

Fredericton high school student collecting books on LGBT themes for school library



Leo Hayes High School student, Chantal Plourde, is collecting books by and about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) people for her school library. Photo by Chantal Plourde.

By MARIE-CHRISTINE ALLARD

The NB Media Co-op's Marie-Christine Allard interviews Chantal Plourde, a high school student at Leo Hayes High School in Fredericton, about her project collecting books by and about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) people.

Marie-Christine Allard: When did you get the idea for your book project?
Chantal Plourde: It started in my World Issues class. I had to do a major project on something that benefits the

community. I came up with idea to put LGBT books into high school libraries. My Mom came up with the name - Literature Gives Belonging to Youth (LGBT).

MCA: Why did you think this project was important?

CP: Books are still very important in our lives. Books help people figure themselves out. I think it's important for teens to read about LGBT issues, whether it's fiction or non-fiction. Because our community isn't represented very much in libraries, I thought it would help.

MCA: How have people responded to the project?

CP: So far it's all been positive. A group called Queer Theory Collective in Fredericton has been very supportive. I learned that Fredericton is a lot more supportive than I thought. The librarian [at my school] was very helpful! The librarian decorated everything purple during purple day [a day in support of LGBT teens].

MCA: How did you get the word out?

CP: I started to tell people about it and made an Amazon wish list with over 100 books on it. I also organized a jelly bean jar competition and raised \$60. I raised \$215 to buy books. I worked with Youth Pride last year. They had raised money that was never used, so they agreed to give money to the project. A lot of people donated \$20. I announced it at school and sold tickets at lunch.

MCA: What is next for your project?

CP: I'm hoping to do a benefit concert and coffee house for the last push. After that, I will give the books to the library. I want to keep going with the project and give books to other high schools and middle schools – and then maybe even the public library. Hopefully, I can make it into an organization and have other groups doing the same in their own high schools.

MCA: How can people contribute to the project?

CP: People can contribute by spreading the word about how important LGBT literature is to teens. Sometimes, books are the only things that these teenagers can relate to; when their parents or friends may not understand. I'm also going to a New Brunswick Teachers' Association conference on May 6th. I will be sharing my project with the teachers. Hopefully, some of the teachers will start their own LGBT Youth Project in their own schools; making the project go province wide. Bringing awareness and supporting LGBT people and their allies is the best thing people can do.

To contact Chantal about the book project, email lgbyouthproject@gmail.com.

In Brief...

- A book commemorating **Canada's longest running co-operative** was released on April 5th in Sussex, New Brunswick. *Determined to Prosper* by historian David Bent tells the story of the Sussex and Studholm Agricultural Society #21, which celebrated its 170th anniversary this year. Their success is attributed to the collective work of generations of farmers helping each other and their community.
- A 1.5 to 2 year open-pit gold mine is being proposed in an environmentally sensitive area near Beresford in northeastern New Brunswick. The **Elmtree Property Gold mine** carries the potential of destroying the headwaters of an Atlantic salmon stream, uncommon white cedar swamps and black ash stands, causing acid mine drainage and affecting the water supply for the town of Petit Rocher as well as the water quality and quantity for nearby residents on wells. The Conservation Council, Mining Watch Canada, the Belledune Citizens' Committee, Bathurst Sustainable Development and the Sierra Club are monitoring the project. On April 19, 2011, the groups requested that the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Elmtree Property Gold Mine be bumped up to a Joint Panel Review, which would mean greater public participation at federal and provincial levels.
- A throat swab of a sick seven-year-old girl in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia came back positive for **mould and asbestos**, which she'd been inhaling at her school. Ceiling tiles began falling down in a grade 2 classroom at Shannon Park Elementary School in early February. Mould was observed on the tiles and the presence of asbestos was confirmed by the Halifax Regional School Board. Students moved back into the classroom on April 1st after repairs were made.
- A coalition of 61 First Nations and Inuit communities along the route of **Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline** are opposing the pipeline that would deliver oil from the Alberta tar sands to the British Columbia coast.
- Over 100 **University of Toronto students held a rowdy protest** denouncing controversial mining mogul Peter Munk's \$35 million donation to the university. Spurred on by speeches by professor Noam Chomsky and journalist Linda McQuaig, the students called on the university to reverse course on the corporatization of education. Protestbarrick.net contains information on Munk's Barrick Gold operations.
- A new study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that **corporate tax cuts over the past decade did not in fact lead to job creation**, a common argument for reducing business taxes. Of the 198 corporations studied, profits rose 50 per cent and taxes dropped 20 per cent from 2000 to 2009, while the number of jobs created by these companies rose only five per cent from 2005 to 2010.
- Despite \$1.25 billion spent over four years by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada on "water and waste water infrastructure", documents obtained from Health Canada revealed that **one in five First Nations communities still lack safe drinking water**.
- Embassy magazine reported that Canada has the highest commitment of military personnel in **Libya** at 531. A Canadian general was appointed to head NATO's command of the no-fly zone over Libya while Canadian CF-18s took part in the enforcement of the zone, bombing Libyan ammunition depots.
- A group of **11 Guatemalan women filed a lawsuit for \$55 million in damages against Canadian mining company Hudbay Minerals**. The women say they were gang raped during forced evictions from their homes near the companies' operations in El Estor in January 2007.
- Over 60 people gathered over the noon hour on April 7th to protest the breaking of a 80 metre buffer rule set to protect wetlands in the **University of New Brunswick Woodlot**. Participants lined up along Fredericton's New Maryland highway in front of the future Costco site and shouted chants in favour of saving wetlands and the UNB Woodlot. A week later, on April 14, dozens of professors and university students from UNB and St. Thomas University, high school students and concerned citizens rallied in front of the UNB Board of Governors' meeting. Mark D'Arcy, a member of the Friends of the UNB Woodlot, delivered a letter to the UNB President Eddy Campbell requesting an explanation of the infringement of the 80 metre buffer around a wetland in the Costco store development. He also requested that the UNB Board of Governors' meeting minutes be made public. The minutes of these meetings have been kept secret since 2004.



Participants at a rally to save the UNB Woodlot on April 7th, 2011 donned floatation devices, scuba gear and blue streamers to make the point that wetlands are essential for water retention and flood control. Photo by Kevin Matthews.



National Day of Mourning marked in Saint John

April 28th is the National Day of Mourning for workers killed and injured on the job. Anne Robichaud, the Executive Assistant with the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, said that she marked the day by, "Mourning the nine people who died and the 11,147 who were injured in New Brunswick last year simply because they went to work, and renewing my commitment to fight for better occupational health, safety and compensation laws for all workers." Robichaud and about 300 others attended the unveiling of the Saint John District Labour Council Day of Mourning monument at the W. Franklin Hatheway Labour Exhibit Centre in Saint John.

Community Calendar

For details and updated event listings, visit nbmediacoop.org To list your event or to receive the community calendar by email once per week, email community@nbmediacoop.org.

Protest the abolition of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. CUPE 2745 invites others to join their rally on Friday, May 6 at 2:30pm. March from Officers' Square to the Legislature to protest against the abolition of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Membership Options

☐ \$3.00/month

☐ \$10.00/month

☐ \$25.00/month

☐ \$10.00/year

☐ \$30.00/year

☐ \$50.00/year

☐ Other _____

☐ I would like to become a member but I cannot be a sustainer right now.

Payment Options

☐ Cash

☐ Please send me an application form to establish monthly Pre-Authorized Payments from my bank account

☐ Cheque

Application forms and cheques may be mailed to NB Media Co-op at 180 St. John St, Fredericton NB, E3B 4A9

- Penbosquis Fundraiser Dinner.** Join a dinner in support of the Concerned Citizens of Penobsquis on Sunday, May 7 from 4-7pm at St. John's United Church in Sussex corner. The meal will feature a 'beef smorgasboard' (a variety of beef dishes), salads, dessert and coffee/tea. Adults \$10 each. Children \$5. Contact: concernedcitizensofpenobsquis@yahoo.ca.
- Rally for the Acadian Forest.** Yes to More Wildlife Habitat! No to More Clearcutting! 12 noon, Tues, May 10. Where: New Brunswick Legislature, Fredericton. Send a strong message that we don't want our habitat protection zones clearcut, instead we want a 50 year plan that protects and restores the rich diversity of animals, plants, trees, rivers and streams in our forest. The rally will include speakers and a 318 foot long banner calling for an end to the clearcutting of our forest signed by thousands of people from across the Americas. Contact Tracy at forest@ccnbaction.ca
- Fredericton Free School: Skills and Tools for Community Groups.** Volunteers, board members, and staff - Fredericton Free School is the chance to get some fresh new ideas for your community work. Free School features: "You are stronger than you think" with Mark D'Arcy, Friends of UNB Woodlot; "Emotions and the Ecological Self: The Personal Sustainability Model" with Carla Gunn, writer, psychology professor, and board member with Conservation Council of NB; "Know the lay of the land – Aboriginal rights in NB" with D'Arcy Vermette, Assistant Professor St. Thomas University Native Studies Program. For more information and to register, visit www.nben.ca
- Labour History Workshop.** Sun., May 29, 10am-12 noon. Charlotte Street Arts Centre, 732 Charlotte St., Fredericton. A variety of labour history topics will be covered. Simultaneous translation provided. Registration fees (lunch included): \$8 for low income and students, \$15 for average income, or \$25 for high income. To register or for more info, contact 506 453-4599 or email: lhtnb@unb.ca