

Happy 50th Birthday, Halifax 2SLGBTQQI+ Community!

Halifax Central Library Rainbow
Café with NS LGBT Seniors
Archive, Wed. 2023-06-21

The Beginnings

Written, signed and distributed by Anne Fulton, identified on the "newsletter" as the new group's secretary, this proclamation sent out to an unknown, likely small number of subscribers and was the first firm step towards community-driven gay rights in the Maritimes. Originally from Woodstock, New Brunswick, Anne had come into her own in the butch/femme bar scene in Saint John before moving to Halifax sometime in the late 60's / early 70's to study and work as a day-care teacher. Closeted to her family but otherwise openly gay, and by all accounts positively fearless, Anne searched for the same kind of community of women she had known there.

Anne found a photocopied poster declaring "It's Time For Gay Liberation" advertising a gathering at Dalhousie University to discuss creating an organization to represent gay people in Halifax, and she leaped at the opportunity to connect with the locals she had been searching for. It was organized by Dartmouth-raised Frank Abbott.

Also in attendance were Tom "Tommy" Burns and David Gray, who unbeknownst to Anne, ran the city's preeminent queer hot-spot, TheeKlub, aka Club 777, quietly situated on the third floor of the Green Lantern building, in an office and residential space rented by David, who lived in the building with his mother, various young gay vagrants, and later co-bar operator/co-renter Tom.



After a few false starts, a core group emerged, meeting again and again to discuss the future organization, what they wanted to achieve, and how they intended to do it.

Anne's signed declaration on behalf of the resulting Gay Alliance for Equality gave a founding date of June 4, 1972.

There was another year of discussion and planning including a significant amount of time figuring out a name everyone could agree on, and finally in May of 1973, the application to become an official society was filed.

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November 1972.

NEWS LETTER.
This letter is to inform you that Halifax has now stepped into the ever-expanding movement for Gay Liberation.

As of June 4th., 1972, the Halifax Gay community established an organization known as the Gay Alliance for Equality, with an elected executive committee of five. We plan to register as a non-profit organization in the near future, and we will be working with, and through the community to better facilitate gay - community relations.

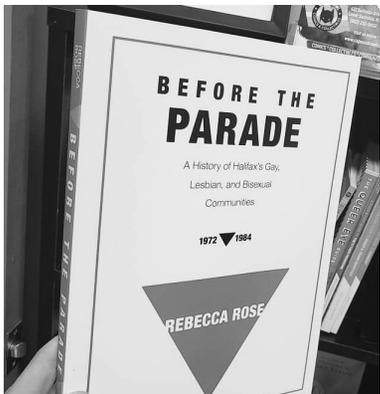
We are yet a new and struggling organization and have few and modest accomplishments to stand with our name. Therefore, at this point, and in the future we would appreciate any correspondence and ideas which we could incorporate into our program.

Looking forward to hearing from you,
GAY ALLIANCE FOR EQUALITY
M. Anne Fulton
Secretary.

Published Histories



Queer Looking, Queer Acting, by Robin Metcalfe, original 1997, vastly updated and revised in 2014, published by the Khyber Center for the Arts, available at libraries and from the author.



Before The Parade, by Rebecca Rose, available at the GAE birthday celebration and Venus Envy.

Halifax Rainbow Encyclopedia, by the Halifax Q community and Bonmot Publishing. <http://gay.hfxns.org/>

for all things queer

Welcome to the Halifax Rainbow Encyclopedia, the portal for the SLIGHT+ / Queer / Q community in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

The goal of the Halifax Rainbow Encyclopedia is to have a page for every person, place, thing and event of relevance to the Q community in Halifax, ever. As of January, 2022 we have over six hundred thousand words in two thousand finished pages, words-in-progress, or article stubs, and about thirty five hundred images and several dozen hours of audio and video recordings.

Halifax Rainbow Encyclopedia (HRE) is designed for easy storage and retrieval of facts, stories, and indexes to the locations of others. Here are some tips for doing research:

Starting Points for Particularly Q Things In Halifax

- Upcoming Events Calendar: Local events
- Bars: As of about 2020, there are no Q specific bars in Halifax. See [Gaybars for a half century of history](#)
- One Bar Hangouts: [Gay Hangouts](#)
- Support Groups: [LoveAndCaring](#), [EastCoastRainbowBeliefAssociation](#), [HalifaxHustle](#)
- Local
- Social Groups: [SocialGroup](#)
- There is one men's bath house: [Sudago House](#)
- There is one women's Q oriented journal in Halifax
- [Journalism: Wives Magazine](#)
- Facebook groups: [Wives Magazine](#), [LGBTQ Atlantic and World News - Homes For Queers](#)
- [Halifax, Trans From - News](#), [Queer News](#), [LGBTQ Atlantic and World News - Homes For Queers](#)

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While scope and scale of potential goals varied from member to member, all agreed that together, they were the best chance for gay rights to advance in Nova Scotia, and so adopted an open-ended 8-point list of objectives: to promote education in all aspects of homosexuality • to educate the public regarding problems confronting homosexuals • to assist individual homosexuals • to work to change the prevailing attitudes of society towards homosexuals • to remove public discrimination against homosexuals • to raise funds to achieve their stated goals • to exercise the powers invested in them by the Nova Scotia Societies Act (itself a revolutionary act, as there had never before been a society registered based on homosexuality) and • to establish a social centre to assist homosexuals and administer the objectives of the GAE.

The Gayline

One of the first, longest-lived and successful creations of GAE, created while the ink was still drying on the paperwork, was the GayLine, an information, counselling and referral service. Volunteers were trained by the Halifax Helpline, then other Gayline workers, and staffed the phone for a couple of 3-hour shifts per month.



A Church

At a time when many churches barely recognized us as human, one church reached out: on October 24, 1972, the Universalist Unitarian Church officially offered their Inglis Street worship space to GAE for meetings. The church held their own 50th anniversary celebration.

Not Every Step

Not every step forward would be as easy or so welcomed. It was rare at that time that any gay person, open, closeted or suspected, could go through their life without facing some form of homophobic abuse, harassment or assault, sometimes at the hands of the very police meant to protect those endangered by the violence of society.

As over the decades, understanding beget acceptance, the number of people who openly and proudly identify as some variation of 'queer' has dramatically increased, influencing society and culture to be more inclusive. Nearly an entire generation of Canadians have grown up in a country with legalized same-sex marriage, have grown up knowing other queer people, have grown up being loved and accepted by friends and family alike.

But in Halifax, it all began with a tiny group of feisty and determined people, a half a century ago.

Research & writing by Mikaela Gorman.
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