



QUEERANT(A)INE 2021 : OPENING CEREMONIES | CÉRÉMONIES D'OUVERTURE

Monday, July 12th, 2021 // lundi 12 juillet 2021

Alex Tétreault, FSP Chair // Président de FSP

Aanii! Welcome! Bienvenue à Queerantaine 2.0, les 24^{es} célébrations annuelles de la Fierté du Grand Sudbury!

Before we begin, we want to acknowledge that we are in the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land on which I am recording this is the traditional territory of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek.

En guise de remerciement de l'énorme privilège de pouvoir vivre, œuvrer, créer et célébrer sur ce territoire, nous nous engageons à être solidaires avec les communautés et nations autochtones de N'Swakamok et de l'Île de la Tortue ainsi qu'avec nos compatriotes bispirituel.les, à continuer sur le long chemin menant à la vérité, la réconciliation, l'équité et la justice. Nous allons nous tromper en cours de route et ferons face à des vérités difficiles, mais c'est un travail qui demeure extrêmement important, nécessaire et essentiel.

So...here we are again. S#!? sucks, right? Last year, we thought we would only have to do this whole virtual thing once. But lo and behold, one year later, we're spending another Pride season talking to each other through our screens. Don't get me wrong, it does have its perks. A bathroom always within reach, no need to worry about thunderstorms or torrential downpours during the Pride March, and no need to wear pants at all, something which might be slightly less appropriate in public but hey, who am I to judge? Wherever you are and on whatever device this video is being beamed to, thank you for being here. It's thanks to folks like you and your support that we can do any of this. On behalf of the Pride Week organizing committee, thank you from the bottom of our gay little hearts.

Pride Week exists as a way for our community to come together and to occupy public space, to take up the space that we deserve, the space that we're still too often discriminated in or that isn't accessible to us. Pride Week allows us to stake our claim on this city, to show that even though we might not be many, that we are magical and that we

are mighty. After an extremely long year of struggles and isolation, it also allows us to get back in touch with each other, to rekindle the sense of community that so many of us depend on for support. In a year of unrest, of social injustices made clear, of dark parts of our history (and their ever-present impacts and marks on today's society) having such an important and necessary place in the public consciousness, we've learned that solidarity, and especially solidarity among marginalized communities, is more important than ever. We have a responsibility to speak up and speak out against discrimination and hate in all its forms. Let's not be afraid to point out hypocrisy, to call out the fearmongers and snake oil salesmen who masquerade their own selfish agendas as community engagement or as philanthropy, and to push back against those who exploit those struggling as a PR campaign. We must put greater pressure on our elected officials, on the institutions, organizations, people, and bodies that claim to act in the best interests of our communities, to push them to prioritize our health and well-being over profit, to prioritize people instead of ego and power, to prioritize the emancipation of the marginalized and the dispossessed rather than reinforce systems which only cause greater inequity and injustice. Because Pride is political. It always has been, and it will be as long as society remains unjust. Pride exists to fight for the liberation and freedom of our communities from restrictions that prevent us from living our lives openly and without fear. While we may celebrate, we also take this opportunity to remind ourselves of the work that still needs to be done. It's going to be a long fight, but you won't have to go it alone; we're in it for the long haul.

Ce qui nous amène à la semaine d'activités que nous et nos partenaires vous avons concocté. Je dois avouer, que le processus n'a pas été facile, avec toute l'incertitude face aux restrictions sanitaires et l'inaction gouvernementale (merci, Doug!), l'épuisement collectif qui semble s'être installé au courant de la dernière année et la décision presque inévitable que les activités de cette année allaient se passer virtuellement. Mais, nous sommes contents d'avoir pu organiser quelque chose. Même si ce n'est pas ce que nous avons imaginé et que nous aurions aimé en faire davantage, il aurait été impensable de tirer la plug et de ne rien faire. Puis, nous sommes contents en maudit de retrouver vos belles faces après une année difficile. But let's not do this again, okay?

I'd now like to invite some of my friends and colleagues to say a few words.

Bobby-Jay Aubin, Community Member // Membre de la communauté

Aanii, Hello,

My name is Bobby-Jay. The pronouns I use are her/him, he/she and they/them.

I am a 56-year-old Mother to a 30-year-old daughter and soon-to-be Grandparent.

Living in Northern Ontario as a youth in the late 60's, 70's, there was no language nor exposure to the 2-Spirit and LGBT communities. The only exposure was the homophobic jokes/comments throughout high school. It wasn't until July of 1997 when I was first exposed and experienced the 2-spirit and LGBT community here in Sudbury when I accidentally came upon Sudbury's very first Pride March, where I came out as a Lesbian. I identified as a Lesbian for the better part of 13 years after which I started identifying as a Trans Guy. It was a very exciting time for me as I'd always dreamed of being male since I was 5 years old. Even though I am of Metis origin, I do not identify as 2-Spirited, however, most recently, I prefer to honour and celebrate both my female and male spirits, as this is what honestly makes me happy.

Happy Pride Sudbury!

Emily Maville, FSP Youth Representative // Représentante jeunesse chez FSP

Hello, Aanii, Bonjour.

My name is Emily Maville and I am Fierste Sudbury Pride's Youth Representative.

This Pride, like last Pride, has been impacted by COVID-19. We have not been able to fully gather together and share our unique experiences of Pride for quite some time. For many of us, our lives have been devastated by several factors, including but not limited to- isolation, poverty, hate, bigotry, and violence.

This Pride, as every single one before it, isn't a celebration. It's a fight for our rights to survive, thrive, and exist. It gives us a chance to have our voices heard, and empower and uplift the voices of others. Some may say Pride isn't supposed to be political. But the fact of the matter is- it has always been. To not recognize that is to forget our history.

This Pride, I encourage you to listen to and empower those around you. I encourage you not just to celebrate queer perseverance and history, but to celebrate and understand the importance of intersectionality within the queer community. I encourage you to educate yourselves on the injustices faced by those in Black and Indigenous communities. I encourage you to understand how systems and ideas you may celebrate bring harm and detriment to those within your own community.

But, at the same time, in the same breath, I say- celebrate. Celebrate getting through this. This entire situation, and all of the recent events that have transpired have caused mass amounts of grief, stress, exhaustion, and pain. Taking time to have fun and celebrate is crucial. We deserve a break. Enjoy the time you can with your friends, family, and community. Do so while also respecting public health guidelines. Enjoy our array of events and have yourselves a happy Pride Week!

Ryan Wildgoose, FSP Secretary // Secrétaire chez FSP

Good morning, Sudbury queers!

I'm Ryan, your Fierté Sudbury Pride Secretary and I just want to say Happy Pride Week and happy Queerantime 2.0! I know, we gotta deal with all that stuff...again. But we're resilient! We're here, we're queer, and we ain't going nowhere.

So here's to another week of community together that transcends the boundaries of a global pandemic.

I hope to see you there!

Venice Kirk, Community Member // Membre de la communauté

Hello, bonjour, aanii, and welcome to opening ceremonies of Fierté Sudbury Pride's 24th year! I was kind of stumped on what to write for this speech, first because I feel there is so much to be said, especially with all the things going on in this country right now. Second

being that I need to first acknowledge the privilege I am coming from to be here and speak to you today. First and foremost, I'd like to thank you all for being here to celebrate with us and taking part in our beautiful pride community in Sudbury. It is thanks to all of you, our LGBTQ2S+ elders, our local pride board, and the folks who fought for this 24 years ago that we have the ability to gather (so to speak), celebrate, and take full pride in who we are as gender and/or sexually diverse individuals.

Our community has made great strides in the past, and in the present, that are building a better tomorrow for our youth. However, there is still much work to be done. As many of you already know, the discoveries of the unmarked graves of many children throughout Canada's residential schools has recently been brought to light. I believe this goes to show the ways that the issues that some of our most vulnerable peoples have been dealing with are, and have been swept under the rug throughout history, and in our present due to colonialism. Now more than ever is a time for us to learn and practice allyship. Our Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ family is hurting right now and has been for a very long time. To some this may come as a surprise, as due to the colonial system we live in functioning flawlessly, many people do not know the history of residential schools in Canada. It was intentionally hidden. All of us need to acknowledge that we live in a colonialist system, and thus, all of the information we are taught, from what is dictated as social norms, to what we see online, to what's in our textbooks, is colonized. Don't get me wrong, there's still much to celebrate this pride season, but I believe that until we can all celebrate with the same liberties, freedoms and the release of the confines of colonialism, there is still so much more to do.

It is our job, as a community and as allies to Indigenous people in this time of all, to recognize the power we once possessed and still do. The forces that we once used to help us start to step out of the barriers of homophobia and transphobia, that we utilized to fight for our liberation, and to start carrying that same fight with us for the indigenous people in our communities, learning about the history of colonization and its impact on our present culture, and how we uphold those things, and putting that same drive into decolonizing ourselves, and our community. Start speaking out against the racist and colonial barriers that we see unfolding before and within us and holding ourselves accountable. As well as putting that same drive into unlearning the things we thought we knew about Canada and its treatment of indigenous people. To use that power to uplift Indigenous people, their voices, their experiences, and to be present to hear what their needs are from us. Be there for your Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ friends and family right now, be kind and listen to what they have to say if they choose to say it.

Fighting through the barriers of racism and colonialism in our own community, and learning allyship as a constant practice, and as a consistent series of acts, is one place we can start to work towards radical change for the Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ people in our community. It means speaking out against racism and colonialism and unlearning a lot of things that we were taught were concrete and learning Canada's true history. It also means listening to and learning from the indigenous LGBTQ2S+ people in our communities to do so. It also means questioning yourself, and your peers.

To each of us, pride means something different. To me, it means that I am no longer afraid. Afraid I am broken, or that I won't be accepted, afraid of homophobia and transphobia and its perpetrators. To others, it may mean freedom, freedom to love and be loved, freedom of expression, freedom from the roles and rules handed to us by our colonized society. Ultimately, what pride means is up to you, but I know it is, matter of fact, about having pride in who we are as LGBTQ2S+ people, and the fact that we wrote our piece of history. We need to give the Indigenous people in our community the same ability to control how their stories are told, and what we know about their history.

I am so glad we are all able to be here today and take a period to recognize all the good works we are doing and have done, and to make bounds and strides for the complete liberation of our community. This week, be joyful, be prideful, but also be strong in your allyship, and be prepared as many more changes will be happening in coming times until all of us are safe, supported, respected, and empowered. It is also a time to listen to the needs of members of our community and pick up the slack where we are lacking. So, with this I leave off, thank you, and happy pride everyone!

Alex Tétreault, Chair // Président

Un gros merci à vous toustes pour vos témoignages.

Before we wrap up, we need to thank all our partners, without whom any of this would be possible. First, our sponsors: The City of Greater Sudbury, TD Bank Group, le Conseil de coopération de l'Ontario, Centre Victoria pour femmes, Compass, and 50 Carleton. Thank you, merci.

We also need to thank all of our programming and media partners: Centre de santé communautaire du Grand Sudbury, Centre Victoria pour femmes, Consortium national de

formation en santé – Volet Université Laurentienne, Eastlink Community TV, Expozine Sudbury, the Greater Sudbury Public Library, KISS 105.3 FM, L’Arche Sudbury, Le Loup 98.9 FM et le journal Le Voyageur, Myths & Mirrors Community Arts, Public Health Sudbury & Districts, Queer North Film Festival and the Sudbury Indie Cinema Coop, Réseau Access Network, Science North & Dynamic Earth, St. Peter’s United Church, Sudbury Community Legal Clinic, Sudbury Workers Centre, le Théâtre du Nouvel-Ontario, and Zig’s Bar. Thank you, merci.

In a conscious effort to make our programming as accessible as possible, we’ve made sure that participation in all of our events and projects are free of charge. To make sure that we can do that, we depend on the support we receive from folks like you. You can find out how to donate to our activities by checking out our website at sudburypride.com/donate. Every little bit goes a long way and we thank you in advance for your support.

And to make sure that you don’t miss anything, the full schedule of events (including registration for said events), is available on our website, sudburypride.com. On top of that, check your local cable listings because some of our events will be re-aired on Eastlink Community TV in Sudbury over the next week. You might even be watching us from there right now! If so, “Howdy!”

Finally, I want to thank my fellow members of the Fierté Sudbury Pride Board of Directors, a devoted team of volunteers who’ve busted their humps over the past year to make this year’s Pride Week a reality: Laur O’Gorman, Ryan Wildgoose, Kathleen Zinn, Katlyn Kotila, Mélodie Bérubé, Dana Carbone, Kyle Boychuk, and Emily Maville. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I couldn’t ask for a better team. I’m looking forward to finally giving you all a well-deserved, long-anticipated hug during this Saturday’s Beach Day.

With that, all that’s left to say is thank you for tuning in and we hope you’ll enjoy the festivities. We wish you a kick-ass, queer as hell Queerantime 2.0! See you on the interwebs and, fingers crossed, we’ll see each other in person next summer for Fierté Sudbury Pride’s 25th anniversary bash!

Thank you! Merci! Miigwetch!