

**Peterborough
Pride
'Zine**

Peterborough Pride 'Zine

Lately at the Queer Writing at Sadleir House group, we have been exploring ideas of Pride and what Pride means to us. As we shared our stories and ideas about Pride, we came to realize that Pride is a multifaceted, multivocal thing. It is not easy to define, and it shifts from story to story. We recognize that Pride is always shifting, changing as new ideas come about and new voices are added to our community.

We want to celebrate that uncertainty and instability of Pride, to encourage that shifting and changing of discourse that allows our ideas of Pride to not grow stagnant. So, we created this 'zine to provide some thoughts and perspectives about pride, to share our stories, our pictures, our histories because Queer/ LGBTQ2IA people are often subject to erasure.

Pride has always been political since the Stonewall Riots gave us a space to speak back to an oppressive society and create Queer rights movements. So, we chose to create a 'zine, a form of media that has been self-aware of its political messaging, and its ability to deliver messages to a community through non-hierarchical means. The 'zine's simple style and easy production makes it a form that can pass from hand to hand, sharing and co-mingling voices. 'Zines combine image and words, fiction and essays to allow for a recognition of the different ways that we share our ideas and thoughts.

We hope that you enjoy our 'Zine and add your voices and thoughts to the ideas explored here.

We want to thank Sadleir House for generously donating their space for us to have our writing group and explore ideas together.

We want to thank Peterborough Pride for all of their support and encouragement.

Thank you,
Derek Newman-Stille

The Queer Writing at Sadleir House Group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at Sadleir House, 751 George Street North. Check us out on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1859548720934912/> for more information and come join us!

The Quiet Was Killing me

By Anonymous

I lived in Toronto for five years, but sometimes I feel like I never really lived there at all. My apartment was just outside of the village, on the fringes of Cabbagetown... pretty much how I felt about my experience of a being a young queer trans man. I wasn't really "in" the village. I visited it, but I wasn't a part of it.

Every week I would weave through crowded streets, hoping not to see anyone I recognized, as I made my way to the 519. I wanted to be invisible. I wasn't out to anyone except for people online and... and everyone at the Trans Youth Toronto group. It doesn't really exist anymore but for me it was the only place I existed for a long time.

I grew up in a small village, outside of Peterborough. Gay, lesbian, queer, bisexuality, all of that was something that people laughed at or hurled at someone as an insult. None of them fit me, but they stuck to me anyway. I had this affinity for the queer community, even if I couldn't quite understand it. I remember people asking if I was a lesbian, or if I was sure I was straight. I even got heavily involved with my school's GSA - a founding, "A" for ally, member.

It's pretty funny when I think about it.

I lived in Toronto for five years and I never went to a single Pride. I was afraid to tell people who I was or to be seen. Was I "male" enough to be a queer man? Would people see me as me? Would I lose friends? It was all too much... so I weaved through the crowds and stayed silent.

Quiet was just easier.

Quiet was easier.

Quiet was...

Quiet was killing me.

Working in Toronto, seen as a woman, aware of who I was, living each day as a lie was pulling me into a deep depression that I couldn't escape.

So I left.

I left Toronto and moved home to revisit a place I grew up in but... as someone new. I moved home to transition and to discover what pride meant to me. It wasn't a short trip for me. I wasn't wearing rainbows and glitter the next day (but boy would I be), but I felt like I was taking a slow step forward each morning.

I joined a group. I changed my name. I wore a binder and cut my hair. I stopped being afraid to be seen and started to feel the cloud lift and this feeling of joy and rightness that I hadn't felt before. I stopped caring about what others said. Who cares what that asshole called me from his shitty van? Not me.

My first Pride was in Peterborough... where my own pride slowly grew to wrap itself around me, warm and comfortable like a bear hug (pun intended). I painted a rainbow beard on my face, pulled on my binder and a tank top, and prepared myself. With my new friends at my side I walked down the street beaming.

I wasn't afraid or hiding when I walked down George Street my first pride... I was loud. I was visible. I was proud.

Stain Me Red

By Seb

Picking up a girl from a bar was near impossible when you yourself were a girl. For some reason, people thought it would be easier, like the way I thought it was with gay guys. But it wasn't. If anything, it was harder, because flirting was very different. Flirting was basically just being nice to someone. So how do you tell if a girl is flirting with you or trying to make a friend?

It probably didn't help that I sucked at flirting, or at understanding when others were flirting with me. There had been so many times where afterwards my friends would nudge me and smile, and I was just utterly confused. It seemed that I tended to flirt without even noticing. Which was okay. But it wasn't what I needed. What I needed was to be aware that I was flirting, and to be able to notice that someone was flirting back. Instead, I noticed when someone was flirting with anyone else. It was very helpful.

Sitting in a bar, I watched my friends dance. It was loud. I never knew that country music could be so deafening. I wanted to say that I regretted coming, but I was enjoying my drink and apparently white people loved line dancing. It was nice to see my friends having fun. University sometimes made it feel like you were never going to have fun ever again in your life. I wondered if it was just a small-town thing or if white people everywhere liked to line dance.

There was suddenly a girl in front of me, her hair and skin seemed to be a similar colour in the flashing light. She asked me if she could sit; I assumed she was trying to escape from the dancing too. I agreed. Usually, I wouldn't have. I wasn't always a people person and that also made it hard to flirt with people. But I had a couple drinks, and company seemed like a good idea. Besides I didn't want to be that loser all alone in a booth by herself.

She sat across from me. I expected there to be silence between us 'cause the music made it hard to think; let alone talk. She seemed to decide otherwise. She leaned across the table to yell words at me. Even though she was yelling it was still hard to hear her and I found myself looking at her lips to try and figure out what she was saying.

It didn't help.

I was distracted by the colour of her lips. It was the kind of red that only a white person could pull off. The kind of red that could only be caused by a lipstick, and I wanted to know if it would stain. It looked like the kind that would stain. The kind that a Mistress wore in a movie as she kissed the cheating husband and left him marked for the wife to find.

I wanted to kiss her at that moment.

I wanted to see if her lipstick was the kind that could stain my skin; even if it was unlikely to show up on someone as dark as me. I could still dream. My eyes flickered from her mouth to her eyes. They were blue in the dim bar and I wondered if she had the kind of eyes that changed colours with clothes.

I was trying to follow the conversation that was going on, but it was hard because everything about her distracted me. The way her hair fell in front of her face. The way she brushed it away easily. The way her teeth weren't perfectly white. The way her lips always seemed to always be smiling. The way she leaned forward, showing off what little cleavage she had.

To this day, I have no clue what we talked about.

At some point, she had moved to sit beside me. It made it easier for us to talk. She introduced herself as Luna and her name fit her too perfectly. I wondered if she had changed it or if her parents had just been great at naming.

I still thought about how she was like the moon. I could have stared at her forever. I could bathe in her soft glow forever feeling at peace, unlike the bitch that was the sun. She was gentle in a way that was hard to forget. Not like she would shatter, but more like she had already been shattered. She was your mother's favourite teapot that you had glued back together piece by piece, and you didn't want to lose it again.

Sitting closer to me she had lowered her voice, making me lean forward, so I could hear her. She was so close that I could see the freckles on her shoulders as they disappear into her shirt. I wondered if she had freckles on her face. Was there makeup covering them? Did she had them on other parts of her body too?

She was smiling, her hand still hanging in the air between us. I felt foolish for not taking it sooner. Taking her hand in mine, I noticed it was soft and small. I told her my name.

"Roxana." I think my voice dipped when I said it as if I was trying to impart a secret to her. As if I wanted this to be something more.

I didn't know if we were flirting or if I was just making a friend. It wouldn't be the first time that I ended up with a friend instead of a girlfriend. I wouldn't be upset. It would just mean that I'd have another beautiful person in my life that I couldn't have.

I lied. I'd be a bit upset.

Her smile widened, "That's very close to Roxanne."

"I was nearly named that. My mom loves The Police."

"Is that your favourite song by them?"

I scoffed and dropped her hand. Had I been holding on too long? Or had she? I should have been paying more attention, rather than staring at her lips. "Nope. I love Don't Stand So Close to Me. I often find myself singing it when people are too close. I'm not a real people person."

She shifted closer, "Could have fooled me."

I think I shifted closer too. "Well, I am for people that I like."

She seemed to light up, like I fucking hung the moon and I was back to wondering if this was flirting or friendship. She bit her lip and looked away from me. And I was all the way back to wondering if the lipstick would stain.

She brushed her hair away from her face, and looked at me through mascaraed eyelashes, "Now you're making me feel special."

I wanted to say something clever back, something suave and witty. Something to make it clear that I was flirting with her. I didn't get the chance. Which was best, 'cause I had nothing to say really.

Her friend appeared from the crowd and waved her to join. She shot me a look before scooting out of the booth. I watched her go and I wondered if I ever had a chance.

I remained sitting at the booth, drinking alone. My drink no longer tasted as good and I was disappointed that I couldn't figure out this whole flirting thing. I watched my friends dance and I tried not to watch Luna dance, but she was like a beacon with her nearly white hair. My eyes kept finding her and I had to force them away to something else; anything else.

It was only 'cause I didn't know if this was the beginning of a friendship. That was what I tried to convince myself. I didn't know if it was the beginning of more than friends. I didn't even know if she was single. I didn't even know if she liked girls. I knew nothing about her besides her pretty smile and her name.

I think I avoided her throughout the night. Or she avoided me. We didn't see each other until I was leaving with my drunk friend.

"Where you going, Roxana? The night is young." She looked as if she had meant to say something after that, but we were interrupted by my friend drunkenly stumbling into me.

"You're so great, Roxy! Tough as rocks, sexy as a fox."

I nodded, shooting Luna a smile. It was kind of embarrassing, but she nodded in understanding. Like we had all been there before. "I gotta get this one home."

"No Roxy! I'm fine!"

I patted my friend's head. "Go get your coat."

I got a frown, but she pulled away to do something, so that was a win.

"You sure you don't want to come to Sin City after getting your friend home?"

I knew the club, it was the club that always seemed to be changing names in Peterborough. Even though Luna's smile was amazing, and I wanted to see it more, but I had a friend to take home.

"Nah, I should probably stay with her. Make sure she doesn't die."

My answer got a pout and Luna crossed her arms. She looked adorable. She nodded. "Fair enough."

We stood quietly even as the rest of the bar was filled with noise and life. We seemed to be in our own little bubble and I didn't want to leave it ever.

"Let me give you my number."

Taking out my phone, I handed it to her and watched her small hands. She typed in her name and number. Getting it back I noticed that she had put a heart beside her name. I fought a smile and texted her a simple 'hey' so she had my number too.

She smiled up at me and pulled me into a hug. It felt like I hadn't hugged a girl in a while. She was small and I wanted to hold her close. I wanted to know what it would be like to hug her the way a lover would. But I didn't get to, that night. She smelled nice and I didn't want to let her go. She pressed her face into my neck. It was so intimate as if we had known each other forever. She talked into my neck and I could feel her words vibrating on my throat, thrumming through my body. I wondered when it had gotten so hot in there.

"It was nice meeting you. Text me and we'll hang out."

I didn't know if it was flirting or not, but I held her a little tighter. "It's a date." I could feel her smile and I felt myself smile in return.

We pulled away, I said goodbye and collected my friend.

It wasn't until later when my drunk friend had settled down and I was wiping off my makeup did I see it. It was a little hard to see in the harsh white light of the bathroom. I had to lean closer to the mirror to make sure it was there.

And it was.

There was a red lip mark on my neck and I found myself smiling again as I touched it. Pulling my hand away, I could see the red on my fingers.

It did stain.

Apologies

By Derek Newman-Stille

My first Pride in Peterborough was during my undergraduate degree at Trent. I was excited to find a space of belonging in my town. I wanted to feel a sense of belonging, a connection to place, a way of stepping out of the margins, away from the edges where I had been cast.

I saw Pride as a potential space to feel welcome - to BECOME welcome.

Peterborough always felt homophobic. When I ventured off campus, I ventured into spaces of violence. People would throw eggs at me, yell threats from cars, hit me (I don't want to say 'beat' me because I wouldn't let them defeat me, but it was always more than one hit, and always more than one person), follow me, push me, trip me.... Violence was a way of life for Queer folks in Peterborough. Downtown, hell, anywhere in Peterborough, was a space of danger and rejection.

So Pride was a chance to reject the rejection, to transform this space of danger into a space filled with potential, a space of celebration. I craved it. I wanted it. I needed it. This was a possible space of opportunity, a new frontier (and include your own Star Trek metaphors here). I started creating my own imaginary utopia based around the potential that Pride offered, a utopia about the futures I could imagine being opened by Pride. For me, it meant the potential for other smaller communities to welcome their Queer members.

I arrived at Pride to protestors.

I arrived to signs that felt like STOP signs, stopping all of the futures I could imagine.

"God hates fags."

"What do you have to be Proud of?"

"Pride is a sin and so is everything you do."

"We don't want you here."

Signs, chants, threats... all saying I don't belong... all saying that I COULDN'T belong.

Police smiled at the protestors.

They glared at us.

I could feel their stare like needles in my flesh; barbed, permanent, un-removeable....
Staring goes deep. Hate is physical. It is violence. It is pain.

The violence hadn't stopped just because we had a Pride parade.

It still hasn't stopped.

I still feel like it will stop.

I still hope.

I still want.

And I can't stop wanting, hoping, willing... making this world the one I dream of. Finding people who will make this world into one of acceptance.

The signs, the chants, the threats... they were made to try to make us fear our own communities, to exile us and to make us feel our exile deep, to the bone.

And I felt that exile.

I still feel that exile.

But I also feel potential.

I believe in the power of apology... the power of change and enlightenment and learning... and I know those things take time.

A few years ago, my friend Stephanie and I were approached in a coffee shop while we were waiting for the Pride parade.

We were asked if we were going to Pride... and my body tensed. I got read, prepared to respond to a threat that was all too common.

I said "Yes. We are really looking forward to it. It's nice to feel welcome here in Peterborough."

The men who were speaking to us paused, considering. "How long have you been here?"

"Oh, this is my home now. I've been here for years and years. I was here for Peterborough's first Pride."

"Oh... then I want to apologize. I think we should also all apologize" He said, gesturing to his friends.

I braced myself, waiting for the "I'm sorry you're gay".

It didn't happen.

"You see, we were at the first Pride too... the first couple of them... I'm sorry. We protested Pride. We shouldn't have. You belong here too."

I didn't know what to say.

My eyes teared up.

"Thank you."

I couldn't say anything else.

Stephanie and I had some poutine and coffee while the men who apologized to us continued to chat.

Very full of fries, gravy, and coffee, Stephanie and I lost track of time and had to run out just as the parade arrived.

There were signs again...

These signs were "go" signs instead of "stop" signs. They were signs of potential, signs of change, signs of new possibility. And no, I don't mean "go" as in get out... I mean go as in "We won't be in your way any more. We want you to have possibilities."

"I'm sorry" the signs said.

Apologies are filled with potential.

They can remake the world.

They can give the world possibilities.

They mean that people can change....

The future is fluid and the past can be transformative.

School Colours

By Dana

Rainbows hung in our halls, but in the face of taking action, how do schools actually show their true colours when it comes to queer rights?

On the surface we seem so visible... yet we're still hiding.

It is not ok for students at school to face harassment and bullying just for who they are, a statement applicable to all. School should be a safe place for everyone; but sadly in my experience, it seemed one group of people were consistently marginalized. And nothing was done about it.

So why is it ok to label schools as "diversity accepting", but for staff to police only swearing, leaving much more harmful slurs to cut deep? Or to punish the student who punched that gay boy", yet not actually addressing the deep rooted homophobia from which hate crimes like that stem.

Even Sex Ed ignores lgbtqia+ students, which is not only dismissive, but ultimately leaves these students without knowledge on topics very important to their own sexual health.

I'm tired of commercialized pride motivated solely by greed - pride at our schools being purely political. Good image above good policy is not the message we should be sending to youth.

As we hang those flags, let's not forget everything that they represent: Allyship and commitment to the reconciliation and the uplift of lgbtqia+ folks.

The celebration of what makes us different; one of love and identity. And shining the light on injustice hidden in shadow for far too long.

I know this is possible.

I see it everyday now in my new school.

But it's not just arts schools that can be this way, although many are role models in advocacy for our voices and creating safe spaces.

The causal freedom of expression I see in the halls is enough to make anyone smile. Because we are enough, as is. A community within a community. And that community is so vibrant and resilient.

We are here.

We are queer.

So let's be proud in our schools; and really show it.

MAIS OÙ COURENT-ILLES TOUS·TES?

THE RELATIVITY OF QUEER TIME

Sylvie Bérard

He puts the scrapbook down, pointing to a clipped photo from the Montreal Mirror. "Shit, Della, that's you and I at the protest after Sex Garage! I didn't know you were there too!" Della is holding a placard that says, We're here, we're queer, get used to it!

Zoe Whittall,
Bottle Rocket Hearts, 2007.

Mon premier défilé de la Fierté, je l'ai vécu à Montréal, en 1993. C'était le premier défilé officiel de l'histoire de Montréal, et comme je ne suis pas du genre à laisser passer la parade, je ne l'ai pas manqué. Nous étions arrivé·e·s avec un peu d'avance, le défilé est parti avec un peu de retard, tout était dans l'ordre queer des choses. Quand je regarde les photos d'archives d'André Querry (elles sont disponibles publiquement sur Flickr), je mesure le chemin parcouru, en distance et en culture queer!

My first Pride in Toronto was in 1997. I had just moved to the big city, and was living in the Church Village, in the midst of the action. I didn't officially walk in the parade, but, back then, the event was sufficiently small and private for the spectators to be trusted to stay on the sidewalk as the participants marched – yes, call me old-fashioned, but I still think of the parade as a march, something political. As a result, it was more participatory, and people could decide to just jump down the sidewalk and actually join the circus!

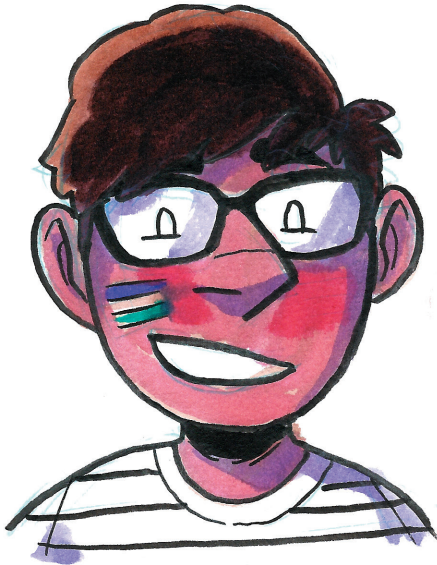
My first Peterborough Pride was in 2003. And, yes, I had just moved to town! Have I told you that I don't like to be a bystander? But... actually... I was not in the Parade this time. I... missed it! I got there queerly late and, apparently, Peterborough Pride schedule, back then, was not set on QST (Queer Standard Time), I had to run to catch the end of it! Now, 15 years later, I recouped myself!

J'ai vécu beaucoup de Pride et de Fierté dans l'intervalle et depuis. À Montréal, Toronto et Peterborough. J'en ai manqué à regret, aussi, parce que l'on ne peut pas être partout à la fois. La Fierté de Montréal occupe une place spéciale dans mon cœur, parce que c'est ma ville natale et aussi le lieu d'éclosion de mon identité queer. Toronto Pride aussi mérite une place à part pour moi, à cause de son ampleur et de son exubérance, même si, parfois, je trouve que l'événement a atteint des dimensions surhumaines, voire inhumaines. J'ai, moi aussi, tout plein de réserves quant à la commercialisation de l'événement et la commodification des identités LGBTQ2S. Cependant, c'est Peterborough Pride qui est l'événement queer le plus important de mon calendrier queer annuel. Ces célébrations, dans une ville de la taille de Peterborough, sont un élément essentiel de la vie et de la visibilité queer, de la survie des identités queer. Ici, Pride a conservé tout son potentiel politique.

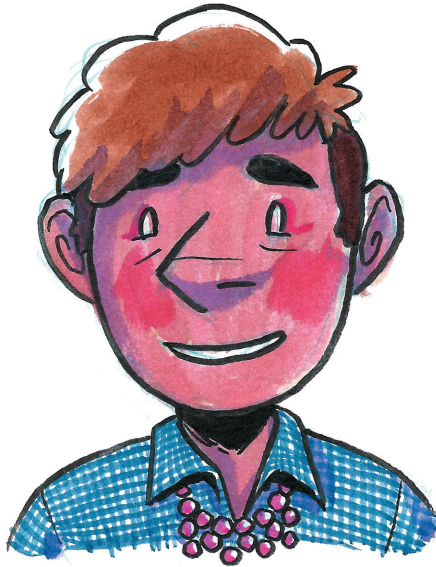
I hope this year we take all our time to march the streets, to take back the spaces, to queer the city. QST time is also QSST, Queer Standard Sweet Time. This is our LGBTQ2S moment of the year, the week when we make our queerness the most actual, visible, bold, and strong.

Please note that, for the sake of consistency, this article was submitted to your editor one day late...

EVERY PRIDE I'VE BEEN TO



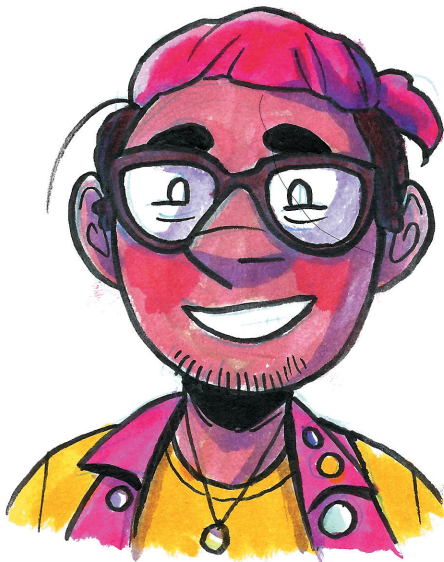
2013



2014



2015



2016



2017



2018?

Ronnie Ritchie