in Vancouver. During that long flight I decided I could kill myself some other time. Let's find out what Japan was all about.

I deplaned in Osaka one November evening to be greeted by the ever enthusiastic Fred. I was exhausted from the jet lag. ' Kept alive only by caffeine .He spoke Japanese well and navigated me to downtown Osaka. The streets were bustling with thousands of well- dressed Japanese men and women getting off work. Brilliant neon signs covered towering buildings. Soon we caught up with Fred's pals. They were a lively and



cocky bunch of twenty somethings. Canadians, Australians, Brits. Mostly college grads quickly paying off their student loans with yen from their private students. A wave of enthusiasm engulfed me. A bright new chapter was beginning. Every newcomer to Japan gets a huge case of culture shock. There are few street signs or house numbers.

Most people can't speak English though some think they can. Japanese are extremely reluctant to deal with foreigners. In the 80s and 90s we foreign residents had to rely on memorization. Language schools issued map books with explanations, train and subway diagrams, local landmarks and phone numbers.

My first year, I frequently got lost and had to phone my school for help. You cope or have a breakdown and go home. Some had meltdowns.

I received confirmation that I had tested negative for AIDS. Japanese often asked visitors if they had AIDS. I could now confidently laugh and say no. Gradually, as I became adjusted to living there, I wondered, "where are all the gay people?"

## **Part Two**

### JAPAN AS PRESSURE COOKER

Before cellphones or the internet we gaijin (foreigners in Japan) were largely cut off from our families and culture and all that was happening there. Long letters from home were treasures to be devoured and reread. Long distance phone calls were extremely expensive and required using a check list of questions you wanted to ask about or requests for items to be sent. These included pants, shirts, t-shirts, peanut butter, razors, pound cake, Sudafed, Britta water filters, video tapes of the latest 90s t.v. shows and music videos. Letters on cassette tapes from home were a treat. Newcomers "fresh off the boat" were welcomed enthusiastically and pumped for the latest political, music, entertainment news.

### UNUSUAL THINGS ABOUT 90s JAPAN

The culture seemed to be a jumble of unique, cutting edge, lovely and awful things.

-Even in 1988, public (green) telephones could be used by inserting prepaid plastic phone cards.

-The whole society was organized into rigid feudal pyramids of mindless obedience

- Death by "karoshi" (overwork) was not uncommon and praised by some.
- You could visit impressive old temples, shrines, monasteries and castles with lovely gardens.
- The country has incredible far reaching mass transit systems to transport people to work.
- "Chikans" (perverts) openly groped high school girls on those train but, nobody lifted a finger to stop them.
- You knew everybody or at least knew someone that knew them. Larger than life personalities and nicknames abounded. ("French Claudette", "Big Fat Black Claudette", "Cat", "Cousin Tom", "Mad Max.")
- Female impersonators (onnagata) in the Kabuki theatre set the standard for proper behaviour for women.
- The cost of living was about 150% to 200% higher than home. Saving money was difficult.
- Senseis (teachers) particularly Caucasians were held in high regard but generally avoided.
- Banking machines were only (reluctantly) introduced in the late 90s.
- Getting drunk in public was a very common way for office staffs to bond together.
- Anyone found to be an alcoholic was fired or squeezed out of the workplace.
- Most of us foreigners had no homophobic, racial, religious or political prejudices. Everybody was welcome.  
.Friendships were easy to make.
- Japanese women were often harassed and talked down to by their bosses despite their politeness, intelligence and strong work ethic.
- The crime rate was incredibly low. Safety was not a worry even late at night.
- Homesickness was very common. Most foreigners would go through "I hate Japan" periods. Some got so frustrated they imploded or exploded and went home abruptly.
- Early morning commutes (7 am to 8 am) meant subway stations and cars were swarming with wall to wall people. Workers with white gloves pushed people onto trains for maximum passenger loads.

-The long summers were exhausting, hot and damp (35C - 40C and 90% humidity.)

-We all got a lot of exercise cycling to our schools or key train/subway stations.

-Bullying was common in Japanese schools. Students committed suicide if their marks were not high enough which many considered the honorable way to "save face."

-Most foreigners went on drinking and dancing sprees together on weekends. The camaraderie was wonderful: but, affairs and break ups abounded.

-Japanese men lead complex, compartmentalized lives. They had to get married. If you were gay, you hid that from everyone or suffered complete disgrace

How was this 40 something gay guy going to find love in Japan?



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Barend Kamperman

## ===Elderberries Visit To Pictou County Rainbow Community===

By Dan MacKay

On the afternoon of June 29th, eight Elderberries converged at a newly renovated space in New Glasgow for an "Elder Cafe" hosted by the Pictou County Rainbow Community.

For 35 years, Lolly's Gifts was adored by New Glasgow residents, run by Laura "Lolly" McLean. Her very out, and proud son, Shaun, took over the space when it closed in early 2011, and transformed it into a multifunction space which can be rented for performances. Shaun is just back from a performing tour himself, presenting "Big Gay Affair" — a ten-person drag show that outgrew its corsets into a two-hour extravaganza of live song as well as lip sync, comedy, and a particularly powerful video that speaks to the struggles of the LGBTQ community.

There were perhaps 15 Pictou County Pride people aged from 16 to 80 to welcome us, and we mixed and mingled and wolfed down a mountain of homemade chocolate chip cookies as well as Timbits, however I took my new puppy which was a huge hit.

A guitar soloist did a couple Carole King tunes, and a women's choir gave us a couple of quite solemn songs during the afternoon.

We handed out a handful of Elderberries brochures, and sold eight of our 2011 cookbooks! (There are only 8 cookbooks left, by the way.)

Elderberries reps Norman Moulton and I spoke to the group about the Elderberries, who we are, what we do, and invited people to join.

Afterwards, on our host Shaun's recommendation, seven of us headed to Sam's Restaurant in Stellarton. Norman Moulton and I each got an enormous "chicken wrap, buy one get one free" for \$16; although they were delicious, each could only eat half so we brought home the other half as a complete meal in a doggy bag.

On the way home, Dan & Mike Sangster stopped at Shubenacadie to take a picture of this solitary tree in its field.

The following pictures are of Shaun's Mom, Lolly's exterior, Jake & Shaun's Big Gay Affair and the tree.

[http://www.inmemoriam.ca/images/photo\\_original/obituary-226237.jpg](http://www.inmemoriam.ca/images/photo_original/obituary-226237.jpg)

[https://www.google.ca/maps/uv?hl=en&pb=!1s0x4b5c1eb25ee10b61:0x846af383322fdd52!2m19!2m2!1i80!2i80!3m1!2i20!16m13!1b1!2m2!1m1!1e1!2m2!1m1!1e3!2m2!1m1!1e5!2m2!1m1!1e4!3m1!7e1!15!4s/maps/place/Lolly%27s%2Bgifts%2Bnew%2Bglasgow/@45.5877426,-62.6449203,3a,75y,263.31h,90t/data%3D\\*213m4\\*211e1\\*213m2\\*211s5e-836TNpix06SMXc0o0FQ\\*212e0\\*214m2\\*213m1\\*211s0x4b5c1eb25ee10b61:0x846af383322fdd52!5sLolly%27s+gifts+new+glasgow+-+Google+Search&imagekey=!1e2!2s5e-836TNpix06SMXc0o0FQ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj6ubWueXUAhVFdD4KHVe7CvgQpx8IZTAK](https://www.google.ca/maps/uv?hl=en&pb=!1s0x4b5c1eb25ee10b61:0x846af383322fdd52!2m19!2m2!1i80!2i80!3m1!2i20!16m13!1b1!2m2!1m1!1e1!2m2!1m1!1e3!2m2!1m1!1e5!2m2!1m1!1e4!3m1!7e1!15!4s/maps/place/Lolly%27s%2Bgifts%2Bnew%2Bglasgow/@45.5877426,-62.6449203,3a,75y,263.31h,90t/data%3D*213m4*211e1*213m2*211s5e-836TNpix06SMXc0o0FQ*212e0*214m2*213m1*211s0x4b5c1eb25ee10b61:0x846af383322fdd52!5sLolly%27s+gifts+new+glasgow+-+Google+Search&imagekey=!1e2!2s5e-836TNpix06SMXc0o0FQ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj6ubWueXUAhVFdD4KHVe7CvgQpx8IZTAK)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57cf03f1e3df2894398ba6fc/t/57ee7c979f74563967bbc805/1475247268574/?format=750w>

<http://bonmot.ca/~daniel/tree/pics/2017-06-29.jpg>

DM

**Thank you for your readership and Happy Pride 2017!**

**Wayne Collette - Newsletter Editor**

**Anita Martinez – Graphics Editor**

**Daniel MacKay – Systems Editor**