

**Queer Ontario**  
**2015 Annual General Meeting**  
**Saturday, May 2, 2015**

**2014-2015 Chairperson's Report**

This being my outgoing Chairperson's Report I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the past four years, my two terms as elected Chairperson as well as the initial two years before that at which time Queer Ontario was very much in development. Although there is much to reflect on in terms of our strengths and weaknesses, successes and disappointments, accomplishments and as yet unfulfilled dreams, my focus will be on the importance and relevance of Queer Ontario's existence, and that as I have said in the past I will emphasize once again, we are a work in progress.

Almost a full six years ago I set out to develop a community based group with a new more modern perspective and outlook that would both carry on the legacy of our predecessor group the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario (CLGRO), yet do so in a more nuanced way making use of our rapidly changing technology. I really was not sure what the response would be but was pleasantly surprised and relieved that there was and continue to be community interest in our type of politic. This politic, which Queer Ontario is very much cornering, is that of queer liberation. It is a politic that seeks to liberate all people to be free to be themselves as they choose to be. This is not without responsibility and respect for each other. In fact, it is to rise to a higher level of responsibility and respect in which we allow such spaces to exist among us without judgement. This involves a commitment to freedom of speech and freedom of expression. It requires an endless process of questioning norms, mores, common beliefs and world views. It calls upon us to apply an in-depth critique that is not readily taken on by society and often results in a challenge to the status quo. Gay liberationists faced rabid hatred in their time; queer liberationists today face complex intersections of social locations, equality-based rights claims and the insidiousness of neoliberalism that has inevitably led our broad movement down the path of assimilation.

Today, the relevance of a progressive, critical and what some may call a radical voice is just as needed as it ever was. As our communities supposedly settle into a comfort zone of 'mainstream equality,' queer liberationists sees right through this and cannot sit silent regarding the ones left behind. Look around us today and you see a great number of LGBTQ groups and organizations that create and celebrate the arts, engage in competitive sports, celebrate and engage with their race

and/or ethnicity, create spaces for their gender identity and expression, connect with one another on all kinds of social issues from coming out to substance use, etc. or commit the focus of their mission to putting on Pride festivities on an annual basis. Yet, look around us today and you will see very few groups committed to politics. We have seen the pop-up groups over the years taking on the one-issue items of the day before disappearing altogether. Yet, political groups with 'legs,' as they say, are far few and between and our politics are not necessarily complementary among us. Our communities need all the aforementioned groups and they contribute greatly to community growth and development and our wellbeing. Groups consisting of those with critical insight, in-depth analysis, a progressive perspective and a passion for equity and liberation far beyond what we have achieved to date with equality are vital. Almost six full years in, we remain one of the few consistent voices that carry forward that dream for social justice.

Queer Ontario's political work is not just focused on mainstream society, but also the LGBTQ movement in general. Engaging in both external as well as internal critique is not easy but a necessity of queer liberation work for the future of our movement and communities. We also have a responsibility to engage in self reflection within queer liberation politics, within Queer Ontario itself. We are currently experiencing, as we have been for the past few years, some growing pains and importantly some soul searching in terms of how we can best contribute to our movement, society in general and importantly to each other.

Queer liberation is a particular kind of politic, one that pushes the envelope. Because of such positioning, we are not a populist group. Being in the forefront calls for leadership skills and abilities that include pushing the boundaries, so much so, that by the time the others catch up, we're already onto the next thing. Queer Ontario has achieved some great successes that are true to the queer liberation politic, fuelled by the passion, commitment and devotion of so many over the years. Some have had short stays but left indelible marks, others have been toiling consistently in our ongoing work. I want to thank each of you and the many that have contributed and are not with us today for such contributions to this very important mission. I've learned a lot from all of you and I am sincerely grateful you answered the call. I turn over my responsibilities to the new Chairperson of Queer Ontario of whom I wish much success and whom I will support in any way I can. I look forward to continuing the work with many of you at a more frontline level, for as we know, there is much work still to be done.

Thank you,

Nick Mulé  
Chairperson,  
Queer Ontario