

How Safe Do You Feel in Waterloo Region?

by Jim Parrott

It can be an incredibly liberating experience going to a large Pride Parade. I remember the thrill of going to my first Pride celebration in San Francisco in 1986, and then over the next dozen years attending Pride celebrations in Toronto. For a period of several hours you feel "normal" - but then you get back to everyday life in Waterloo Region.

Over the past few decades it has become much easier for LGBTQ folks to come out to friends, school-mates, family and co-workers. It is now commonplace to hear some people in our community say that we have achieved integration into Canadian society, and we don't need special events, dance clubs, bars or organizations for the local rainbow community.

If we are truly integrated, it follows that we should feel safe. But how safe do you really feel here?

Are you safe if you have to make accommodations for fear of emotional, verbal or physical abuse?

Are you safe if you have to hide who you are with members of your extended family, who pester you with questions suggesting that you are cis-gendered or heterosexual?

Are you safe if you feel that you have to conceal your identity when a stranger

visits you home, for example, to deliver plumbing services or home care?

What about when you visit your health professional or the hospital?

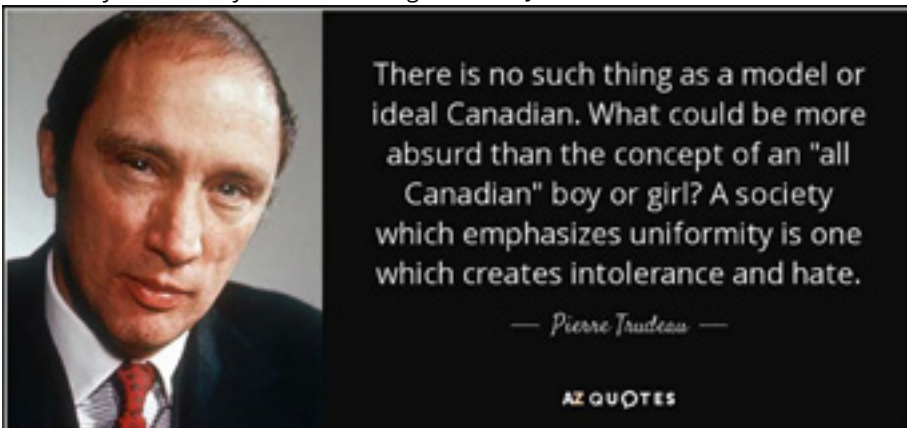
Do you pretend that your partner is your friend or a relative when you are arranging some joint purchase (like a home or an automobile), making a joint financial investment or preparing your wills?

Can you imagine being transparent about who you are in a retirement home or a long-term care facility - with both the staff and the other residents?

What about showing affection with a friend or partner of the same sex on the street or in a shopping mall - would you feel comfortable holding hands or exchanging a kiss the way many straight people feel entitled to do?

Being out to people you know fairly well is one thing - but being transparent about who you are in the presence of strangers is something completely different. I still remember that one of the goals that we had back in the early 1970s was for people in our community to be comfortable being open about who we were. In my opinion we are not quite there yet.

Sorry to rain on the Parade.



Rainbow Community Calendar

The **Rainbow Community Calendar (RCC)** is a monthly publication serving the LGBTQ community of Waterloo Region. It is named in tribute to the **Pink Triangle Community Calendar** created in 1989 by community activist Lisa Simkins. The **RCC** is issued by the **Rainbow Community Calendar Collective**, an action group of **SPECTRUM-Waterloo Region's Rainbow Community Space**. Print copies are available at **SPECTRUM**, **ACCKWA**, and various bars, clubs, cafés et cetera in Waterloo Region.

Online at: <http://ourspectrum.com/rainbow-community-calendar/>

Please e-mail calendar editor Lyn McGinnis with corrections or new information by the 20th of each month to: lynmc@rogers.com please put **RAINBOW CALENDAR in the subject line.**

SPECTRUM's Resource Centre and Drop-in Space is in Unit 210 at 283 Duke Street West, Kitchener, N2H 3X7 (corner of Duke Street West and Breithaupt). Park on Breithaupt Street side of the building, near the loading dock. Go in the Duke Street entrance, up the stairs, through the door, down the hallway to Unit 210.

Website: <http://ourspectrum.com/> **NEW!** (with hours of opening and much more)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SpectrumCommunitySpace/>

Twitter: [@our_SPECTRUM](https://twitter.com/our_SPECTRUM) **E-mail:** info@ourspectrum.com **Phone:** 226-779-9695

January Events

Starting January 1

ORG-SPECTRUM's Outdoor Recreation Group. Sundays. Events alternate between Lite and Regular:

January 1 - 1- 5 PM, "Spur Line and Iron Horse Trails" Meet at **SPECTRUM**. Drop-in at **SPECTRUM** follows immediately, 5-8 PM

January 8 - 1-5 PM Meet at **SPECTRUM**; we'll then walk to Kitchener City Hall for the Mayor's Levee, 1:30 -4:00, returning to **SPECTRUM** for the conclusion. FREE.

January 15 - 2-4 PM, Uptown Water-

loo: meet under the skylight of Waterloo Towne Square, the mall. FREE

January 22 - 2-4 PM, Riverside, meet at the Preston branch of Idea Exchange, the Cambridge public library and art gallery. FREE

January 29 - 1-5 PM, Ski Chicopee: details forthcoming. \$\$\$

William Pensaert, General Manager, **SPECTRUM**, office: 226-779-9695, mobile: 519-503-9313.

Friends of Dorothy Bowling League Event.

1:15pm practice; 1:30 - 4pm bowling, Sundays: **January 1, 8, 15, 22, 29,** at Brunswick Frederick Lanes, 385 Frederick Plaza, Kitchener.

Starting January 3

Queercraft - a Queer Crafting Group. 6-8 PM, Tuesdays: **January 3, 10,17,24,31.** Bring your portable craft to SPECTRUM!

OK2BME Youth Group. 6-7:30 PM Alternate Tuesdays- **January 3, 17, 31** More information: <http://ok2bme.ca/>

Starting January 4

Older Adults Group. 7-9 PM, first and third Wednesdays of the month - **January 4** and **18** at SPECTRUM. We see things differently as we age. Priorities shift. Social circles change. Join us in a **new** discussion and social group for older LGBTQ adults. And if you are concerned about whether the group is a fit for you, then try it out to see. Lately, we have been sharing stories about our lives. We will also continue to think about what kinds of discussions and activities we might like to have in future. We hope that this will be a step in the direction of creating a community support for us as we age. <http://ourspectrum.com/older-adults-group/>

Starting January 5

Trans Peer Support Group. 7-9 PM on the first and third Thursday of the month. **January 5** and **19.** New day - new time - new facilitators. A safe and normalizing environment for anyone identifying in the trans/gender variant umbrella at SPECTRUM. More information: trans@ourspectrum.com

Rainbow Connections - Kitchener meetings, 7-9 PM first and third Thursdays of the month: **January 5, 19.** LGBTQ and Mental Health Group Main Floor, Self Help Alliance, 67 King St E. Kitchener. If you will be late, please contact us in advance so we know when to let you in. Also note that there is now a 15 minutes time-period that we can let you in, otherwise it becomes disruptive to group. We will be in the downstairs room, so ring the down-

stairs doorbell to be let in. Call 519-570-4595 to speak with either Jasmina, ext. 4052, or Brenda, ext. 4061 to verify meeting date and time, or for more information:

<http://cmhawsselfhelp.ca/events/>

Starting January 6

day5games. 7-11 PM **January 6, 13, 20, 27** at SPECTRUM. Join us as we gather at our space to play board and card games, assemble jigsaw puzzles and fiddle with constructions in an informal atmosphere.

Starting January 7

SPECTRUM Saturday Symposium 2-5 PM Saturdays, **January 7, 14, 21, 28.** This social drop-in event is a great opportunity to meet other people, to talk about whatever you currently have on your mind, and to make new friends! Come and hang out with us in a casual, relaxing atmosphere where you can just be yourself! This event is ideal for you if you just want to socialize in an LGBTQ-friendly setting. We typically talk about anything that comes to mind, from tv shows to languages to fairy tales to technology to music - and occasionally LGBTQ issues. We also have cookies and other (sometimes healthier) snacks to share. Feel free to drop in at any time between 2-5 pm. Everyone is welcome!

January 8

Trans Fams Event. 4pm, **January 8** (Sunday). Are you interested in meeting other families with Trans and Gender Independent Kids? Want to join our family and others for some fun activities? Contact Holly for more info at: hbmathers@gmail.com

January 9

Rainbow bereavement support group Monday, January 9 1:30-3:30 PM. All LGBTQ caregivers, spouses, friends suffering loss. 298 Lawrence Ave. Kitchener. Call 519-743-4114 ext. 117. barb@hospicewaterloo.ca

Starting January 11

Transgender Peer Support Group. 7-9 PM on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month. **January 11** and **25.** For individuals who identify as transgender and questioning. Self Help Alliance, 67 King Street East, Kitchener. Call 519-570-4595 to speak with either Jasmina, ext. 4052, or Brenda, ext. 4061 to verify meeting date and time, or for more information.

Starting January 12

Rainbow Newcomers Thursday, **January 12,** Wednesday, **January 25** 7-9 PM at SPECTRUM. A place for LGBTQ-identified immigrants and refugees to socialize with each other and with LGBTQ people who have been in town for a while, and discuss issues related to being a newcomer to Canada. More information:

RainbowNewcomers@gmail.com

January 17

Waterloo - Wellington - Perth PFLAG, Parents Family and Friends Peer-Support Group 7-9 PM on the third Tuesday of the month. **January 17.** Are you having difficulty coming to terms with the sexuality, gender identity or gender expression of someone close to you? Join us in a warm, welcoming and safe place for all family and friends of people of the LGBTQ community at Pre-School Room, Downtown Community Centre, 35-B Weber Street West, Kitchener. More Information: <https://www.facebook.com/PFLAG.WWP>

Starting January 20

Cliterature January 20 to 22, Victoria Park Pavilion. This is a transformational and artful celebration of women's sexuality through erotic readings, live music, dance and more! Over 25 talented performers to the stage in this weekend long marathon of sexiness! Be sure to get a weekend pass so you don't miss a thing!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1279770358764856/>

Starting January 22

Rainbow Chorus of Waterloo Wellington presents 'Flash Back, Flash Forwards: Music Through the Decades' Sunday, **January 22,** 2017, St. James Anglican Church 520 Ellis Rd. W., Cambridge at 2 PM

AND

Rainbow Chorus of Waterloo Wellington presents 'Flash Back, Flash Forwards: Music Through the Decades' Saturday, **January 28,** Harcourt United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph at 2 PM and 7:30 PM.

Tickets can be purchased online at <http://rainbowchorus.ca>

Adult advance: \$20 or at the door \$25, seniors and students \$15, children (6-12): \$5, children under 5: free

January 31

Good Laughs. 7 PM until closing, last Tuesday evening of the month: **January 31.** A safe space for trans people to explore their identity in the community; open to allies as well at Symposium Café, Waterloo (corner of King and Erb) - back room. More information:

goodlaughs81@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/goodlaughs81/?fref=ts>

Volunteering with SPECTRUM

Are you interested in helping SPECTRUM make a difference in the LGBTQ community? We are looking for enthusiastic, responsible individuals who are able to make a commitment to volunteer with SPECTRUM. For a detailed list of areas where we are looking for volunteers see: <http://ourspectrum.com/get-involved/volunteers/>