

**(Out)standing in their field:
A qualitative study of Gays of Ottawa, 1971-1984**

by

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Abstract

This paper is a history and analysis of the Gays of Ottawa organization during the years 1971 to 1984. Using the theoretical approach outlined in Pierre Bourdieu's Logic of Practice and his concepts of habitus, capital and field, I consider how Gays of Ottawa was able to provide social opportunities for lesbians and gays; deliver innovative educational and support services; and engage with Canada's wider lesbian and gay social movement. Through interviews and qualitative archival research, I explore GO's governance structure, relationships within Ottawa's organizational field and its relationships with various lesbian and gay organizations. Aided by member capital and habitus, GO achieved a position of dominance within the lesbian and gay organizational field, wherein it played a pivotal role in the Canadian lesbian and gay movement.

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Abbreviations

ADGQ	Association pour les droits des gais du Québec
ASK	Association for Social Knowledge
CGRO/CLGRO	Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario / Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario
CHAT	Community Homophile Association of Toronto
CLGA	Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives
CLGRC	Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition
EGALE	Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere
GAA	Gay Activist Alliance
GAE	Gay Alliance for Equality
GATE	Gay Alliance Toward Equality
GFE	Gays for Equality
GLF	Gay Liberation Front
GO/ALGO/ALGBO	Gays of Ottawa / Association of Lesbians and Gays of Ottawa / Association of Lesbians, Gays & Bisexuals of Ottawa
HALO	Homophile Association of London Ontario
LOON	Lesbians of Ottawa Now
LOOT	Lesbian Organization of Toronto
NGEC	National Gay Election Coalition
NGRC	National Gay Rights Coalition
RTPC	Right to Privacy Committee
UTHA	University of Toronto Homophile Association

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Chapter One: Introduction

Write about what you know; standard advice for fledging novelists yet applicable also to graduate students. Of course students, like novelists, should begin writing only once they know a goodly amount about an area. As to my area, Gays of Ottawa (GO), I began my research with a keen sense (and fond memories) of GO and those who ran it. After moving to Ottawa in 1980 I attended GO's Friday night drop-ins, the GO Centre and its community dances. In the early eighties, GO was experiencing its golden age, running a dynamic community centre, complete with a wildly popular women's bar night, all the while providing support and education services to Ottawa lesbians and gays. On the political front GO was a significant player in Canada's lesbian and gay social movement. While the early eighties marked GO's best years, the organization continued operating until 1995, just shy of its twenty-fifth anniversary. For the purposes of this enquiry, (part analysis, part history), I consider GO's operations operation between years 1971 and 1984. My primary research interest, the question I ask of GO was quite simple. How did GO do it? What capacities and resources enabled GO to emerge and evolve into an organization capable of significantly impacting Ottawa's lesbian and gay community while simultaneously being a significant player in Canada's lesbian and gay social movement?

The rationale for limiting my enquiry to the years 1971 through 1984 is similarly straightforward. When founded in 1971 GO emerged virtually fully formed, all its essential elements in place, continuously enhancing these until 1984. Quickly GO established its structure and governance, opened its first drop-in centre (GO Centre), began publishing a newsletter cum newspaper (*GO Info*), and began delivering education,

support services and engaging in politic activities. Not until 1984 was there a significant change in GO's core services and structure. In that year GO established a charitable organization, Pink Triangle Services (PTS) and ceded to it, its education and support services. Formed to create a designated charity, GO ceded to PTS all but its politically-oriented work, the publishing of *GO Info* and running the GO Centre.¹ As a result, fundamentally, GO was no longer the organization it had been since its inception. While not immediately evident in 1984, the areas of activity that GO retained would become less and less relevant to Ottawa's burgeoning lesbian and gay community. Gays of Ottawa continued its operations for a further 10 years during which it struggled to find a new raison d'être and slowly declined until it quietly closed its doors in 1995. By this time many in Ottawa's lesbian and gay community had all but forgotten GO still existed. Before exploring in more detail my research process, I offer a brief review to situate GO in a historical context.

Historical Background:

Gays of Ottawa emerged at a time when lesbian and gay rights activists were forming organizations to fight for the greater social acceptance of lesbians and gays, for civil rights and to challenge society's heteronormative views on sexual pleasure and sexuality. They expressed the hope that one day 'they'd put themselves out of business'; having changed the social and political situation of lesbians and gays so that their organizations were no longer needed. However, when GO was founded, the Canada into

¹ Charitable organizations cannot engage in overt political activity and only limited advocacy. In 2001, the Canadian Revenue Agency relaxed the rules governing charity's political or advocacy work, allowing them to influence policy decisions, public opinion, etc. This was done in recognition of how over time the charity sector had, "acquired a wealth of knowledge about how government policies affects peoples' lives" (CRS, 2001. Charities – Policy Statement: Political activity).

which it emerged gave no indication whatsoever that GO would ever go out of business. Although the preceding sixties decade had been one of fervent change, in 1971, Canadian lesbians and gays whether closeted or out had no legal protections from discrimination owing to their homosexuality. Harsh legal sanctions criminalized and society deeply stigmatized any expression of same sex desire.

More than twenty years earlier Alfred Kinsey's 1948 research had fostered new ways about thinking about sexuality among North Americans. Having revealed to an amazed public that bisexuality and homosexuality were common, Kinsey undermined the post-war era's rigid hetero/homo dichotomy, subsequently fueling the sexual liberation and feminism of the sixties. Yet for all of Kinsey's influence, in the early sixties it remained inconceivable to the general public that a person could have a social or legal identity fused with a sexual practice, ergo a sexual orientation requiring legal protections.² For average Canadians homosexual desire remained indicative of deep moral failing and sexual danger.

However, things *were* changing. In 1960, the government of John Diefenbaker had established a Canadian Bill of Rights. While protecting the freedom the press, religion, speech, association and assembly, etc. the Bill had not addressed issues of race, sex or sexual orientation, reflecting how nascent Canadian 'rights-thinking' was. As Miriam Smith cogently pointed out Diefenbaker's Bill offered no "constitutionally entrenched rights protection". As a piece of legislation the Bill was defenseless before

² M Smith, *Lesbian and Gay Rights in Canada: Social Movements and Equality-Seeking, 1971-1995*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1999, p. 42. Smith notes Kinsey's work was of great use to the lesbian and gay movement. However Kinsey suggestion that one's sexual identity was possibly a choice proved a gift and a curse. Lesbian and gay activists would have difficulty in "forging a stable identity for the purpose of securing rights" while declaring "absolute sexual orientation...a myth". How could sexual orientation be an immutable basis for rights claims and simultaneously lack a mutable form?

the whims of future parliamentarians to change or abolish it.³ However, the move to establish a set of rights echoed a growing awareness among unions, ethnic minority groups, etc. that rights-protections were needed. Media coverage of the U.S. civil rights movement and its vicious opponents was widely televised; a visual testament to the social and legal importance of legislative rights.

In Canada increased rights-awareness and -activism led to Ontario passing the country's first human rights code and the creation of a commission to over-see it in 1962. Ontario's Code like Diefenbaker's Bill of Rights offered no sexual orientation protections as the very notion of such protections was incomprehensible. Sexual orientation as a concept, even as a linguistic phrase, was unknown to legislators. Well into the seventies legislators proved unable to grasp the need to protect the rights of lesbians and gays, often citing a lack of discrimination evidence. As Gays of Ottawa's Ron Dayman told Liberal MPP Albert Roy in 1974, "it is a vicious circle; we are denied our rights until we can prove we are denied them: but how can we prove we are denied rights we do not have".⁴

Outside the governmental and legal, sphere lesbians and gays had little respite. Socially they were deeply stigmatized, regarded as sick, mentally unsound, unclean, and thought a general danger to society, in particular to young people. That the RCMP engaged in a protracted campaign to remove homosexuals from the federal government's work force reflected the depth of concern over homosexuality. Cold War anxieties

³ Smith 1999, p. 42; T Warner, *Never Going Back: A history of queer activism in Canada*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2002, p. 30.

⁴ CGLA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017 / 02A, File No.: Human Rights – Ontario – 1971-1975 – 82-017/017/02 02: Letter: R. Dayman, GO PAC to Albert J. Roy, MPP, 27, November 1974. Dayman wrote Roy after he had told Dayman legislators need to see "evidence that your group has been discriminated against".

intensified these fears, situating homosexuals as a 'weak link' in Canada's national security. Gays of Ottawa perhaps more than other lesbian and gay organizations bore witness to this 'Canadian war on queers'.⁵ Same sex desire was a topic society addressed in whispers or outrage, often in response to the media's linking of homosexuality to sex crime.⁶ However, as the sixties unfolded, North American social and sexual norms and mores rapidly changed. The impact of U.S., civil rights and feminist movements did not stop at the border. Nor could Canada's home-grown social movements be ignored. The advent of provincial-level human rights commissions had heightened rights consciousness among ethnic minorities, women, and lesbians and gay men. As the latter noted how discrimination against people based on race, sex, etc. was being addressed they asked: "Why should discrimination against lesbians and gays not be prohibited as well"?⁷

Prohibiting discrimination required the emergence of an organized lesbian and gay response. Here Canada lagged behind the U.S. where so-called homophile organizing had been underway since the fifties. In the U.S. homophile activists had focused attention less upon legislators or politicians and more on a professional class of lawyers, doctors, clergy and psychologists whom they saw as a potential engine of change.⁸ North American society in the fifties and sixties still regarded homosexuality

⁵ G Kinsman & P Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation*, UBC Press, Vancouver, 2010.

⁶ Warner (2002, pp.36-7) found that prior to the sixties, Canadian mainstream media or cultural industries made little or no mention of homosexuality. When raised it was "usually [in] reports on murders or sexual offences, or dealt with deviancy". The media would have little positive to say about homosexuality until approximately the mid-sixties. Yet for years to come, depictions of gay men as driven by pedophilic longings remained a feature of media narratives and social *common sense*.

⁷ Smith 1999, p.43.

⁸ J. D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The making of a homosexual minority in the United States, 1940-1970*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 83-4.

as a dangerous condition tied to immorality and illegal acts; something best handled by police. As some progressive clerics, doctors, psychiatrists, etc. reconsidered homosexuality as a mental condition ill-served by the blunt instrument of law; homophile activists identified these professions as a means to an end.

The best known fifties-era homophile group was the male-oriented Mattachine Society. After the creation of the first Mattachine Society in 1950 in Los Angeles, like-minded individuals founded chapters of the Society in other U.S. cities. The Mattachines believed that homosexuals were a minority comprised of those sharing a culture and common language and quietly fought on their behalf. As an alternative to fifties era homosexual bars which Mattachines regarded as socially isolating, Society meetings were forums for education and socializing. In 1955 a similar lesbian group formed in San Francisco, the Daughters of Bilitis. Subsequently it too opened chapters in other U.S. cities. Like the Mattachine Society the Daughters focused on education and offering an alternative to the bar scene.⁹

In Canada in 1964 the homophile group, Association for Social Knowledge (ASK) formed in Vancouver. While modeled on the Mattachine Society, ASK was more assertive, challenging Canada to treat its homosexual minority with greater respect. As a reflection of ASK's greater assertiveness, Doug Sanders as its second president, had made a presentation before the Royal Commission on Security.¹⁰ Although initially comprised of men, lesbians soon joined ASK giving it a gender balance that was unusual

⁹ Warner 2002, pp. 57-9. Homophiles rejected the clinical term 'homosexual', coining the term 'homophile' based on the Latin word 'philia' (friendship) and the Greek 'philos' (loving). 'Bilitis' was the name of a fictional character of 19th century songs, celebrated for her relationship with the poet Sappho.

¹⁰ Warner 2002, p. 59; Smith 1999, p. 28; Kinsman 1987, pp. 147-51.

for homophile groups of the time. For Sanders the problem in Canada was not the kind of police persecution common in the U.S., rather the issue was the “pervasive view that gays didn’t exist”.¹¹ When Canada decriminalized homosexuality in 1969 it demonstrated how much this ‘pervasive view’ had changed since 1964 when since ASK had formed. While homophile activists like those at ASK had moved the debate along, attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality had been evolving steadily. For example, Warner highlights how by the mid-sixties mainstream media began tentatively reporting on the growing visibility of homosexual communities. Doctors and clergy too had begun to express a new progressive, point of view.¹² Kinsman too noted changes in media coverage, citing a 1964 article in MacLean’s for which the input of gay activist Jim Egan had been sought.¹³ Canada’s decriminalization of homosexuality revealed that legislators too were not immune to the forces of change.¹⁴

Two events predating Canada’s decriminalization were particularly influential. One was the indefinite sentence given to George Klippert in 1966. While speaking to RCMP officers investigating an arson case, Klippert casually admitted to having consensual sex with men. Charged and convicted of gross indecency, Klippert was sentenced to essentially life in prison which was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1967. The Court’s upholding of the conviction shocked many, generating increased debate about homosexuality. Also in 1967, Britain’s parliament decriminalized homosexuality.

¹¹ G Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities*, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 1987, p. 148.

¹² Warner 2002, pp. 36-44.

¹³ Learning of Egan from his writings MacLean’s writer Sidney Katz met with Egan who gave him a tour of various gay bars and clubs (Kinsman 1987 pp. 159-60).

¹⁴ For a discussion of the links between North American homophile organizations and those of Europe, revealing how the movement’s vision of social change was global in scope see: S Churchill, ‘Transnationalism and Homophile Political Culture in the Postwar Decades’, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2009, pp. 31-65.

This occurred at the end of a decade-long debate, prompted by 1957 publication of the Wolfenden Report on laws governing prostitution and homosexuality.¹⁵

The Report's conclusions and Britain's subsequent decriminalization influenced Canadian thinking about homosexuality, furthering a process already underway. In its newsletters ASK argued that Wolfenden had provided a model of reform applicable to Canada. Within Canadian churches the Report sparked debate. In 1966 the principal of Montréal's United Theological College suggested the United Church did not object to Wolfenden-style reform as long as it was done as "an act of society, not of the church". What had made Wolfenden's report so important? Kinsman concluded its chief contribution was the way in which it drew a distinction between homosexual acts done in private versus those occurring in public. This distinction essentially decriminalized private homosexual activity, making it the purview of medicine and psychiatry rather than police who would now "deal [only] with homosexual acts in public places".¹⁶

Although ASK was an important pioneer, substantive homophile organizing did not emerge in Canada until the late sixties and early seventies. However, Canada's homophile movement was soon overwhelmed by a rapid evolution in thinking about homosexuality and the growing demands of radical gay liberationists. Of these early homophile groups the University of Toronto Homophile Association formed in 1969 was

¹⁵ Klippert remained in prison until 1971. Warner 2002, p.13; pp. 42-6; Kinsman 1987, pp. 161-64, 139-44; B Adam, *Moral Regulation and the Disintegrating Canadian State: Introduction*, in Adam, B., Duyvendak, J., and Krouwel, A., eds, *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1998, p. 13. After a series of high profile arrests of upper class members of British society, Sir John Wolfenden led a governmental committee to consider the "nauseating subject of male homosexuality and prostitution" (Kinsman 1987, p.139).

¹⁶ Kinsman 1987, pp. 154, 152, 140. See also: D McGhee, Wolfenden and the fear of 'Homosexual Spread': permeable boundaries and legal defences. In, S, Austin & P, Ewick (eds.) *Studies in Law, Politics and Society*, no. 21, Elsevier, Oxford, UK, 2000, pp., 65-100.

the most influential. Possibly Canada's homophile-style organizing proved short lived due to its emerging at a later stage in the development of lesbian and gay rights-consciousness. In the U.S. homophile groups emerged more than ten years before ASK. Warner concluded Canadian homophile organizations were unable to capture the imagination or broadly mobilize lesbians and gays. By the seventies a new generation of activists which had experienced sixties radicalism and learned its lessons from civil rights and feminist movements, regarded homophile thinking as out dated, overly cautious and ineffective.¹⁷ This new breed of activists wanted and demanded more. Although homophile groups did not disappear for years, they were rapidly overshadowed by the liberatory analysis and actions of gay liberationists.

Warner believes the driving force behind gay liberation's aggressive, decidedly non-homophile approach was rooted in the U.S.-based gay liberation movement. In the aftermath of rioting that followed a New York City police raid on the Stonewall Inn tavern in June 1969, a new type of gay organization emerged. The new organization's name, Gay Liberation Front (GLF) reflected the era's prevailing anti-Vietnam war and revolutionary sentiments. Espousing a radical rhetoric that challenged the social and legal oppression of gays and their own self-oppression, the GLF was indebted to sixties-era civil rights, feminist and liberation movements. Ultimately the GLF's organizing style proved too loose and ill-focused to be sustained but it provided the early gay liberation movement a new critical conception of same sex desire. For the GLF homosexuality was a normal and natural sexual expression that had to be liberated from the oppressive strictures of state, church, medicine, gender roles and the ideal of the

¹⁷ Warner 2002, pp. 59-60.

nuclear family. In a significant departure from homophile-style organizing, liberation required homosexuals to engage in “militant public action, the rejection of shame and guilt, the assertion of visibility, and the espousal of sexual freedom”.¹⁸

Quickly the message of New York’s GLF spread, leading to the formation of similar groups across the U.S and Canada. For example, in Montréal’s Front de liberation homosexuel formed in November 1970. The Front emerged in response to Trudeau’s imposition of the war measures act, which in turn led to police raiding and closing gay bars. Police had been granted new broader powers to deal with the nationalist threat of FLQ crisis. That they then used these to single out gay men, typified how in that era homosexuals were a convenient, *usual suspects* when it came to addressing social ills. In 1971 GLF-style activism found a home in the Gay Alliance Towards Equality in Vancouver and Toronto and in Gays of Ottawa. Also in 1971, Toronto’s *Body Politic* began publishing. Espousing a GLF-inspired gay liberation message it became the country’s premiere lesbian and gay newspaper, playing a leading role in Canada’s lesbian and gay rights movement.¹⁹

In the U.S. GLF-style organizing proved unsustainable in the long term. In the immediate post-GLF era another influential type of lesbian and gay organizing appeared which took a more conciliatory position, arguing for the necessity of gay rights. The first such group was New York’s Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) formed in December 1969. Neither as conservative as homophiles nor as revolutionary as the GLF, the GAA fused

¹⁸ Warner 2002, pp.62-7. See also: T Kissack, *Freaking Fag Revolutionaries: New York’s Gay Liberation Front, 1969-1971*, *Radical History Review*, No. 62, 1995, pp. 104-34.

¹⁹M Smith, *Linguistic practices in Canadian lesbian and gay rights organizing*, *Ethnicities*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2004, p. 103; Warner 2002, p. 67.

the rhetoric of oppression with calls for sexual liberation. It sought civil rights and an end to discrimination through public pickets, appeals to the press and direct legislative lobbying. While GAA-style organizing was hugely influential, the organization it inspired differed from the original New York group. These latter groups focused solely on rights for lesbians and gays and eschewed linkages with other social movements. Regarding movements with whom they might share common cause as being inherently homophobic, these GAA-inspired groups focused on rights, typically those relevant to gay men.²⁰

That GAA-type groups were dominated by gay men partly resulted from the fact that relatively few lesbians were involved in the movement. However, this prefigured a generalized preponderance of gay men within early lesbian and gay organizing that lasted well into the seventies. In the early seventies while some lesbians participated in the movement, a majority absented themselves. Lesbian feminists in particular, critiqued the movement for being too male dominated and comprised of men ignorant of women's lives who were too focused on (male) sexual liberation. Most of the men involved failed to recognize how a male-model of gayness did not work for women. That lesbians had a different experience, a different sexual-politic, and a distinct sexual identity, created a chasm between lesbians and gay men impacted the movement for years.²¹ Yet the way in which GAA-inspired thinking and organizing fused a sexual liberation ethic with demands for rights, to be achieved through public engagement and activism, was hugely influential in the U.S. and Canada, on for example, groups like Gays of Ottawa.

²⁰ Warner 2002, pp.68.

²¹ Smith 1999, pp.29-30.

As a city Ottawa circa 1971, seemed an unlikely place in which to find a future player in Canada's gay liberation struggle. True, Ottawa was home to a federal government that had helped kick-start Canada's lesbian and gay rights movement by decriminalizing homosexuality in 1969.²² And it was in Ottawa that two years later, members of Canada's nascent gay movement marched on Parliament Hill. This 'We Demand' rally, took place on a rainy cold day in August 1971, to protest how little had changed since decriminalization two years earlier. For many the Rally marked the "true inception of [Canada's] gay rights struggle".²³ However, as a 'government town', Ottawa seemed too staid a place to play a role in changing the lives of Canadian lesbians and gays.

Strongly conservative and not far removed from its lumber-town roots; Ottawa was home to lesbian and gay civil servants fearful of drawing attention to their sexuality. Owing to past experience with RCMP investigations, 'witch hunts' designed to purge homosexuals from the civil service, most opted for lives cloaked in secrecy.²⁴ The impacts of which remained apparent years later when GO member Barry Deeprise moved to Ottawa in 1975. Upon arriving in the city he wondered if, "*I'd moved back to the 50s*". After living in Vancouver's vibrant and public gay scene, to Deeprise, Ottawa

²² See D McLeod *Lesbian and Gay Liberation in Canada: A Selected Chronology, 1964-1975*, ECW/Homewood Books, Toronto, 1996. McLeod documents the rapid increase in the number of Canadian lesbian and gay social, support, and political groups from 1969 onward.

²³ R Dayman, *Witch-hunt Extends to Court, Body Politic*, no. 19, 1975, p. 9.

²⁴ See: G Kinsman, 'Constructing Gay Men and Lesbians as National Security Risks, 1950, 1970', In *Whose National Security? Canadian state surveillance and the creation of enemies*, Kinsman, G, Buse, D, and Steedman, M (Eds) Between the Lines Press, Toronto, 2000, pp. 143-53. It was not just direct contact with the RCMP they feared but also neighbours or colleagues who might give one away. During the fifties and sixties "hundreds of gay men and lesbians in the public service" would lose their jobs or be demoted.

*“was so uptight. When I dug a bit more in the history I realized that just 10 years prior...people were being fired” for being gay.*²⁵ *

Gays of Ottawa was created as part of a wave of Canadian lesbian and gay organizing that occurred after decriminalization. Along with other lesbian and gay groups, GO began a decades-long effort to change the lives of lesbians and gays in Canada. Typically this collective effort is described somewhat problematically as a ‘movement’. Smith comments Canada’s lesbian and gay movement is quite “hard to pin down”, its core too ill-defined. The collection of lesbian and gay organizations and actors that emerged, is better understood as a “set of loose networks, a web of associations and overlapping connections rather than a coherent actor” or movement per se.²⁶ Speaking to the situation in Toronto, Nash came to a similar conclusion, noting that the city was home to several organizations with different agendas operating simultaneously, making “it difficult, if not impossible, to speak of the gay movement in Toronto in the singular”.²⁷ This lack of movement cohesion was due in part to the myriad number of players and ways of organizing characteristic of the early years. For example, until approximately the latter seventies lesbians were not heavily involved in Canada’s gay liberation movement, preferring to organize as an autonomous lesbian movement. Within the gay movement one could also find Québec groups with a nationalist focus; groups with a revolutionary or Marxist view; those formed as part of

²⁵ Barry Deeprise; interviewed on: November 27, 1997. *Quotations from research interviews appear in italics.

²⁶ M Smith, *Lesbian and Gay Rights in Canada: Social Movements and Equality-Seeking, 1971-1995*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1999, p. 27. As to the kind of coherent actor *not* found in Canadian lesbian and gay organizing, Smith highlights the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). Within NAC one *could* expect to locate the ‘core’ of women’s equality-seeking efforts in English-speaking Canada.

²⁷ C Nash, ‘Contesting Identity: Politics of gays and lesbians in Toronto in the seventies’, *Gender, Place and Culture*, vol. 12, 2005, p. 188.

the labour movement, etc. The sheer diversity of lesbian and gay groups makes it difficult to view them as forming a singular lesbian and gay movement. I now turn to briefly discuss my theoretical stance.

Theoretical Approach:

My enquiry considers GO and the larger network of groups in which it took part from a relational perspective, conceptualizing network actors and organizations as forming a lesbian and gay organizational field (LGF). This field was an area of activity defined by a “configuration of relationships” that existed between specific actors and organizations and the positions they occupied within this field.²⁸ It is Pierre Bourdieu’s conception of relational sociology that forms the theoretical heart of my analysis of GO within this LGF. Along with documenting GO’s work for the first time, I see my application of Bourdieu’s approach as my major contribution to the literature on the lesbian and gay movement in Canada. For Bourdieu social life emerges from relations between social actors who are themselves embedded in relationships with economics, culture and politics, etc. Here the power, credibility, social position, and the skill-sets actors hold, are envisioned as forms of capital to be amassed, exchanged or lost, through social practices comprising a network of social relations. Actors and organizations comprise a dense ‘system of relations’ embedded within a field(s) of social practices. This field and its internal relationships are inextricably intertwined. Social actors and organizations possess knowledge about their field. By interrogating this knowledge, researchers can grasp an actor’s position within the field, and in turn understand how

²⁸ M Emirbayer, & V Johnson, ‘Bourdieu and Organizational Analysis’, *Theory and Society*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2008, p.26. For this description of organizational fields, Emirbayer and Johnson draw on Bourdieu’s (1994a) definition of field.

these positions construct fields.²⁹ For example, it is impossible to explain why GO organized public protests in the manner it did, without considering the knowledge its members possessed about previous social movements, such as sixties anti-war protests.

Through my research I tell a part of GO's history, analyzed through the theoretical lens of Bourdieu's logic of practice (1977, 1986a) and its foundational concepts, *habitus* (cultural dispositions, tastes etc.); *capital* (social position); and *field* (space in which we hold social position). For Bourdieu social practice is a product of the relationship between habitus, capital and field, here represented as a quasi-mathematical equation: [(habitus) + (capital)] + field = social practice.³⁰ Thus I consider the manner in which GO protested, the pickets it organized as a manifestation of a sixties protest style, ergo GO's protest-habitus. The organization's knowledge of this protest style (habitus) was a resource, a form of capital its members held.

Mobilizing its habitus and capital, GO engaged in social practices whereby it established itself in, and defined, the lesbian and gay organizational field. Through habitus and capital, I consider the 'how of GO'; how GO took up a position as a credible organization. With field, I locate the 'where of GO'; its relational position within the LGF and the field of mainstream service agencies in Ottawa. I chose not to study GO via organizational theory although some organizational scholars have applied the concepts of field and/or capital. For example, Armstrong's (2000), *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994*, considered the emergence of a field

²⁹ P Bourdieu, & L Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1992, pp. 106-07.

³⁰ Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 50.

of lesbian and gay organizations, businesses etc. Few organization scholars have also added the concept of habitus, “without which the concepts of field and capital (at least as he employed them) make no sense.”³¹ I did so, considering actions through the lens of habitus to gain insights into socio-historical foundations of individual actor’s actions and those of the movement. We gain a clearer sense of the debt one social movement owes another. For example, Gays of Ottawa was founded in an era typified by the phrase ‘the personal is political’. Through habitus we can consider the embodied quality of this sentiment and how its embodiment was employed for effect, for example through picketing.

Using Bourdieu I argue that efforts by Canada’s lesbian and gay activists constructed a new organizational field, populated by lesbian and gay-focused organizations. Within and outside of this field the most valuable form of capital was cultural, specifically the experiential knowledge of lesbian and gay life. I argue movement actors transformed the darker aspects of gay experience, namely homophobic oppression, into cultural capital through which claims for change and redress could be articulated.

The relationships of (generally) shared purpose, aspiration, influence and activity in which GO was embedded defined the LGF. In turn individual GO members were embedded in economic, cultural, educational, and social relations, and in other fields. Together these equipped them with a habitus and forms of capital beneficial to GO. Thus

³¹ M Emirbayer & V Johnson, ‘Bourdieu and Organizational Analysis’, *Theory and Society*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2008, pp. 2.

I focus on GO's executive members, their backgrounds, skills; ways of working etc., to consider how they established GO as a credible player in the LGF and in other fields.

Bourdieu's theoretic demands a more focused, nuanced profile of LGF actors than is currently found in the literature. Existing research has generally considered lesbian and gay organizing in broad terms. For example, because of their backgrounds, education, and competencies, the literature often characterizes the LGF's movement leadership as middle class. A not dissimilar label has been applied to the North American late sixties feminist movement. Using Bourdieu's relational approach we look beyond surface indicators of economic class to consider actors' social, cultural and political capital and determine their social position. Thus GO's executive was revealed to be quite diverse economically, culturally, socially, and politically.

Yet it is also clear GO was governed by an executive that engaged in image management, aspiring to position GO as a credible and professional organization. Thus they wished to appear a not-especially-radical, liberal, reliable, upstanding group. Its executive enacted the kind of credible performance it believed necessary to being fairly heard by those in power, namely one that was solidly middle class. And while GO's executive was economically, culturally, socially and politically diverse, socially its members should be considered relatively privileged. All were educated, housed, culturally skilled, employed, socially connected etc., all of which was enormously advantageous to GO. Executive and committee meeting minutes are replete with references to members' social connections. Many spoke of benefiting from a job that

paid the bills and enabled their activism.³² True, GO members were oppressed owing to their stigmatized sexual orientation but this was mitigated somewhat by a relatively privileged social position. Additionally, for the men dominating GO's leadership in the seventies and early eighties, the fact of their being male placed them in a privileged position. Here Bourdieu's conception of gender as form of symbolic and cultural capital is important. Within a patriarchal society men possess the most valued form of (gendered) symbolic and cultural capital. As Bourdieu states, "women have in common the fact that they are separated from men by a *negative symbolic coefficient* which, like skin colour for blacks or any other sign of membership of a stigmatized group, negatively effects everything they are and do".³³ Thus as I consider the credibility and efficacy of GO's leadership, I recognized the kinds of relationships they might be able to exploit owing to their having been born male.

I discuss Bourdieu's logic of practice in greater detail in Chapter Two. I turn now to briefly review the literature on lesbian and gay community, history and social movement organizations.

Contemporary Scholarship:

There is a growing body of works documenting lesbian and gay communities and organizing in North America, written by researchers from the disciplines of history, geography, social work, sociology, and political science, etc., to which I add my research. This body of work is dominated by works with a U.S. focus; however, it remains relevant to my own. A number of histories of lesbian and gay communities exist. Generally these

³² They did not, for example, work at jobs necessitating a security clearance, which in the early seventies was a barrier for lesbians and gays.

³³ P Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, Stanford University Press, California, USA, 1998, p. 93.

focus on large urban centers. Of these George Chauncey's *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay World, 1890-1940* is one of the best known.³⁴ Broad histories such as Chauncey's and works such as Nan Boyd's history of the San Francisco gay scene prior to the sixties; Marc Stein's history of lesbian and gay community in Philadelphia; Gary Atkins oral history and analysis of lesbian and gay life in Seattle since 1900; anthropologist Esther Newton's cultural history of Cherry Grove and Fire Island; and the History Project's review of three centuries of same-sex desire in Boston, all trace the social emergence of lesbian and gay relationships, spaces, communities and their social and political struggle for enfranchisement.³⁵

The struggles of lesbian and gay individuals and communities across North America, is marked by shared experiences owing to hegemonic social, medical, sexual and regulatory regimes. Yet it is clear that local conditions particularized lesbian and gay experience in different geographic, temporal, social, political and cultural locales. Works by Stein, Atkins, and the History Project challenge a geographic narrative that tends to dominate writing about North American gay community. Namely that lesbian- and gay-identified community emerged first in San Francisco and New York, and, that New York's 1968 Stonewall Inn riots sparked the modern gay liberation movement. Stephen Murray in particular challenges portrayals of Stonewall as a kind of lesbian and gay 'shot heard round the world'. He situates the riots within an unfolding series of protests taking

³⁴ G Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay World, 1890-1940*, Basic Books, New York, NY, 1994.

³⁵ N Boyd, *Wide Open Town: A history of queer San Francisco to 1965*, University of California Press, Berkley, California, 2003; M Stein, *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-197*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2000; G Atkins, *Gay Seattle: Stories of exile and belonging*, University of Washington Press, Seattle WA, 2003; E Newton, *Cherry Grove, Fire Island: Sixty Years in America's First Gay and Lesbian Town*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1993; History Project, *Improper Bostonians: Lesbian and Gay history from the Puritans to Playland*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1999.

place across the U.S. prior to 1968. Murray concluded that, Stonewall became popularly regarded as the beginning of gay liberation partly due to “New York [city’s] position as the media center of the United States”. As a result, what was a “generalized symbol” of protest was shaped into something larger.³⁶ In Canada a similar criticism could be leveled at a tendency to see lesbian and gay events occurring in Toronto as critically important to the whole movement. A tendency no doubt furthered by Toronto’s position as the lesbian and gay media centre of Canada.³⁷

In the literature, there is a growing body of smaller-scale research such as M. Davis and E. Kennedy’s oral history of working class lesbians in Buffalo, New York. Here authors noted the primary role of commercial bars in fostering a strong, local lesbian culture, which would prove essential to the community’s adopting a “more public stance”.³⁸ In contrast, Rochella Thorpe’s study of African-American lesbian nightlife in Detroit, 1940-1975, concluded it was house parties rather than commercial bars that facilitated the creation of lesbian and gay social networks. Here Thorpe concluded commercial bars were not viable social outlets owing to racism, police surveillance and economic disparity. Thus house parties provided spaces that were ethnically, legally and economically, freer.³⁹ Jeffery Jones in his dissertation on queer communities in

³⁶ S Murray, *American Gay*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996, pp. 62-3.

³⁷ In late 1971 the gay liberation newspaper *Body Politic* was founded in Toronto, going on to play a key role in Canada’s lesbian and gay movement. While ceasing publication of the *Body Politic* in 1986, its publisher Pink Triangle Press founded the less political and more commercially focused, Toronto-based *Xtra!* In 1993 Pink Triangle Press expanded with the creation of the Vancouver-based *Xtra! West* and Ottawa’s *Capital Xtra*. See:

³⁸ M Davis & E Kennedy, ‘Oral History and the Study of Sexuality in the Lesbian Community: Buffalo, New York, 1940-1960’, *Feminist Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1986, pp. 23. Specifically the authors are speaking of a “pre-political period” in the fifties, during which lesbian bars became more numerous. See also: E Kennedy & M Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The history of a lesbian community*, Routledge, New York, 1993.

³⁹ Thorpe’s work challenged past research which concluded that in the 1950’s lesbian culture had existed only within the commercial bar scene (p. 41). R Thorpe, ‘A house where queers go’: African-

Lexington KT, 1930-1999, considered the spatial and geographic aspects of lesbian and gay community. Jones concluded that Lexington was home to a multiplicity of gay communities rather than a singular monolithic or rhetorical gay community. What drew these communities together was their shared legal marginalization and sense of kinship with other queers.⁴⁰

There is a small but growing body of literature on the history of lesbian and gay life and community in Canada. Historian Steven Maynard has made extensive use of archival material to document lesbian and gay history, in particular the sexual regulation of gay men.⁴¹ Drawing on interviews and archival research Cameron Duder's *Awfully Devoted Women: Lesbian Lives in Canada, 1900-65*, revealed that prior to the fifties lesbian couples were typically regarded as being platonic friends. Not until the post-fifties era was a more sexualized and lesbian-identified experience recognized.⁴² Moving outside the large centers Riordon's *Out Our Way* provides an excellent oral history of lesbian and gay life in rural Ontario.⁴³ McLeod's history of *Gay: Canada's first gay tabloid*, and Jackson and Persky's *Flaunting It*, consider the lesbian and gay media in Canada.⁴⁴

American Lesbian Nightlife in Detroit, 1940-1975', In *Inventing Lesbian Cultures in America*, Lewin, E (ed) Beacon Press, Boston, 1996, pp. 40-62.

⁴⁰ J Jones, *Hidden Histories, Proud Communities: Multiple narratives in the queer geographies of Lexington, Kentucky 1930-1999*, [PhD Dissertation], University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 2001.

⁴¹ See: S Maynard, 'The Maple Leaf (Gardens) forever: Sex, Canadian historians, and national history', *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 36, no. 2, 2001, pp. 70-105. See also: T Chapman, Male homosexuality: legal restraints and social attitudes in western Canada, 1890-1920, In *Law and Justice in a New Land: Essays in Western Canadian Legal History*, Knafla, L (ed), Carswell Publishers, Calgary, 1986, pp. 267-92.

⁴² C Duder, *Awfully Devoted Women: Lesbian Lives in Canada, 1900-65*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 2010.

⁴³ M Riordon, *Out our Way: Gay and lesbian life in rural Canada*, Between the Lines, Toronto, 1996.

⁴⁴ D McLeod, *A Brief History of Gay: Canada's First Gay Tabloid, 1964-1966*, ECW/Homewood Books, Toronto, 2004; E Jackson & S Persky, *Flaunting It! 1964-1982: A decade of gay journalism from The*

Much of the smaller-scale research into lesbian and gay community in Canada focuses on regional, geographic and spatial aspects. Dawn Johnston in her research on queer spaces in Calgary, Alberta, highlighted the importance of space for lesbian and gay community. *Queer* space whether commercial or non, acts to dynamically “challenge popular notions of equality – legal, civic and spatial”. Yet Johnston concluded queer space is “simultaneously liberating and limiting...[creating] a two-tiered world in which our sexuality can only be displayed in marked and signified spaces”.⁴⁵ Julie Podmore in her study of lesbian life and community along Montréal’s St. Laurent Boulevard argued that researchers cannot rely on approaches that “privilege visibility in the material landscape”. As a result researchers were prone to focusing on those lesbian and gay spaces that were clearly visible and gay-identified at the expense of other “spaces that are meaningful”. Taking a different tack, Podmore was able to discover a vibrant, social community on St. Laurent, a street not readily identifiable as “a lesbian territory”.⁴⁶

Catherine Nash too critiqued assumptions about geography and space in her study of Toronto’s gay village. While the literature suggested establishing gay-identified spaces such as businesses and neighbourhoods were critical to community formation, Nash notes that prior to the eighties a more assimilationist-minded movement had regarded such spaces as isolating lesbians and gays. Gay liberationists too had been critical, seeing gay ghettos as “disreputable places frequented by a narrow and unrepresentative group of

Body Politic, Pink Triangle Press, Toronto, 1982. See also: D Churchill, ‘Mother Goose’s map: tabloid geographies and gay male experience in fifties Toronto’, *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 30, no 6, 2004, pp. 826-52. See also: M Robertson, ‘AIDS coverage in the Body Politic, 1981-1987: an annotated bibliography’, *American Review of Canadian Studies*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2002, pp. 415-431.

⁴⁵ D Johnston, *Sites of resistance, sites of strength: the construction and experience of queer space in Calgary*, [MA thesis], University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, 1999, pp. 92; 94.

⁴⁶ J Podmore, ‘Lesbians in the Crowd: gender, sexuality and visibility along Montreal’s Boul. St-Laurent’, *Gender, Place and Culture*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2001, p. 351.

homosexuals". Not until the lesbian and gay movement had adopted a human rights agenda were gay ghettos reimagined as "the rightful home of a minority group...the foundation of political and economic strength and community building".⁴⁷

McDiarmid in her study of Kingston's lesbian and gay community noted the degree to which contemporary social actors were unaware of the past activism and experience of community members. As a result in Kingston's "contemporary queer life...stories of life during the 50s, 60s, and 70s are not part of the collective consciousness". This forgotten community history had revealed how Kingston's geographic size had forced lesbians and gay men to cross gender lines and work together to form community. In large cities such as Toronto there was less of an impetus for the genders to interact.⁴⁸ Ross Higgins in his study of pre-liberation Montréal also highlighted the effect of 'what happened before'. Through an analysis of discourse and narrative Higgins found that well before the seventies, gay men in Montréal had already established a strong rhetorical stance that rejected the era's views of homosexuality, furthering the community's growth. Indeed, Montréal had experienced "a continual development of specifically gay institutions in the fifties and sixties. When gay political groups emerged in the seventies, they did so long after "a visible, self-aware gay community had taken shape in the urban landscape".⁴⁹

47 Nash, 2006, p. 13; see also: C Nash, 'Contesting Identity: Politics of gays and lesbians in Toronto in the seventies', *Gender, Place and Culture*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2005, pp. 113-35; J Grube, 'No more shit: the struggle for democratic gay space in Toronto', In *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance*, G, Ingram, M, Bouthillette & Y, Retter, (eds), Bay Press, Seattle, 1997, pp. 127-45.

48 M McDiarmid, *From Mouth to Mouth: An oral history of lesbians and gays in Kingston from World War II to 1980*, [MA Thesis], Queen's University, Kingston, 1999, pp. 164-5.

49 R Higgins, *A sense of belonging: pre-liberation space, symbolics and leadership in gay Montréal*, [PhD Dissertation], McGill University, Montreal, 1997, p. 383. See also: L Chamberland,

The available literature on individual lesbian and gay community organizations is limited. Eleanor Tilton highlighted the dearth of such research in her 1991 qualitative, historical case study of the AIDS Committee of Toronto. In it Tilton concluded that in order to survive, community-based organizations have to generate formal bureaucratic structures and become more professional, while simultaneously maintaining the participation of community members. However, bureaucratization and professionalization often distanced an organization from its constituency leading to tensions.⁵⁰ Jeremy Holman's study of the Boston HIV/AIDS social movement charts the transition of a gay-focused and -identified HIV/AIDS organization as it responded to shifts in the pandemic, namely its impact on non-gay communities. Through social movement theory, Holman charted how local geographic, economic, cultural and social factors acted to either foster or impede HIV organizing. For example, as the meaning-frame associated with HIV evolved away from its initial gay male emphasis Boston AIDS relevance declined.⁵¹

While focusing on a commercial business, Saralyn Chesnut and Amanda Gable's 1991 study of the lesbian owned Charis Books in Atlanta, Georgia, demonstrated the business's profound impact on the local community through its production and distribution of women-centered and lesbian cultural products. Founded in the early seventies and still in operation today, Charis Books manifested a seventies era lesbian feminist ideology emphasizing female agency and autonomy; a driving force behind a

'Remembering lesbian bars: Montreal, 1955-1975', *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 25, no. 3, 1993, pp. 231-69.

⁵⁰ E Tilton, *AIDS Committee of Toronto: Case Study of a New Community Organization*. [MA, thesis], York University, Toronto, 1991.

⁵¹ Holman, J 'The Boston HIV/AIDS Social Movement: Framing, Identity, and Social Movement Decline'. [PhD Dissertation] Clark University, Worcester, Mass., 2005.

wave of lesbian writing and the creation of lesbian publishers and bookstores.⁵² Daneel Buring's history of the Memphis Gay Coalition, 1979-1991, is of particular relevance to my research, as it documents a community organization that was quite similar to GO. Like GO, the Coalition founded a community newspaper, operated a community center, support line and promoted lesbian and gay identity. It too encountered hostility from the local gay community. In Memphis, Coalition efforts were undermined by a 'Southern culture' whose tolerance for lesbian and gay organizing and community was undermined by those agitating for substantive political change. Ultimately, the Coalition would flounder as a result, coupled with its inability to deal with racial tensions and effectively manage generational transition among its leaders.⁵³

Nicolla Lucas in her study of *Womonspace*, Edmonton, concluded that although the organization had emphasized the social over the political, its "appropriation of social space" had actually furthered "political progress". This unexpected outcome was the result of how "access to social space for non-political activities" enhanced lesbian visibility and promoted political awareness among lesbians using the social space.⁵⁴ Becki Ross in *The House That Jill Built* also considered a lesbian organization and the implications of lesbian-identified space in her study of the Lesbian Organization of Toronto (LOOT). In it she noted how emphatic, even strident attempts to develop and instill a particular *geunine* lesbian identity, became a barrier to the organization's

⁵² S Chesnut & G Amanda, 'Women Ran It Charis Books and More and Atlanta's Lesbian-Feminist Community, 1971-1981', In *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*, Howard J (ed), New York University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 242-43.

⁵³ D Buring, 'Gay activism behind the magnolia curtain: the Memphis Gay Coalition, 1979-1991', *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 32, no. 1, 1996, pp. 113-35.

⁵⁴ N Lucas, *Womonspace: Building a lesbian community in Edmonton, Alberta, 1970-1990*, [[MA Thesis], University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, 2002.

development. The emphasis on members being 'real' lesbians acted to exclude those women who could not support or manage this too-specific self-presentation.⁵⁵

Of greatest utility to my enquiry, were works addressing the organizational, political, and activist experience of Canadian lesbian and gay communities. While this body of literature often considers the country as a whole, it allows me to situate GO within the larger Canadian lesbian and gay organizational movement. Don McLeod's month-by-month chronology of Canadian lesbian and gay-related developments from 1964-1975 is a detailed look at events across the country.⁵⁶ Tom Warner traced in an in-depth manner, community activism since the late sixties highlighting the influences of events in the US and the assimilation and liberationist approaches found in Canadian lesbian and gay activism. While assimilationists sought equality rights through political lobbying and legislative action, liberationists sought to address the roots of inequality by challenging homophobia and heterosexism. Miriam Smith has documented in superb detail the Canadian lesbian and gay movement's efforts to secure equality in the period 1971-1995, paying particular attention the emergence of rights-seeking and the impact of the Charter of Rights. While the Canadian movement was embedded within the larger North American liberationist movement, it differentiated itself through a rights-seeking discourse wherein rights were both means and end.⁵⁷ Gary Kinsman has considered the various moral and regulatory forces that historically confronted Canadian lesbians and

55 B Ross, 'The House the Jill Built: Lesbian Organizing in Toronto, 1976-1980', *Feminist Review*, vol. 35, Summer, 1990, pp. 75-91. See also: B Ross, 'How Lavender Jane Loved Women: Refiguring Identity-Based Life/Stylism in seventies Lesbian Feminism', *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 30, (Winter), 1995-1996, pp. 111-127.

56 D McLeod, *Lesbian and Gay Liberation in Canada: A Selected Chronology, 1964-1975*, ECW/Homewood Books, Toronto, 1996.

57 Smith 1999. See also: D Herman, *Rites of Passage: Struggles for Lesbian and Gay Legal Equality*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1994.

gays and their resistance to these forces.⁵⁸ Barry Adam has similar carefully considered the moral regulation the movement had faced.⁵⁹ Kinsman also writes at length about the impact of the RCMP's protracted campaign against lesbians and gay men in Canada's federal civil service and military. Recently Kinsman together with Pat Gentile published the *Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation*, a work which details the story of the RCMP's efforts.⁶⁰ To this past work I am much indebted and add the story of one of Canada's longest continually-operating lesbian and gay organizations.

Organizing My Findings:

Before presenting my findings proper, I review Bourdieu's logic of practice theoretic and my methodological approach in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three I present a narrative account of GO's founding and organizational first steps which covers its first years of operation which includes the opening of its first GO Centre. It was during this formative year that varied areas of interest and activity emerged which I discussed in subsequent chapters. Chapter Four charts the development of the organization's newsletter cum newspaper, *GO Info* which I situate within an emerging lesbian and gay

⁵⁸ G Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities*, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 1987.

⁵⁹ Adam, B 'Moral Regulation and the Disintegrating Canadian State: Introduction', In *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement*, B. Adam, J. Duyvendak & A. Krouwel, (eds), Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1998, pp. 13-29. See also: B Adam, *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement; Social Movement Past and Present Series*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1995.

⁶⁰ Kinsman, G 'Character Weakness' and 'Fruit Machines: Towards an Analysis of the Anti-Homosexual Security Campaign in the Canadian Civil Service'. *Labour / Le Travail*, Spring, vol. 35, 1995. pp. 133-62; G Kinsman & P Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation*. UBC Press, Vancouver, 2010. See also: P Gentile, 'Capital queers: social memory and queer place(s) in Cold War Ottawa', In *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, J Opp & J Walsh (eds) University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 2010, pp. 187-214.

media field. Here I discuss GO's critique of mainstream media, specifically a complaint it made to the Ontario Press Council. The creation of social space and opportunity was a key goal of GO and in Chapter Five I explore this at length, highlighting the role of its community dances; critique of Ottawa's local gay bars; and the opening of its second GO Centre. Chapter Six considers GO's approach to the provision of social services and education. For lesbian and gay communities the seventies was an era characterized by frequent confrontations with, and critiques of, policing. In Chapter Seven I discuss GO's advocacy and activism on behalf of gay men arrested in the city's cruising areas and the results of a disastrous raid on Ottawa's Club Baths bathhouse. The shocking fallout from an Ottawa Police investigation into a so-called vice ring is also explored. Gays of Ottawa was a key player in the lesbian and gay social movement and in Chapter Eight I explore GO's relationships and work with the National Gay Election Coalition, the National Gay Rights Coalition and the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario. Having reviewed the context the lesbian and gay discrimination in Chapter Eight, I turn in Chapter Nine to consider GO's effort to secure anti-discrimination protections for City of Ottawa employees. Chapter Ten considers the final five years of my enquiry during which GO recovers from a devastating fire; opens its third and fourth GO Centre; increases the participation of lesbians; and establishes PTS. In Chapter Eleven, I briefly review my findings, contribution and directions for further research.

Chapter Two: Theory & Methodology

Theory

In this section I outline the theoretical perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's logic of practice and the concepts *habitus* (dispositions), *capital* (social position) and *field* (space of positions).¹ After an overview of Bourdieu's theoretical stance, I discuss each concept, touching briefly on reflexivity and symbolic violence. Throughout I provide examples that illustrate the utility of Bourdieu's 'thinking tools'.

Bourdieu regards social actors as engaged in a constant struggle to establish, maintain and/or improve their social position and/or challenge the positions occupied by other actors. This seems a 'red in tooth and claw' view of society, but Bourdieu's 'struggle' is more prosaic. For example, think of how we characterize the post-war aspirations of North Americans as 'keeping up with the Jones'. In the *Socialist Review*, Bourdieu described struggle: "Conflict is built into society". Conflict is manifested in people struggling to achieve social standing, to be regarded as educated, well read, connected, to 'get ahead,' as 'working folk'.² However, "people can find their expectations and ways of living are suddenly out of step with the new social position they find themselves in". This can result from the efforts of other social actors to maintain or achieve a social position which in turn negatively affects one's own. Thus for Bourdieu, "the question of social agency and political intervention becomes very important". Recognizing that one is 'out of step' can drive social change. Consider for example, the

1 P Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977; P Bourdieu. 'The Forms of Capital,' In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of education*, Richardson, J. (ed), Greenwood, New York, 1986, pp. 241-58.

2 P Bourdieu, 'The Politics of Protest', *Socialist Review*, June, 2000b, pp. 18-20.

plight of Canadian lesbians and gays. From the sixties onward their changing social aspirations were out of step with the criminalized and stigmatized social position they occupied. Particularly since the fifties, long-held perceptions of homosexuality were being radically reconsidered by social scientists, academics, clergy, civil libertarians, liberal lawyers, governments etc. Homosexuality was still thought morally repugnant but this reconsideration led to a push to reclassify it as psychiatric condition rather than a criminal offense. In 1969 Canada's Justice Minister, John Turner, expressed this view during parliamentary debates on decriminalizing homosexuality, one widely supported by MPs. For Turner, decriminalization would remove the stigma from actions once thought wholly criminal and now thought in need of psychiatric treatment.³ Two years earlier, the then Justice Minister, Pierre Trudeau, whose omnibus bill would lead to decriminalization had stated, "there's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation".⁴ Lesbians and gays took Trudeau's words to heart, mobilizing to make them a reality. For them being out of step had become a 'question of social agency and political intervention'. Their realization was fundamental to the enacting of a new *habitus*; to applying their *capital* to the creation of a social movement; and to generating a new organizational *field*.

Bourdieu seeks to understand the regularities characterizing social life, in particular, the consistency of social practices whereby individuals, groups and institutions interact. How was it that actors develop a capacity for consistently and credibly engaging

³ T Warner, *Never Going Back: A history of queer activism in Canada*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2002, p. 42-6. In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association delisted homosexuality as a mental disorder.

⁴ Canadian Broadcasting Agency, 'Trudeau's Omnibus Bill: Challenging Canadian Taboos'. In CBC, 2011, viewed on March 2011, <http://archives.cbc.ca/politics/rights_freedoms/topics/538/>.

in and maintaining social practice, without constantly looking up rules governing practice? Bourdieu asked, “how can behaviour be regulated without being (and without being described to be) the product of obedience to a set of rules”?⁵ Picture yourself entering a café, after ordering and paying for coffee, you take a seat by the window. Consider all the necessary physical and social manoeuvres. From ordering a type of coffee while chatting with the barista; to walking with a hot liquid; to ascertaining which seat is free; to finally sitting down—without tripping, insulting someone or spilling a drop. Looking up the rules would greatly lengthen one’s coffee break. That we do not have to reveals how much we have internalized ‘coffee skills’ or the coffee habitus.

Directed towards our accomplishing practical social tasks, the habitus of social practice enables actors to recognize what actions to take, how to behave etc. in a given situation. It therefore follows that social reality exists *inside* and *outside* social actors. It exists in the mind as sets of dispositions comprising a habitus informing and enabling social practice. Outside the mind, social reality exists through our externalized, enacted social practices.⁶ A search for the principles behind this “production of the observed order” leads Bourdieu to formulate a theoretical explanation for how social practices were generated.⁷ Such an explanation would account for the regularity of social practice,

⁵ P Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1990, p. 65.

⁶ L Wacquant, ‘Towards a Reflexive Sociology: A workshop with Pierre Bourdieu’, *Sociological Theory*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1989, pp. 42-4. Here we can see the influence of Pascal: “Social reality exists...in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus” (P Bourdieu, & L Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1992, pp. 127-28).

⁷ For example, consider Bourdieu and Wacquant’s *Reproduction in Education*, 1977, an enquiry into the role of France’s education system in reproducing social order. Working with L. Passeron, Bourdieu considered post-War changes in the academic system which led to schools expanding and becoming more democratic. Yet even after this, few lower- and working-class students went on to post-secondary study. How could a more open system remain (apparently) closed to some? Bourdieu and Passeron concluded that while lower- and working-class students had greater access, they lacked the cultural, linguistic and scholastic skills (capital and habitus) necessary for advancement. The products of a

and, its reproduction through social and cultural classifications and stratifications. Because social practice occurs at both micro and macro levels, Bourdieu applies the generative principles he identified to daily life and our web of social interactions.⁸

Three propositions form the core of social practice and its reproduction.⁹ Firstly, there exist mental schemata through which actors understand social actions and positions. Through this actors physically embody sets of social classifications and stratifications, manifested in social practice. The corresponding fit between an embodied (mental schemata) and an understanding of social position is like a genetic link between social position and recognition of their appropriateness: it *feels right*. Secondly, this correspondence has a political dimension. Because it provides actors with a particular world-view vis-à-vis how to self-classify and classify others, it fosters a belief in a social order, a *natural* status quo or an objective reality.¹⁰ Challenging the natural order-of-things is therefore potentially politically transformative. For example, when GO engaged in anti-homophobia education it acted to change social perceptions of homosexuality. This could alter the mental schemata of homosexuals and non-homosexuals alike, potentially initiating a change in social practice. Thirdly, for Bourdieu the system of classifications whereby we interpret the world is a site of struggle. Classifications reflect decisions taken to distinguish and categorize ourselves and others, providing a window

primary school experience that differed from their middle- and upper-class counterparts, they remained ill-equipped to move forward (P Bourdieu & J Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Sage, London, U.K., 1977b, p. 72).

⁸ Here Webb et al, note Bourdieu's interest in education, the tertiary and secondary role it plays in reproducing social and cultural classification and stratification (J Webb, T Schirato & G Danaher, *Understanding Bourdieu*. Sage, London, U.K., 2002, p. 3.

⁹ Bourdieu & Wacquant, pp. 12-14.

¹⁰ This view reveals Bourdieu's debt to Pascal who held that, "...the world encompasses me...but I comprehend it...precisely because it comprehends me. It is because the world has produced me, because it produces the categories of thought that I apply to it that it appears to me as self-evident" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, pp. 127-28).

onto our social positions. Thus, we struggle to determine classifications, for example, our taste, style or credibility that in turn determine how the social world is properly understood.¹¹

The phrase the *logic of practice* refers to the (logical) rationales behind classifications and the social positions we take up. The *logic* of actors' social practice refers us back to their social origins. As Bourdieu states in *Distinction*: "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classification, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their [social] position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed".¹² 'Classifying practices' illuminate and situate social actors to themselves and to society. Practices reflect social positions, classifying and distinguishing actors. They reveal how we want to be regarded; cast us in a certain light.

Over time actors embody social practices, internalizing a "determinant type of social and economic condition". As a result the choices and actions of social actors correspond to or fit with their social position.¹³ While we have the capacity (agency) to choose social practices, actions, choices etc., Bourdieu insists that culture (structure) sets

¹¹ Here Bourdieu is speaking to the role of language and symbolic systems of meaning in the reproduction and transformation of structures of social domination and subordination.

¹² (P Bourdieu, *Distinction*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, U.K., 1984, p. 56). In *Distinction*, his study of French consumer practices, Bourdieu mapped the logic of consumer's consumption, finding that upper, middle and lower-class actors made purchases that distinguished them according to class. *Distinction* illustrated how class distinctions and hierarchies are maintained through consumption. Products were consumed according to particular class trajectories. Class-distinguishing consumption was consistent but with some variation. A middle-class consumer occasionally bought a better (upper) class of wine or attended a lower-class entertainment. Consumption practices reinforced social classifications and divisions by putting cognitive limits on actors' choices. Middle-class consumers *knew* "this wine's not for me" or that their actions could reveal their 'true' social position, for example, how they stuck-out at the country fair (Bourdieu 1984, p. 232).

¹³ Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 105.

limits on practice, actions and choices. This is why GO's protest practices were recognizable. They *choose* how to protest but from a limited protest repertoire. As a result of choices made from limited menus, the social world is effectively reproduced in each subsequent generation through an internalization of a set of conditions that subsequently limits practices, actions and choices. An actor's social trajectories are similar to those of past generations from the same social group. We manifest this trajectory in social practices, by rejecting certain choices because they lack relevancy, because they don't feel right *for us*. Potentially, social trajectories can be altered through the struggle that Bourdieu contends we engage in. The emergence of the lesbian and gay movement was a struggle to alter the social trajectory of lesbians and gays.

That agency is limited by social trajectories directing us to particular social fates leads some to regard Bourdieu's logic of practice as objectivist, if not determinist.¹⁴ By situating action in "objectively demarcated limits," Lau believes Bourdieu has provided an objectivist account. While Bourdieu has provided 'tools for thinking' Jenkins maintains the logic of practice is determinist. Because its logic limits agency, he fails to see how "actors or collectivities intervene in their own history".¹⁵ How would change ever happen? Bourdieu addresses his critics (unsuccessfully in their eyes), pointing out that with regard to habitus, "one cannot rule out that it may be suspended in certain circumstances—certainly in situations of crisis which adjust the immediate adjustment of

¹⁴ R Lau, 'Habitus and the Practical Logic of Practice', *Sociology*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2004, pp. 369-87. R. Jenkins. *Pierre Bourdieu*. Routledge, London, U.K., 1992, p. 175; C. Mahar, R. Harker, & C. Wilkes. 'The Basic Theoretical Position', In *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu: The practice of theory*, Harker, R, Mahar, C, and Wilkes, C (eds) Macmillan Press, London, U.K., 1990.

¹⁵ R Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*. Routledge, London, U.K., 1992, pp. 9-10.

habitus to field”. Ergo, sets of practices will emerge *or change* depending on conditions within a particular field, meaning change happens. ¹⁶

Bourdieu responded to his critics (unsuccessfully, in their eyes) by pointing out that different sets of practices emerge depending on conditions within a particular field, thus change does happen. Much of their critique revolves around accusations that Bourdieu is determinist. Critics seem to believe there exist (or should exist) actors with a capacity and opportunity for unlimited agency. This is difficult to imagine as we constantly face limits: cultural and social norms, the physical limits of the body, the laws of physics, etc. Our imagination seems boundless but it too is constrained by a dependence on cultural references for content and coherence. In order to understand ourselves and others, we draw from an enormous, albeit limited, range of thought and action.

In formulating his approach Bourdieu rejects phenomenological explanations which hold that, “social structures [are] the mere aggregate of individual strategies and acts of classification”. Also phenomenology does not explain “why and according to what principles” the social production of reality occurred.¹⁷ Bourdieu also finds fault with objectivist accounts. While demonstrating that “objective regularities (structures, laws, systems of relations etc.”) existed independent of individual consciousness, this denies actor agency. Furthermore, objectivism failed to problematize the reproduction of social practice. Subjectivist accounts were also insufficient. Describing how actors construct a social world through the “artful practices of everyday life”, subjectivism

¹⁶ Bourdieu 1990b, p. 108.

¹⁷ Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 9-10.

ignored links between objective structures of culture and the subjective capacities (agency) of actors. In response, Bourdieu negotiates a path between objectivist denials of agency and subjectivist limitations on the effects of structure, in an effort to transcend the Agency vs. Structure debate.¹⁸ Social regularities (structure) do exist, but Bourdieu believes these are the “aggregate product of individual actions”, namely their agency. Such actions reflect agency “guided by some constraints” internalized by actors or objective necessities of structure.¹⁹ Ergo actors engage in social practices freely chosen (agency) while their choices that are limited by internal and external forces (structure) to ensure they fit with social position and culture. Thus, when GO *choose* to protest it did so from a limited, recognizable protest repertoire.

Habitus

In *Outline of a Theory of Practice* Bourdieu describes social practice as being, “cultivated dispositions, inscribed in the body schema and in schemes of thought” which enable actors to ensure all social practice is consistent.²⁰ Regularities characterizing social practice, are rooted in mental schemes allowing for range of practices “adapted to endlessly changing situations”, without these being “constituted as explicit principles” or

¹⁸ P Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1990a, p. 26; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 8-9). With his approach Webb et al (2002 p.36) described Bourdieu as, “reading across [objectivist and subjectivist] approaches”. Thus for Bourdieu practice is informed by a sense of agency, however possibilities for agency should be understood and contextualized in terms of culture. Mahar et al. describe this approach as a form of “generative structuralism,” a new way of thinking about the “genesis of the person, social structures and groups” (‘The Basic Theoretical Position’, In *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu: The practice of theory*, Harker, R, Mahar, C, and Wilkes, C (eds) Macmillan Press, London, U.K., 1990, p. 3)

¹⁹ Bourdieu 1990a, pp. 63-5.

²⁰ This analysis emerged out of Bourdieu’s study of a ‘sense of honour’ among the Kabyle people of Algeria. By way of illustrating the logic underlying social practice, Bourdieu described a sense of honour as a permanent disposition, embedded in the Kabyle; a mental disposition; a scheme of perception and thought resulting in particular bodily postures and stances. The logic of honour practices is not an abstract principle or rules but a *sense* of what honour is. This sense is inculcated into actors from birth, constantly reinforced by others endowed with this same sense of honour (‘*Outline of a Theory of Practice*’, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1977, pp. 14-16).

rules. This regularity is driven by *habitus*, a “system of durable, transposable dispositions” constituted by the structures of our social environment. It is habitus that enables and structures our consistent and credible social practice as actors.²¹ We thus engage in social practices which are ‘regular’ and ‘regulated’ that are not a “product of genuine strategic intention” but rather they *feel* and *are* right for the social situation.

In order to be and feel credible, social actions must accord with our situation and be accomplished without apparent effort. The work of ‘getting it right’ should be invisible. Revealing we have to ‘work at it’ undermines our credibility. Because our bodies are open and exposed to the world they can be “conditioned by the world, shaped by the material and cultural conditions of existence”.²² Thus habitus is a set of embodied actions society has “written into the body”. Being the culmination of actions over time, our having consciously and unconsciously come to embody social rules, tastes, values, capacities, etc., habitus generates appropriate mental and bodily dispositions that Bourdieu refers to as *bodily hexis*.²³ Therefore habitus should be understood as “an individual or socialized biological body, or as the social, biologically individuated through incarnation in a body is collective or trans-individual”.²⁴ The embodied nature of

²¹ Dispositions *not* rules, guide social practice (Bourdieu 1977 p.214). Social practice is not a by-product of mindlessly following rules but a *strategic* engagement with dispositions. These are the “*result of an organizing action*” understood as something close to structure. Dispositions designate “a *way of being, a habitual state* (especially of the body); and, in particular, a *predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination*” towards appropriate social practice (emphasis in original).

²² P Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, Polity Press, Cambridge, U.K. 2000a p. 134.

²³ P Bourdieu 1990a, p. 74. Bodily hexis is the embodied aspect of habitus, emphasizing the centrality of the body for Bourdieu; a “political mythology realized, *embodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking and thereby of *feeling* and *thinking*” (Bourdieu 1990a, pp. 69-70). As a result hexis is seen as having *political* implications, being the arbitrary result of power relations.

²⁴ Bourdieu 2000a, p. 157.

habitus places our dispositions “beyond the grasp of consciousness”, freeing it of any “voluntary, deliberate transformation”. Ergo, habitus is enacted (largely) unconsciously.²⁵

Inculcated in actors from birth, first by family and later by social institutions, habitus has a historical dimension, producing individual and collective practices that accord with “schemes generated by history”.²⁶ ‘Collective history’ though, should not be confused with notions of social (economic) class.²⁷ Rejecting economic, Marxist readings of class, Bourdieu argues social class is revealed via a *class habitus*, a shared system of dispositions comprised of shared economic, cultural, political, social etc. experiences.²⁸ The contention that we perform much social practice unconsciously has drawn criticism. Lau argues habitus must involve a degree of consciousness as it interacts with physical motor function. Indeed children acquire dispositions through conscious self-discovery and bodily apprenticeship.²⁹ Bourdieu argues we initially *consciously* acquire dispositions that are subsequently *unconsciously* recognized as socially correct. Jenkins too insists on the role of consciousness, highlighting how

²⁵ Bourdieu 1977, pp. 93-94. Embodiment is also a feature of Latin definition of habit; a “habitual or typical condition, state or appearance, *particularly of the body*” (emphasis added), which leads some to confuse habitus and habit. Like habit, habitus emerges from a habituation to conscious rules, resulting in a degree of unconscious adherence. However, Bourdieu (1977 p.218) denies social practice is performed mechanically or out of habit.

²⁶ Bourdieu 1977, p. 95.

²⁷ Bourdieu 1990a, p. 54.

²⁸ Bourdieu (1977 p. 85) argues not all class members share the same experiences but each is more likely than a member of another class, “to have been confronted with the situations, most frequent to members of that class”. They will not share perceptions or sets of actions but as a class actors share a set of possible variations on practice. Each has a unique ‘take’ on a shared class habitus allowing them to distinguish themselves.

²⁹ Lau 2004, pp. 374-75. Lau (p. 377) insists habitus involves the consciousness mind. First, habitus is a structured-structure. For example, when selecting restaurants a lower-class couple rejects expensive ones. Their children, while not privy to their thinking nonetheless unconsciously absorb a lesson; certain restaurants ‘are not for us’. Subsequently this is attached to a financial calculation. Each involves conscious mental processes, not unconscious corporeal bodily actions. Second, habitus is a structuring structure; actors are able to reflect on their mostly non-reflexive dispositions if asked to explain them.

speech results from conscious and unconscious cognitive and intellectual operations.³⁰ Bourdieu argues less-than-conscious dispositions produce the habitus, *disposing* actors to a *propensity* to act in certain ways.³¹

Social structures constitute a habitus which adjusts to those constituting conditions. Thus, actors experience “all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions consistent with those conditions”. This is why we rarely ask ourselves “could I have done otherwise?”³² In this way habitus is a “structured and structuring, structure”. *Structured* by an actor’s past and present circumstances, habitus is *structuring*, helping to shape present and future social practices. Being a system of dispositions, habitus acts as *structure*, generating in actors, specific appropriate perceptions and practices.³³ Habitus enables and restricts possible actions owing to the structuring effects of an actor’s social position in a given field, imbuing in them certain field-specific ways of thinking that preclude inappropriate or ill-fitting perspectives. “Historically and socially situated conditions” inform the production of habitus and thus limit social action, therefore ours is a “conditioned and conditional freedom”.³⁴ Our freedom to act (agency) is limited by a finite range of actions deemed appropriate to our class habitus and the field position we occupy.³⁵

³⁰ Jenkins 1992, pp. 76-8.

³¹ Bourdieu 1990a, p. 55. Recent scientific discoveries in brain research may settle the debate in Bourdieu’s favour. Brain scans of research participants reveal brain activity increases seconds before a conscious decision to act. Therefore all actions may be pre-reflexive, based on our unconscious decisions (N Branan, ‘Neuroscience: Unconscious Decisions’, Scientific American, no. 19, 2008, p. 8).

³² Bourdieu 1977, p. 95.

³³ Bourdieu 1977, p. 54

³⁴ Bourdieu 1977, p. 95.

³⁵ This limitation furthered Jenkins’s (1992 p.80) suspicion that the logic of practice is a form of structural functionalism. If structure stabilizes practice through internalized values, beliefs and norms etc.

Habitus is that which we take as self-evident or doxic, “beneath consciousness and choice”. It is a product of struggle “between dominant and dominated groups”.³⁶ Thus it is mutable, in that “habitus may be superseded in certain circumstances,” adjusting its appropriateness to a given social area or field.³⁷ Circumstances that move actors to question the self-evident precipitate an “objective crisis” break the fit between habitus and field.³⁸ I contend from the sixties onward, the internalized homophobic habitus of lesbians and gays faced such a crisis. This gave rise to homophile style organizing and later seventies gay liberation movement that sought to engender a gay-is-good habitus and later, a gay pride habitus.³⁹ Homophobic habitus was subject to the interventions by homophiles and liberationists because of its open quality. Because actors’ experiences act to either modify or reinforce habitus, it is open to the influence of other actors. As more people ‘came out’ publicly, this undermined a homophobic habitus built upon subjective homophobic attitudes and on objective social barriers dictating same-sex desire was a shameful, private matter. However, Bourdieu cautions that an objective crisis requires more than actors questioning the doxic or self-evident. Also necessary are “material and symbolic means [for] rejecting” the self-evident. Britain’s Wolfenden Report, published in 1957, provided Canada’s nascent lesbian and gay

how can change occurs without an outside force? Yet Bourdieu’s emphasis on struggle highlights the potential for change. Where two parties struggle, the outcome can also be different.

³⁶ P Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: A theory of action*, Polity Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1998, p. 56-57.

³⁷ Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 108. Crossley (2003:48-49) adds, that in times of crisis daily assumptions and habits can give way to critical and innovative forms of praxis, allowing new protest repertoires to emerge. As actors identify concerns relevant to them, it engenders a desire to see them addressed. This in turn may generate or benefit a new social movement. Changes in doxic (self-evident thinking) and discursive domains act to suspend certain habits.

³⁸ Bourdieu 1977, pp. 168-69.

³⁹ Homophile-style organizing was characteristic of groups such as the U.S. based Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis, formed in the fifties. Such groups emphasized primarily education as a means to achieve social integration for homosexuals. In the late sixties with the rise of a new generation of activists urging a liberationist approach, the value of homophile cultural and social capital declined as liberationists entered the field.

movement the material means to question and push legislators to rethink homosexuality.⁴⁰

Crossley has considered social movements through the lens of habitus.⁴¹ He concludes that if we consider protest repertoires social movements employ as akin to a protest habitus, this accentuates how participants' life experiences and trajectories shape how they protest for change. This is why my research considered the educational and political backgrounds of GO members. The life experiences and trajectories of social movement participants shape the choices made from the "repertoires of contention" available to them. Crossley believes that a study of movement dispositions can also account for the apparent "infectiousness of struggle", namely, why over time, different movements are seen to employ similar tactics. If we identify a 'habitus of protest,' we can chart its broad manifestation in general, recognizable styles of protest and action in varied social movements.

Being a product of history, habitus of protest (like all habitus) reveals lessons learned from past movements and struggles.⁴² The way of past protests is writ large onto and into the bodies of activists; in clothing, ways of rallying, marching, writing signs, songs of protest etc. A habitus of protest is not static however. Crossley found activists

⁴⁰ Warner 2002, p. 43-46; Kinsman 1987, pp. 139-43. The Wolfenden Committee on homosexual Offences and Prostitution was formed after several high profile British men were arrested for homosexual offences. Their subsequent trial fuelled calls for a more liberal outlook. The Committee's report was notable for its distinguishing, for the first time, between immoral but not criminal, sexual acts occurring in private from those occurring in public.

⁴¹ N Crossley, 'Fish, Field, Habitus and Madness: The First Wave Mental Health Users Movement in Britain', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 50, no. 4, 1999, pp. 656-57.

⁴² N Crossley, 'From Reproduction to Transformation: Social movement fields and the radical habitus', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 20, no. 6, 2003, pp. 48-9; F Dobbin, 'The poverty of organizational theory: Comment on: Bourdieu and Organizational Analysis', *Theory and Society*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2008, pp. 58-9; Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008, pp. 4-5. Based on Durkheim (1977) Emirbayer and Johnson believe the history of all social movements is manifested in contemporary approaches, making an awareness of a social movement's origins and trajectories critical.

“coherently deform” past practices, adapting them to present circumstances. Many varied “repertoires of protest” exist but these must remain understandable to non-movement actors: people have to *know* you are protesting.⁴³ Finally, localized movements may create a specific or “radical habitus” reflecting local ways of thinking and acting etc.⁴⁴

Nash has concluded that social movement habitus exists in three forms: *collective* habitus based on unifying cultural codes; *dispositional* habitus based on internalized cultural codes; and a *manifest* habitus arising out of a particular characteristic mobilizing style.⁴⁵ For an example of a dispositional habitus, consider how gay rights protests have changed over time. From the sixties we see images of pro-homosexual protestors with men wearing suits and ties and women in dresses; the very image of respectability. Later in the seventies lesbian and gay protestors dressed in a hippie style with long hair, flared jeans, etc. Sometimes it was men who wore dresses and women who wore ties.

Field

A field is a structured space wherein actors take up social positions and/or engage in social position-taking. An actor’s social character will depend on their position in this field. Habitus enables them to achieve and/or hold social positions. This dynamic reveals the “ontological complicity” between habitus and field, namely, how habitus fits one’s social position. First, a field structures or limits social practice such that habitus responds to a field’s necessities, ensuring the relevancy and appropriateness of social

⁴³ Crossley 2003, p. 49.

⁴⁴ Crossley 1999, pp. 655-56.

⁴⁵ R Nash, ‘Bourdieu on education and social and cultural reproduction’, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 11, no. 4, 1990, p. 434.

practice. Second, because of the relationship between knowledge (cognitive construction) and social actors, habitus helps constitute fields whose internal practices are meaningful and recognizable.⁴⁶

Society for Bourdieu exists as a system of fields, each possessing a unique structure and power dynamic, that actors see as self-evident or naturally occurring.⁴⁷ A field's social practices are influenced by the relationships between actors and institutions. In turn practices are shaped by a field's internal conditions. Each field has a unique quality but all shares some characteristics due to commonalities between habitus and the ultimate 'field of power,' namely, the field of politics. As the preeminent field, politics impacts the structure of, and activity within, every field.⁴⁸

As in all social life, struggle is a feature of fields, in which actors or organizations struggle for dominance.⁴⁹ Fields then are dynamic spaces where actors act contingently to secure, maintain or change social position; to gain control of mechanisms defining or reproducing the field; and to acquire capital. From this perspective we could restate Smith's finding that Canada's lesbian and gay liberation movement lacked a single "coherent actor" as indicating no lesbian and gay organization had come to dominate the movement field.⁵⁰ While fields are dynamic, in an organizational field change may be restricted by organizations working together to foster conditions reproducing a status

⁴⁶ L Wacquant, 'Towards a Reflexive Sociology: A workshop with Pierre Bourdieu', *Sociological Theory* vol. 7, no. 1, 1989, p. 40. Bourdieu (Wacquant 1989 p.44) believes the epistemological relationship between actors and knowledge is dependent on a relation of conditioning that precedes and structures their habitus.

⁴⁷ Wacquant 1989, p. 41; Mahar 1990, p. 36; Jenkins 1992, p. 84.

⁴⁸ Jenkins 1992, p. 86.

⁴⁹ Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008, pp.6-7; J Everett, *Organizational Research and the Praxeology of Pierre Bourdieu*, *Organizational Research Methods*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2002, p. 60.

⁵⁰ Smith 1999, p. 27.

quo.⁵¹ For example, ensuring conditions favouring continuing funding may drive a field's organizations to mutually maintain these conditions.

Bourdieu's concept of field is an epistemological and a methodological device. 'Thinking through' field is a way to examine its social practices, i.e. what practices distinguish each field. Determining a field's location is difficult. A field may not exist materially yet identifying those practices that define the field can determine its location.⁵² A field's borders are demarcated at the point at which its effects or influence stops.⁵³ The concept of field draws attention to relationship between actors' social position and their practices. This relationship is the key to understanding fields functioning as "networks of social relations, structured systems of social positions" in which actors "struggle...over resources, stakes and access".⁵⁴ For example, in Ottawa's social services field, GO struggled with to define a credible approach, have its expertise recognized, define tactics and seek out funding etc. Based on its clear expertise in the area of anti-homophobia education GO achieved a dominant position.

Internal conditions in a field are determined by its distribution of power. Thus power relations between the lesbian and gay organizations were determined relationally, governing how each could act, their relevancy, roles etc. Defining the relationships between actors in a field is another means of determining its boundaries.⁵⁵ Because we

⁵¹ Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008, pp.19-21

⁵² P Thomson, *Field in Grenfell*, M. ed. Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts, Acumen Publishing, Stocksfield, U.K., 2008, p. 74.

⁵³ Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 100.

⁵⁴ In Everett 2002, p. 60.

⁵⁵ Wacquant 1989, pp. 38-9. An organization can exist as a field unto itself; a field of one. The boundaries of an organization-as-field can be surmised by determining its legally codified boundaries, its overall membership, activities and networks of interaction etc. (Emirbayer & 2008 pp.23-4).

grasp the '*logic of practice*,' we are able to appropriately act in a particular field. This logic provides a practical sense of how to act within a particular field's boundaries.⁵⁶

By way of illustration Bourdieu likens social actions to players on a playing field.⁵⁷ With this analogy Bourdieu argues his analysis has transcended the agency/structure dichotomy. Players (actors) enter a field (social space) to play the (social) game. They enter the field possessing knowledge of how to play (*habitus*). However, they enter lacking a complete understanding of the state of play: of how good other players are what strategies they use, etc. Our social knowledge is limited by our own social position and experience. How actors play, choose a move etc., is a manifestation of their agency, which is enabled and constrained by the game's rules, namely its structure. Bourdieu argues that agency and structure simultaneously affect actor actions. Choices made about their play are based on a 'feel for the game' rather than a conscious calculation. *Habitus* is this 'feel for the game', comprised of our embodying of its rules and the structure of play. Lacking this 'feel,' a player's actions will be inconsistent and lack credibility.⁵⁸ Good players know both the game's written and unwritten rules and

⁵⁶ This 'practical logic' is characterized by a high degree of indeterminacy and fluidity, imbuing social practice with a dynamic quality. Competent actors must be able to improvise, enacting "the 'art' of the *necessary improvisation* which defines excellence" (reference in original) (Bourdieu 1977 p.8).

⁵⁷ In 1985, (in Mahar, et al, 1990, p. 7) Bourdieu stated, "People play different games, which are autonomous, but at the same time, there are homologies between different games and, I think, there are general principles of functioning in these games". Through this analogy, Bourdieu argues actors enter into social life (game) having already consciously or unconsciously accepted, its explicit and/or implicit rules (of the game) shared by other actors (players). Interacting (playing) well socially, requires actors have a 'feel for the game,' namely a 'practical mastery of the logic of the game'. Jenkins (1992, p.71) is critical of the game analogy. He agrees that social life, like a game, has rules governing what players' actions. However Jenkins regards Bourdieu as determinist through his emphasizing of learning and practical experience over rules for behaviour. By stressing actors' 'mastery' rather than competence, Jenkins argues Bourdieu has failed to account for the difference between the two, in that mastery is quite rare.

⁵⁸ Mahar, et al, 1990, pp. 54-5.

that some can be bent, even broken. Therefore, social action is creative even as actors recognize that not just *any* move will suffice owing to structuring effect of the field.

Within a field, actors struggle for position. Having chosen to enter a field, actors demonstrate an investment in playing; a recognition of the game's value. Because we are *invested*, we play, we struggle for position fiercely thus revealing the depth of our commitment and our recognition that "the game is worth playing".⁵⁹ Actors may play half-heartedly or insincerely, out of obligation ('it's what one does'). However, poor quality play exposes our lack of commitment. Other actors see our heart is not in it and exploit this. An actor's belief in whatever is valued or useful in the field, namely its capital, and, willingness to play by the rules is referred to as *illusio*. This *illusio* is field-specific. A lack of *illusio* reveals a lack of belief or understanding of rules, namely the field's internal logic and/or an inability to mentally grasp the game's structure. To those lacking *illusio*, the "game will seem ridiculous".⁶⁰ For example, early on in the movement, many lesbians did not share the movement's drive to enshrine sexual orientation in human rights codes. Women in Ontario for example, had some protection from gender discrimination under provisions of Ontario's Code making an initiative to

⁵⁹ Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 98.

⁶⁰ Bourdieu 1998, pp. 76-79. *Illusio* implies the notion of interestedness but Bourdieu (p. 77) stresses it reflects only the importance players attach to playing; 'interest in being there'. Because of how *habitus* and field structures the mind, Bourdieu states, "games which matter to you are important and interesting because they have been imposed and introduced into your mind, in your body, in a form called the feel for the game". All players are 'interested' but their interest is not calculated. Disinterested players will see no point in playing, "it's all the same to them", revealing their lack of *illusio*.

secure gay rights less relevant.⁶¹ For lesbians changes to human rights codes fulfilled only a “partial objective of gay/lesbian liberation”.⁶²

Players differentiate themselves through skilful play in order to achieve a socially dominant position, amass more capital or influence the availability of a field’s capital.⁶³ All players are unlikely to enter a game unless they possess a basic skill set, but not all play equally well. They play at different levels because each entered the game with a variation on the basic skills. Their skills vary owing to habitus variations.⁶⁴ This habitus structures the field, imbuing it with a unique playing style or ‘grammar’ that constrains actions. Field grammar is its “ars obligatoria”, demarcating the range of possible, grammatically conceivable and consistent moves. Yet fields remain areas of potential and possibility due to their “ars inveniendi...which allows for the invention of a diversity of acceptable solutions” within a field’s grammatical limits.⁶⁵ Adept, experienced players can generate a new grammar of play or new moves to confound other players while adhering to the rules.

Our ability to play social games competently, to credibly act as dictated by the field, is dependent on, and is explained by, two epistemic forms. First is the logic of practice: a practical sense of the social rules (written and unwritten), genres, discourses, values and imperatives that enable our skilful and effective negotiation of social

⁶¹ This indifference would shift over time as lesbians came to address the unique oppression they experienced as lesbian women.

⁶² B Ross, *The House the Jill Built: A lesbian nation in formation*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1995, p. 169.

⁶³ Wacquant 1989, p. 39.

⁶⁴ Players share similar skill sets, thus an individual player’s dispositions is but a “structural variant of all the [overall] group or class habitus” (Bourdieu 1977 p.86).

⁶⁵ P Bourdieu, *The rules of art*, (Translated by Susan Emanuel). Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 1996, p. 236.

situations. Second is our capacity for reflexivity that allows us to understand and negotiate fields, and thereby creatively and strategically engage in social practice.⁶⁶ Through the logic of practice a field 'speaks' to actors, inculcating an awareness of what actions are appropriate and credible.⁶⁷ This limits our agency; however, the interaction between practice and reflexivity helps to mitigate this limitation. Therefore Bourdieu encourages actor reflexivity. We are to consider how social and cultural origins and categories (generation, class, ethnicity, orientation etc.) impact us and our field position (journalist, student, activist etc.). Reflexive actors can systematically explore "unthought-of categories of thought which delimit the thinkable and predetermine thought".⁶⁸

On the issues of reflexivity Crossley noted that characteristically, social movement activists engage in a reflexive questioning of the usual habitus governing a field, namely how their concerns are normally regarded or addressed.⁶⁹ Activists reflexively questioning the status quo need not break with their personal habitus, but doing so illustrates how by becoming an activist we may acquire a reflexive disposition for critical thought. Consciousness-raising techniques which GO employed, can lead to critical reflexivity. Crossley regards consciousness-raising as an amplified and politicized version of the habitual self-interrogation (reflexivity) that social activists often

⁶⁶ As an alternative to a rule-governed social practice Bourdieu highlights strategy. Through an interaction between habitus and a field's capacity for constraint and potential, strategies emerge. For example, an actor's education, cultural norms, profession etc., which produces the habitus and field will constrain and make possible various strategic actions (Jenkins 1992, pp. 83-4).

⁶⁷ Webb, et al, 2002, pp. 49-51.

⁶⁸ Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 40.

⁶⁹ N Crossley, 'Fish, Field, Habitus and Madness: The First Wave Mental Health Users Movement in Britain'. *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 50, no. 4, 1999, pp. 658-59. In this study of mental-health service-users movement in Britain, Crossley concluded a resistance to the habitus maintaining the field's status quo became a focus of resistance. Here activists rejected the label 'patient', in favour of 'users', to create a new unified identity.

adopt.⁷⁰ Bourdieu insists actor reflexivity is why they should not be seen as rule-following automatons. Because of it actors make diverse, creative and strategic choices.⁷¹

The fact that actors choose from a limited range of actions does not preclude them from making strategic, conscious calculations. However, decisions about action are subsequently carried out unconsciously.⁷² For Bourdieu this reveals how habitus works to “continuously transforms necessity into a virtue”. In actors, habitus informs choices made as to actions; ensuing a choice of action correctly corresponding to actors’ social condition; the very same “conditions of which habitus is the product”. Social actors therefore, engage in practice and manifest their choices—even those consciously and strategically made—unconsciously.⁷³ Through socialization and experience, appropriate social practices, even those consciously, strategically chosen, seem second nature. This has the effect of excluding some actions. Some practices become unthinkable while others seem natural, even inevitable.⁷⁴ That actors are strategists and not rule-followers reveals interestedness. Actors’ *interests* are specific to, and reflective of, social position. Whatever this position, be it dominant or dominated, orthodox or heretical, it influences

⁷⁰ Crossley (2003, pp. 48-49) whose work informs my thinking, suggests consciousness-raising and other social movement practices also inform protest habitus. Movement participants possess movement-specific reflexive schemas for defining action, perceptions, feelings etc. Ergo they engage in social change work driven in part, by personal reflexive self-change. To effect change, participants examine personal, habitual ways-of-being-in-the-world to acquire “habit busting habits”.

⁷¹ A Honneth, H Kocyba, & B Schwibs, ‘The Struggle for Symbolic Order: An interview with Pierre Bourdieu’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 3 (November) 1986, pp. 41.

⁷² Wacquant 1989, p. 45. Bourdieu (1977 p.214) believes that in actors, the “most profitable strategies are usually those produced, on the higher side of all calculation and in the illusion of the most ‘authentic sincerity,’ by a habitus”. Thus Bourdieu rejects rational actor theories (RAT) of action, which are “irretrievably flawed” because they perceive social action as “nothing but choice”. To consider social action as always the “conscious aiming at explicitly defined goals” gives into an illusion, ignoring that action occurs under conditions not necessarily of our making (Wacquant 1989a p.43-4).

⁷³ Bourdieu 1984, p. 175.

⁷⁴ Bourdieu 1990a, p. 46.

how actors perceive what is in their interest.⁷⁵ For example, a movement organization's interests are grounded in its field. To advance organizational interests and dominate the field, one organization competes with other organizations. Yet each organization has a shared interest in, and commitment to, maintaining their field, the reproduction of and maintaining the value of the field's capital.⁷⁶ The actions of early lesbian and gay activists challenged this impetus towards field maintenance by envisioning putting themselves 'out of business.' They never imagined they would in fact create a wholly new organizational field.

Capital

Capital encompasses all things "material and symbolic" which are thought of as "rare and worthy of being sought after" in a field. Capital takes three primary forms: economic (e.g., dollars, gold and bonds), social (valued social relations) and cultural (primarily forms of legitimate knowledge). A fourth form, symbolic capital (e.g., prestige, social honour and fame) is also important. For actors, possessing or being in proximity to capital, will determine their field position.⁷⁷ For example, in 1976 GO made a presentation to Ottawa's Board of Control, urging it to pass an anti-discrimination hiring policy. Gays of Ottawa could do so owing to the cultural and symbolic capital it held, namely its ability to explain the realities of lesbian and gay life. As a result of its presentation it accrued social and political capital, strengthening its field position. The value and utility of actors' capital as with habitus, depends upon a competent knowledge

⁷⁵ Wacquant 1989, p. 42.

⁷⁶ Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008, p. 19.

⁷⁷ P Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital,' In *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*, Richardson, J. (ed), Greenwood, New York, 1986a, pp. 241-58.

of social practice. Bourdieu stresses such knowledge is not passively recorded into actor consciousness, rather it is actively and socially constructed by them.⁷⁸

Actors have keen interest in the acquisition and maintenance of capital. Though the term brings to mind economic exchange, Bourdieu's is an expanded notion of capital, which includes non-economic but valued exchanges.⁷⁹ For Bourdieu capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchanges between actors. Determinations as to its value are (often) purely arbitrary owing to a field's conditions. For example, when early homophile organizations were eclipsed by sexual liberation groups, this reflected a de-valuing of homophile capital. That actors struggle to possess and define capital, reveals the *interested* nature of actors' action. This struggle maintains a system of social domination and subordination wherein actors will adjust personal expectations according to their likelihood of securing capital.⁸⁰

The interplay between capital and field generates field-specific types of capital. Actors holding a dominant field position are those who possess the most influence over this specific type, how it is defined, and its rates of exchange. Those holding little capital, or none of a specific type, or those holding capital of little value occupy a weak

⁷⁸ Bourdieu's view of social construction of knowledge differs from Berger and Luckman (1967) in Lau (2004, p. 70). Berger and Luckman contend individuals and/or groups advance competing definitions of common sense knowledge. Thus "whatever passes for common sense [knowledge]...passes for the world" or what is taken for 'reality'. Bourdieu argues reality consists of the intransitive (external) relations between social actors rather than transitive (internal) common sense knowledge. Unlike Berger and Luckman, Bourdieu in Lau (2004, pp. 70-1) believes that actor's actions have a causal, almost genetic dimension arising from their economic and social conditions. Meaning an actors' sense of reality is influenced by external forces beyond their control.

⁷⁹ Bourdieu (1986, p. 42) states, we cannot "account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one re-introduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory".

⁸⁰ Bourdieu 1977, p. 178. Like Nietzsche, Bourdieu regards all social practices as interested. All are all necessarily interested, driven by conscious or unconscious trajectories followed to ensure success. To deny self-interest strengthens the view that social order is natural or inevitable rather than constructed and arbitrary (Webb, at al., 2002 pp.12-14).

social position. Actors who hold financial, informational, legal, technical, or political capital are particularly well positioned to “wield power, or influence” over the field.⁸¹

The type of capital an actor holds influences future attempts to secure more. This is because their “subjective hope” of amassing more adjusts to the “objective probability” of their doing so within a field. Paradoxically this results in a situation where actors holding the *least* amount of capital tend not to focus on accumulating *more*. Having accordingly adjusted their hopes, actors grow more comfortable in their social position; accepting their lot in life. Some actors act to secure a better position and ultimately more capital, by taking part, for example, in an elevated cultural pursuit. However, such pursuits often fail as actors lack related forms of capital that are necessary for real success. Such actors seem out-of-place, regarded as poseurs or as someone ‘punching above their weight’. Here Bourdieu points out that those believing in equality of opportunity for all forget how “social games...are not ‘fair’ games”. Without being strictly speaking rigged, the competition resembles a handicapped race that has lasted for generations”.⁸² One type of capital can be converted to another.⁸³ Cultural and symbolic capital can be readily converted into economic capital. Having attended a culturally and symbolically prestigious university one may join a well-paid profession, garnering more economic capital. Generally however, it is easier to convert economic capital into social or cultural forms.

⁸¹ Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 98-100.

⁸² Bourdieu 2000a, pp. 214-17.

⁸³ That capital can be converted into different types underpins Bourdieu’s (1990a p.122) thinking of capital as the “energy of social physics”.

Actors will maximize holdings of a field's preferred capital and/or try to gain control of it. They have an interest in maintaining optimal conditions for reproducing a field's preferred capital and maintaining value.⁸⁴ This explains why organizations in the field, even as they compete with each other for funding, have an abiding interest in all organizations maintaining a level of competency and credibility, namely the value of shared cultural and symbolic capital. The funding of any one of them reinforces the value of all the field's members. Where possible, actors discredit or devalue capital held by others. In turn they act to valorize and champion the capital they possess or wish to see increased in value.⁸⁵ Thus actors can be seen simultaneously fighting for capital and using capital as a weapon. Within organizations, actors legitimize one type and/or undermine actors holding a type they wish to see devalued. An analysis of a field's available capital and who holds it can reveal which actors or organizations dominate.⁸⁶

Economic capital is the most recognized type, being distinctly material, encompassing things with monetary or material value, commodities and physical resources. While rich in social and cultural capital, for most of its time GO lacked economic capital. Bourdieu situates economic capital at the root of all types as he contends cultural, social and symbolic capital is "transformed, disguised forms of economic capital".⁸⁷ Cultural capital, in contrast, need not have a material form. Its value is often intangible, being knowledge, skills, sense of taste, life-style, qualifications etc. For example, GO's knowledge of lesbian and gay life, while hard to quantify, was

⁸⁴ Bourdieu 1977, p. 502.

⁸⁵ Bourdieu 1977, p. 99.

⁸⁶ Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 98.

⁸⁷ Bourdieu 1986a, p. 252.

highly valuable.⁸⁸ However, cultural capital's value is unstable being at the mercy of shifts in tastes or efforts to discredit it. Various types of cultural capital exist. One of these is *embodied*, defined as a form of external wealth converted "into an integral part of the person through the longstanding dispositions of the mind and body".⁸⁹ Language skills, bodily comportment and physical skills are all important embodied forms of capital. Another type of cultural capital is *objectified*, manifested in cultural goods such as books, dictionaries, machines or abilities such as writing. An ability to write well would reveal one's embodied and objectified cultural capital. However, the value of cultural capital is only realized through an actor's capacity to use it.⁹⁰

For Bourdieu social capital represents all resources acquired, "by virtue of being [part] of a network of durable social relations". Social capital emerges out of the power and resources gained through networks and relationships. As a function of being part of a network, actors may adopt certain embodied social capital, expressed through particular manners, physical bearing or modes of speaking. In this context social capital acts to identify oneself to other network members, affirming shared allegiances etc.⁹¹ For example, many gay men in the seventies adhered to the 'hanky code', displaying

⁸⁸ Thornton (1996) in Sender (2001 p.75) argued that a subculture such as that of lesbians and gays, manifest a gay-specific capital that functioned semi-autonomously of established cultural capital hierarchies. Social actors with a gay camp sensibility, an appreciation of kitsch, drag-performance, awareness of gay community etc., would possess gay-specific cultural capital of little value outside that community (K Sender, 'Gay Readers, Consumers and a Dominant Gay Habitus: 25 Years of the Advocate Magazine', *Journal of Communication*, March, 2001, pp. 76).

⁸⁹ Bourdieu 1986, pp. 243-54.

⁹⁰ Other types of cultural capital include *institutionalized* or certified capital such as academic degrees or professional accreditation. Through the "social alchemy and ritual" of graduation ceremonies, universities publicly increase actors' cultural capital. *Linguistic* capital is embodied, usually through a capacity with one's mother tongue; ability to speak in a magisterial, scholarly or bourgeois language; and/or a capacity to decipher and manipulate complex language structures. Cultural capital, especially when obtained through familial status or education is the most disguised type of capital and the hardest to transfer. 'Disguised' because its value is culturally arbitrary and/or socially constructed, making it very easy to misrecognize or deny (Bourdieu 1986a pp.243-53).

⁹¹ Wacquant 1987, p. 69.

coloured pocket hankies that revealed them to other gay men and their particular sexual interests. Actor's social and cultural networks are themselves a type of social capital.

Social movements manifest social capital through their capacity to organize civil society, mobilize people and draw in members. For both nascent and established movements, networks act as formal and/or informal mobilizing structures, facilitating movement communication and solidarity, essential to mobilizing collectively.⁹² Political capital is a critical type of social capital and is acquired through a being part of a political party's social network, membership in it, relationships within the party and/or with those in the party office etc.⁹³ In terms of the field of politics, whoever dominates it has a capacity to censor or limit what we regard as legitimate political discourse, and to determine political positions. Those identified as a 'spokesperson' in the field hold highly valuable political capital because have a "monopoly [on] the right to speak [or] act in the name" of other actors. Spokespeople can appropriate "not only the words of the group" but also the group's silence. Thus they hold the "very power of the group", facilitating its power by their lending it a "voice recognized as legitimate in the political field". Here we might recall how politicians resisted including sexual orientation protections in human rights codes. As a result of a political decision to not include them, human rights commissions were not mandated to collect data on anti-gay discrimination. Lacking evidence of discrimination, politicians argued there was no need for orientation protections.

⁹² J McCarthy, 'Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting and inventing', In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings*. McAdam, D, McCarthy, J & and Zald, M (Eds) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1996, pp. 1216-217.

⁹³ Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 119.

Symbolic capital is any otherwise quite ordinary property, such as wealth, status or physical beauty that is recognized as important and/or appreciated by others. Its power is almost magical predicated as it is on the socially constructed “collective expectations” and beliefs influencing actors’ actions and thinking. That this influence occurs without any need for resorting to physical coercion attests to the magical quality of symbolic capital. Actors’ expectations and beliefs as to its value depend on their ongoing misrecognition or on a failure to see the completely arbitrary nature of it. Any social distinctions arising out of symbolic capital are likewise arbitrary and misrecognized. Actors can contest definitions of symbolic capital or decisions made as to its value. Similar struggles occur over who may ‘officially name’ or impose an explicit and public, ‘official’ or ‘legitimate’ “vision of the social world”.⁹⁴ Here we can think of homosexuals’ struggle to be identified as ‘normal’ rather than as sexual deviates or sexual psychopaths; to have homosexuality delisted as a psychiatric disorder. Those holding symbolic capital have a “power to consecrate,” which they manifest through a capacity to sway others into believing certain classifications, distinctions etc., are legitimate. During Canada’s same-sex marriage debates, various church groups denied their power-to-consecrate to lesbians and gays, denying them social recognition.

Symbolic Violence

In contemporary societies, a hierarchical or unequal social order can be maintained without dominant players resorting to overt violence through their applying

⁹⁴ P Bourdieu, ‘Social space and the genesis of groups’, *Theory and Society*, vol. 14, no. 6, 1985a, pp. 728. There are individual actors with particular perspectives, who due to personal position produce self-interested namings of themselves and others. But these namings lack real recognition as they have no power to impose recognition or symbolic effect. There are also actors holding an authorized viewpoint through a personal capacity, such as being a significant critic, prestigious author, and most importantly, a designated spokesman, mandated to represent State views (Bourdieu 1985a p.732).

symbolic violence. Dominant classes can remain so merely by working to ensure other actors lead daily lives following the rules of a social system, thereby allowing dominant actors to remain in place.⁹⁵ In Bourdieu's view dominant actors need only "let the system they dominate take its own course in order to exercise their domination". To maintain social hierarchy and inequality through symbolic domination, actors or institutions engage in symbolic violence and here language becomes an "instrument of power and action". As both a form and vehicle of domination, language requires only minimal effort to maintain dominance.⁹⁶ Certain systems of meaning (often through language) can be imposed on groups and classes of actors who in turn experience these as natural, legitimate and a given. For example, lesbians and gays having internalized the belief that homosexuality was a sickness experienced the effects of symbolic violence.

Through cultural reinforcement, systems of meaning are reproduced and accepted as legitimate by actors who misrecognize the role these systems play in their oppression. As result of symbolic violence, "power relations are perceived not for what they are objectively," namely arbitrary, but as legitimate and natural.⁹⁷ Those dominated by symbolic violence are often invested, willing participants in the very system repressing them. This is the result of an interaction between symbolic meanings and the field producing them.⁹⁸ Victims of symbolic violence come to believe that it is in their best interests to act in accord with a field's dictates, making them complicit in their oppression and its reproduction. Convinced they were ill and at risk of social stigma,

⁹⁵ D Schubert, 'Suffering/Symbolic Violence', in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, in Grenfell, M. (Ed), Acumen, Stocksfield, UK, 2008, p. 184.

⁹⁶ Bourdieu 1977, p. 190.

⁹⁷ P Bourdieu, & J Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Sage, London, U.K., 1977, pp. XI-XIII. All cultures generate arbitrary meanings in terms of content and imposition. Behind all lie the sanctions of 'de facto power'.

⁹⁸ Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 24.

lesbians and gay men led hidden lives, believing it in their best interest to deny their desires. Actors accept arbitrary meanings chiefly through 'pedagogic action' which functions to impose a culturally arbitrary notion. In turn this acts to reproduce itself and the status quo. Therefore, all pedagogic action should be understood "objectively [as] symbolic violence". All education is symbolic violence because it involves the imposition of a 'given' cultural norm that is arbitrary and socially constructed.

Three modes of pedagogic action exist: 1) diffuse education via interactions with a peer group; 2) family education; and 3) institutionalized education, namely that of schools, churches etc. Stigmatized groups who possess the appropriate capital can generate a 'counter-pedagogy' to change their social positions.⁹⁹ For example, GO engaged in extensive anti-homophobia education, mobilizing a counter-pedagogy designed to undermine homophobic attitudes and their effects.

Having completed a review of Bourdieu's logic of practice I turn now to explain my research methods.

⁹⁹ Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, pp. 5-11

Methodology:

When I first began my enquiry I had planned to consider the entirety of GO's existence, from its founding in 1971 to its closing in 1995. Thus I conducted interviews with GO members involved throughout its full tenure. Additionally I gathered data from archival and media source, primarily *GO Info* and the *Body Politic*, covering GO entire existence. During the course of the research however, I realized the profound change GO experienced when it established Pink Triangle Services (PTS) in 1984. As a result I chose to close of my enquiry in 1984 based on data collected from fifteen interviews as well as extensive archival documents and media records. I began my research with a review of the archival and media sources and I turn now to discuss that process.

Archival Documentation and Media Sources:

The archival record left by GO is substantial but not comprehensive. Extensive records exist for the years 1971 to 1979. There are fewer archival records for the years 1979 to 1984. The most in-depth material is held by the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) in Toronto. The records of Gays of Ottawa are found in three main fonds, the largest donated by GO in 1981. These 20 boxes contain virtually all of GO's files from its first ten years, comprised of meeting minutes, correspondence, issue files, committee files, newspaper clippings, CGRO documents, NGRC documents, GO publications etc. The next fond was donated by Charlie Hill in 1982 and contains meeting minutes, correspondence, scrapbooks etc. Finally there are the records donated by former Association of Lesbians and Gays of Ottawa president and labour activist, Diane Kilby, in 2004.¹⁰⁰ These contain meeting minutes, documents, publications,

¹⁰⁰ In 1989 GO changed its name to the Association of Lesbians and Gays of Ottawa (ALGO).

correspondence, etc. At the CLGA I also consulted some of CGRO's records and a complete set of *Body Politic* issues. In Ottawa, I reviewed a complete set of *GO Info* issues held by Pink Triangle Services in its Kelly McGinnis Library.¹⁰¹ Some GO members subsequently donated records to me which I will donate on their behalf to the CLGA. Former GO executive member, Joanne Law provided me two complete sets of GO board meeting minutes covering 1979 to 1984.¹⁰² Long-time GO book-keeper Peter Demski, donated financial records and statements for the years 1978-1984. Denis LeBlanc and Barry Deeprise provided me a variety of documents such as books, GO pamphlets, etc. I approached all the archival and media records with an eye for information that spoke to the skills of GO members, social and political relationships, access to material resources, and strategic approaches. In essence I was looking for evidence of GO members' capital and habitus.

As I began to review GO's records at the CLGA I had to face the fact that they had never been catalogued. Little was known as to what they contained. My first task was to catalogue them while simultaneously making extensive notes. This process took approximately two and half months during which I spent approximately four days a week in Toronto. This resulted in a catalogue of 1,426 documents, located in 195 separate files which will be donated to CLGA for incorporation into their records. Notes were partly organized based on the kinds of records GO produced, namely executive and committee meeting minutes, project files, event documentation, NGEC, NGRC and CGRO files.

¹⁰¹ Named after prominent gay Ottawa physician, Dr. Robert Kelly McGinnis, this library was begun by GO in the early seventies. Bequeathed to PTS in 1984, the library now holds approximately 7,000 items.

¹⁰² Two complete sets were created. After the fire destroyed GO's office in 1979 it began to keep two sets of minutes one of which was stored outside the office. One set also include monthly financial statements.

Based on my research interests I made thematic or issue-driven notes, such as GO's approach to gender issues, governance, relations with city hall, police, local community, local agencies, lesbian and gay organizations, city hall, policing, etc. Activities of GO committees were generally documented in meeting minutes however some committees kept better records than others. The most detailed records were left by GO's Political Action Committee (PAC) and the executive. Records of its education efforts, on which GO spent so much time doing innumerable speaking engagements were quite sparse.¹⁰³ That GO strove to keep excellent records from its first days, speaks to its organizational habitus and cultural capital. A general weakness of the records, such as meeting minutes, is that they generally record decisions taken rather than discussions surrounding these. The organizational record often implies a given event was something important owing to the volume of the archival records left behind. Invariably this is unreliable. Some events generated more material because GO had more resources for material production but the actual event was unsuccessful. Often successful events left fewer records as fewer resources were put into documentation.

My cataloguing and review of GO's records took place alongside my of *Body Politic* (BP) issues. While strongly Toronto-centric, the BP reported on the lesbian and gay movement in the rest of Canada through contributions made by movement members. I reviewed the BP for coverage of GO, the NGEC, NGRC and CGRO, as well as contextual pieces on major issues and developments of the day. Returning to Ottawa I reviewed *GO Info*, which was published from 1972 to 1995. Initially *GO Info* was the

¹⁰³ My own experience as an HIV educator in the early 1990s was similar. Speaks were so frequent that aside from a booking sheet we kept few notes. The nature of records was driven in part by the demands of the federal funders who required only quantitative data be kept, namely how many speaks, to how many people etc.

means whereby GO's governing body communicated its actions to the community. Quickly however, content expanded with the inclusion of coverage of issues, personal essays about being gay, political polemics, news, commentary, book and movie reviews, etc. Owing to the vagaries of GO's capital, in terms of time, volunteers, finances, etc., the quality of the *GO Info's* layout, content and publication schedule varied dramatically. For my analysis of *GO Info* I digitally photographed its covers, major new items, board reports, etc. Doing so took only a few hours, using a standard digital camera, a tripod, but no special lighting, and produced excellent results.¹⁰⁴ This digital record will subsequently be donated to PTS and to the CLGA. Having completed my review of GO's archival material I prepared to begin my interviews. While this immersion in all-things-GO gave me a solid command of GO's history I had to learn that a similar grasp of the facts could not be expected of interviewees.

Research Tool and Interviews:

As part of my submission to Carleton University's Ethics Review Board I had to include my primary research tool, an interview questionnaire; see appendix.¹⁰⁵ Once in the field it required only minor adjustments, primarily to do with the relevance of some questions to GO members, depending on when they were involved. At the outset interviewees were asked how they came to join GO; its impact on their coming out; and their personal backgrounds of past involvement with social movements, educational training, interests, etc. Here I was particularly interested in the political, social, cultural and symbolic capital of individuals. Next, interviewees were asked to describe GO as it was when they joined, its primary functions; distinctions made between the political and

¹⁰⁴ Using any of the standard image manipulation programs, images of *GO Info* were easily enlarged for readability.

¹⁰⁵ This research was conducted in compliance with Carleton University's Ethics Review Board.

the social; GO's relationship with Ottawa's gay community; governance structure; establishing PTS; and financing. Next came a series of questions that considered GO's external relationships with Ottawa's heterosexual community; its municipal city government; the Ottawa Police; and the impact of 'Ottawa as Ottawa,' a city that was home to the federal government. Moving outside of Ottawa, interviewees were asked about GO's relationships and work with lesbian and gay groups and coalitions in Canada. At the close of each interview, interviewees were asked to complete the sentence: "During my time GO was..."

For my interviews I focused on GO executive members as my primary interest was on how GO accomplished what it did, i.e., the 'big picture.' However, I also knew that executive members were deeply involved as volunteers on committees, in actions, etc. While they may have sat on the executive they also had to do literally, the heavy lifting the organization required to run a community dance, organize a rally or prepare a parliamentary submission. Of the 24 interviews I conducted with executive members who served between 1971 and 1995, I relied primarily on those 15 concerning the years relevant to my enquiry. Word of mouth was the primary method whereby I found past members, many of whom I had met previously. Most interviews lasted approximately an hour and half and were conducted at interviewees' homes. All but six were conducted in Ottawa. Ian MacLennan was interviewed via telephone from Sudbury. Mike Johnston was interviewed in Hamilton while Paul-François Sylvestre and Barb MacInosh were interviewed in Toronto. Catherine Browning and Jean Gilbert were interviewed in Montréal. Digital audio recordings were made of interviews. Of the 15 interviews all but two were fully transcribed. Interviews with two members from 1981-1984 were partially

transcribed, primarily because many research questions were not relevant to them. Eight interviews were entered into Atlas Ti, a qualitative analysis program. These were then coded for a variety of themes such as gender, education, finances, identity, skills, city hall, police, etc. However, I soon realized generally only a smaller number of interviews were relevant to a given period, issue, etc. Thus at any given time, on average I actively worked with only 4-6 interviews. This smaller sample of transcripts was easily managed and searched using Microsoft Word's own search functions. Subsequently, how I made notes on interviews was shaped by the same themes that I had used during my archival process. Interested in how GO accomplished its tasks, I sought information about specific skills, rationales for approaches, relationships with individuals, organizations, applications, the creations of materials, and establishing positions.

I approached GO as a case study, endeavouring to grasp its "particularity and complexity" as a single case; to "understand its activity within important circumstances" from its founding through to its organizational peak.¹⁰⁶ The case study approach produces "context dependent knowledge", is necessary to (my) becoming a "virtuoso expert", to speak with authority about GO.¹⁰⁷ Only through an experience of many cases though, can one move from being beginner to expert. So as a caveat I point out my case study took me some distance towards being a GO-expert but only part way towards expertise in the lesbian and gay field.

¹⁰⁶ R. Stake, *The Art of the Case Study Research*, Sage, Thousand Oak, CA, 1995, pp. XI.

¹⁰⁷ Flyvbjerg is speaking of the benefits to learning, accrued when one moves beyond mere rule-governed, context-independent knowledge. This elevates student to the level of expert or virtuoso. Flyvbjerg references Bourdieu's (1977) description of how over time and with work, rule-governed beginners grow into fluid performance virtuosos (B. Flyvbjerg. 'Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol., 12, no. 2, 2006, pp. 221-22).

Case studies generate “thick descriptions” through which I hoped to convey a sense of what GO was.¹⁰⁸ Speaking to the work of Geertz (1973), Stake (1995) noted thick descriptions cannot rely solely on describing objective complexity but must also consider the “particular perceptions of the actors”.¹⁰⁹ Thus my study relied on qualitative narratives drawn from GO’s archival records, media reports and face-to-face interviews. Case studies often produce, and rely on, a substantial quantity of narrative to reveal the “complexities and contradictions of real life”. It is daunting or impossible to then summarize these into formulas or theories. While some see this as a weakness of case study research, Stakes believes (as do I), “particularly thick and hard-to-summarize” narratives reveal the richness of the object of study, one not easily or simply described. Why choose GO? Owing to my own interest in the history of lesbian and gay life in Ottawa, one in which GO played a role, I wanted to know more about it, making mine an “intrinsic case study”.¹¹⁰ Additionally GO research might lead to insights into something larger, namely the struggle of lesbians and gays in Ottawa and Canada. Therefore this is also an “instrumental case study” undertaken to answer a specific question: how did GO do it?¹¹¹

Case study data analysis often relies on triangulation, wherein a variety of sources act to confirm or refute findings. As much as possible, findings from of face-to-face

¹⁰⁸ Stake 1995, p. 39; Geertz’s term ‘thick description’ is borrowed from the work of Gilbert Ryle. Used originally to define “the kind of intellectual effort” fundamental to creating anthropological ethnography, the term is commonly applied to rich, detailed, contextual etc., qualitative research descriptions See: C, Geertz, *Thick Description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture*. In Hypergeertz, 1973, viewed on 2011, http://hypergeertz.jku.at/GeertzTexts/Thick_Description.htm.

¹⁰⁹ Stake 1995, pp. 42-3; Geertz, 1973.

¹¹⁰ Stake 1995, pp. 112-15.

¹¹¹ Flyvbjerg, 2006, pp. 229-39. As general advice Flyvbjerg (pp. 213) offers that when identifying a critical case it is best to seek out “most likely or least likely” cases. Critical cases are more likely to either “clearly confirm or irrefutably falsify propositions and hypotheses”.

interviews were compared against GO archival records and media accounts. During interviews, interviewees were asked to comment on others' accounts to verify or refute them and/or add further information. Generally the accounts offered by different interviews were highly similar. When compared against archival and media sources, their consistency and accuracy was generally confirmed, adding to my level of confidence in the picture that was emerging. All the interviews considered historical events. It soon became clear that over time memories changed, especially the emotional aspects of memories. For example, interviewees could not remember being as angry as archival records suggested they were. Past slights and hurts, years later, seemed less powerful. As years passed, emotional peaks and valleys appear to have flattened out. Therefore my attempts to discern emotional content, to get a sense of 'how it felt,' was difficult. Memories were clearest concerning actions taken, things done rather than how they felt. Finally, as activists, GO members engaged in calculated emotional displays, appearing to be deeply angry, hurt etc. when they were not, in order to secure some advantage. Determining the sincerity or veracity of the emotional content from archival records was thus problematic. Having reviewed my theoretical approach and methodology I turn now to consider my findings.

Chapter Three: GO's 'home birth' and first steps

In this chapter, I present a narrative describing the period from August 1971 through to the fall of 1972, GO's foundational year. I review GO's organizational first steps to highlight areas of interest that I will consider in subsequent chapters. Throughout the chapter, I situate GO within Canada's lesbian and gay movement. Here I begin to characterize the forms of capital members brought to GO, the capital GO amassed in its first year and note the important social relationships GO drew on or established. I chart GO's initial efforts to stake out a position within an emerging field of lesbian and gay organizations and its forays into different fields of practice in Ottawa. The point at which I chose to end this chapter is an arbitrary one; not one GO's executive had identified as significant. I chose this point because after its first year, GO had established most of its areas of interest. It had a clear structure for governance, facilitated regular meetings, hosted its first community dances, began publishing its newsletter *GO Info*, opened its 'GO Centre', and facilitated the founding of a student group at Ottawa's Carleton University, GO's Carleton Section. While facing initial stresses owing to differences over competing forms of habitus, it came to establish a field position and habitus ensuring its perception as a credible lesbian and gay organization. Although a new player to the game GO's ability to play was immediately clear, so too was its desire to change how the game was played.

Gays of Ottawa's birth in 1971 was the result of national and local influences. A Canadian lesbian and gay liberation movement was emerging. The August 'We Demand' rally on Parliament Hill had dramatically illustrated this. Some in Ottawa believed the city should take part in this new movement. Ottawa was a conservative city due in no

small way to the overwhelming presence of the federal government, whose federal civil service was its dominant employer, one scrutinized by an RCMP obsessed with rooting out homosexuals. Additionally, the era's public sentiments towards homosexuality were highly negative. Thus many Ottawa lesbians and gays led low key, if not invisible, lives. When GO member Barry Deeprise moved to Ottawa, everyone "*knew somebody, who was fired...when you hear about 400-600 men in the community, [it's] no wonder the community fled back of the closet*".¹ As a field, Ottawa's internal conditions were not especially supportive of lesbian and gay organizing. Similarly in other locales lesbian and gay organizations would have to contend with their fields' unique conditions. For example, founders of the Memphis Gay Coalition, Memphis, TN., had to contend with the effects of "Southern Culture". While 'Southerners' appreciated "people doing good" they preferred they do so "without threatening the status quo". They particularly "drew the line at social and political activism", exactly the kind of work the Gay Coalition proposed.² In Ottawa in 1971 however, had grown tired of Ottawa's stifling small-town atmosphere and omnipresent RCMP-inspired 'closetry' namely, its conditions. For them the 'We Demand' rally' had been a revelation and a call to act.

On September 21st, 1971, nine gay men (Paul Wise, Reg Turcotte, Terrance Reichey, Charlie Hill, Maurice Bélanger, Phillip Bianco, Michael Black, Jacques Hoffman and Lawrence Browne) met at Black and Bélanger's home to discuss Ottawa's need for a gay organization.³ They believed the city desperately needed a group to

¹ Barry Deeprise.

² Buring 1996, pp. 114.15.

³ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972-82-017/-17 – Minutes: Sept. 21, 1971. There are references to individuals first meeting on September 14. Possibly a 'second' first meeting took place to allow Hill to attend (McLeod 1996, p.78).

provide something akin to gay community. 'We Demand' rally posters had informed lesbians and gays, 'you are not alone', urging them to 'demand your rights'. Charlie Hill, who had helped found the University of Toronto Homophile Association (UTHA) in 1969, had spoken at the Rally in support of demands presented by the August 28th Gay Day Committee.⁴ The demands presented at the Rally, coming after the decriminalization of homosexuality, were meant to "present gays and lesbians in ways that would bring about a more favourable public attitude".⁵

Film footage of the Rally shows Charlie Hill standing under an umbrella in the rain, his hand shaking as he reads his text. Years later this shaking was seen as evidence that Hill feared being dismissed from a civil service job. While this is a romantic image, at the time Charlie Hill was a university student employed at the National Gallery of Canada. Hill's shaking was more prosaic, "*that's because it was cold...it was pouring rain. What I remember most was it was pouring rain*". As to the Rally, "*it was sort of bad theatre. In fact there was practically no one on the Hill...it was [a] Saturday*". His chief concern was where to "*find lodging for people.... _____ stayed over at my step-mother's place; they were away. And I remember an Ottawa Journal journalist trying to get an interview and I was torn...what was my first responsibility? Give an interview or get these people back where I was staying?*" Describing himself as knowing

⁴ These demands had come from the We Demand brief the Committee submitted to parliament on Aug. 21, 1971. They formed the core lesbian and gay movement agenda for the next several years, specifically criminal code reforms, ending discrimination in housing and private sector employment and making lesbians and gays eligible for employment at *all levels* of in the public service (Warner 2002, p. 76). Toronto Gay Action had organized the rally which was attended by "two hundred lesbian and gay men" (Kinsman 1987 p.181). Most attendees were from outside Ottawa. Smith (p.3) puts the number at over two hundred with attendees from Vancouver, Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and Waterloo. According to McLeod (1996, p.77) about 100 people marched on Parliament Hill for forty minutes in the pouring rain.

⁵ Nash 2005, p. 188.

very early on he was gay, Hill did concede the Rally might have made him nervous as it “was still ‘something’, but I don’t remember being particularly nervous”.⁶

Charlie Hill’s past involvement with UTHA and public participation in the Rally gave him credibility with attendees at GO’s first September meeting. Eager to set up a group they sought his counsel.⁷ Being *so out* was enormously courageous. Yet Hill knew well the price of internalized homophobia. For him, “*there was obviously lot of ingrained hatred, a lot of guilt and fear of alienation. All the usual crap of coming out...part of the whole process of being involved in gay liberation was sort of a throwing off of that stuff from me. It was very much a learning process*”. So Hill was not easily dissuaded by those with a conservative approach to change for lesbians and gays. At the September meeting Hill’s liberal outlook placed him in conflict with conservative attendees such as Lawrence Browne. However, while he used gay liberation language, Hill considered himself and his circle reformist, not revolutionary. “*We were liberals, we were not radicals...we weren’t going to demolish the church and state, we were going to reform it*”.⁸

Hill’s ‘out there’ status clashed with Browne who advocated low-key action. Charlie Hill’s past experiences were with homophile-style organizations which should have aligned him more not less, with Browne. However, now the kind of homophile approach with which Hill was familiar was giving way to liberationist notions of sexuality, sex roles, gender, and the need for substantive social change. The homophile

⁶ Charlie Hill; Interviewed on: November 15, 2007. Hill states: “*I had known I was gay since 12 and active since 13...Certainly my parents knew quite early. Actually when I came back from France in 1963 I came out to them*”.

⁷ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Document: “On September 21, 1971”.

⁸ Charlie Hill.

organizations with which Hill was familiar were assimilationist, believing that by educating society about homosexuality society would come to welcome their social integration.⁹

Struggles between homophiles and liberationists, like the clash between Hill and Browne would be a key characteristic of Canada's lesbian and gay movement for much of the seventies. Moreover Churchill adds that in the late sixties and early seventies, clashes within liberationist groups "*between 'radicals' and 'reformists'*" were commonplace. Just as similar lesbian and gay movements emerged in North American, United Kingdom and Australia, so too would similar points of conflict, owing I suggest to the commonalities between the available capital and habitus.¹⁰ However, the divergence of views between Hill and Browne did not stymie them from meeting again on Oct. 5th 1971 to consider a group name and a constitution.¹¹

Perhaps due to Hill's influence, or because all were pragmatists at heart, they agreed to adopt and revise UTHA's existing constitution. Minutes from this meeting indicated that UTHA's constitution was itself based on one from a U.S. organization.¹² Possibly this organization was the Student Homophile League which Jerald Moldenhauer had helped found at Cornell University in 1968. After which Moldenhauer moved to Toronto becoming a founding member of UTHA along with Hill.¹³ Using a ready-made

⁹ Nash 2005, p. 119.

¹⁰ Churchill, p. 286. See: Adam, 1995.

¹¹ Until February 1972 the GO's governing body met weekly and then every two weeks.

¹² CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972-82-017/-17 – Minutes: Oct. 5, 1971.

¹³In his article on early gay organizing on U.S. campuses Beemyn discusses at length, Moldenhauer's activities at Cornell (B Beemyn 'The Silence is Broken: A history of the first lesbian, gay and bisexual college student groups' *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2003, pp.12). See also D.

constitution made good use of cultural capital. However, owing to UTHA's homophile-roots, the language used in its constitution reflected homophile thinking, the cultural value of which declined as gay liberation thinking came to the fore. Thus the preamble of GO's first constitution sounded decidedly non-liberationist, stating it was, "dedicated to educating the community about homosexuality, working to combat discrimination against homosexuality, and bringing about a social and personal acceptance of homosexuality".¹⁴

Nonetheless, GO's quick recognition of the value of a constitution, demonstrated its immediate commitment to a credible, organizational habitus, manifested in constitutional governance and recording of meeting minutes, etc. Ergo there was no discussion about *needing* a constitution, or keeping minutes, etc. Reflecting their collective habitus—such things were a given. Denis LeBlanc, who joined GO late in 1972, characterized this habitus by stating, "*we weren't so Left in Ottawa at that time to even consider becoming a collective*".¹⁵ Marie Robertson, who joined in 1975, recalled GO's early choice of governance model. It was "*the only structure that we knew...as opposed to a collective. It would seem democratic and fair and accountable. And accountability was really important to us...I think that we felt very accountable to the community to be doing things properly*".¹⁶ LeBlanc believes that because many of those who attended GO meetings and/or served on its board were public servants,

Churchill, Chapter 6: 'foreign bodies in the polity: American expatriates and the history of the lesbian and gay movement in Toronto, 1965-1977, pp. 282-348.

¹⁴ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Oct. 13, 1971; CGLA, File No.: 1982-017/01A. File Name: Constitution n.d. – 82-17/01 09, Document: G.O. Gays of/D'Ottwa) G.O. Constitution.

¹⁵ Denis LeBlanc; interviewed on: October 12, 2007.

¹⁶ Marie Robertson; interviewed on: October 6, 2007.

organizationally and in terms of governance, GO was a product of their combined organizational knowledge, namely organizational habitus and cultural capital.¹⁷

There had been no disagreement over governance but liberals and conservatives disagreed on group names. Liberals at the Oct. 5th meeting insisted the organization's character had to "come out in the open...in the name". Including words such as 'gay', 'homosexual' or 'homophile' was essential. Conservatives were opposed, demanding the name "exclude all references to our sexuality in the name". The conflict reflected liberal's desire to capitalize on the symbolic value of being gay or at least, homosexual-identified. Conservatives saw value in a circumspect homophile-identity. They endorsed names that did not alienate closeted individuals, while liberals appealed to nascent gay liberationists. As a compromise it was decided that any name had to form a not-too-revealing acronym, like the University of Toronto's, UTHA or the Gay Liberation Front's, GLF.¹⁸ Debates continued at the October 13 meeting. The conservatives put forth names that reflected a *closeted* mindset, for example the 'ByTown Discussion Group', 'Nepean Society', and 'Ottawa Discussion Group'. Liberals pushed for an *out* with the, 'Community Homophile Association of Ottawa', 'hommes d'ottawa / Men of Ottawa', 'Gay Ottawa Action' and 'Ottawa Gay Alliance'. Finally, by unanimous vote, Gays of Ottawa/d' Ottawa with its comfortably neutral acronym GO, was provisionally accepted.

Gays of Ottawa choice of a gay-identifying name rather than a homophile one was in keeping with a wider North American trend. In her research on San Francisco's

¹⁷ Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁸ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Oct. 5, 1971.

early lesbian and gay community, Armstrong describes the 1971-1973 period as marking the “crystallization of the gay identity movement”. Groups that formed then often used “bold sexual identity terminology in organizational names,” emphasizing the growing importance of public expressions of gay pride and gay identity. Particularly after 1972, Armstrong found most U.S. lesbian and gay organizations signalled gay identity and/or gay-function through their name.¹⁹ In Canada, Kinsman notes homophile-identified organizing declined prior to the 1969 decriminalization of homosexuality. An examination of names in use after 1969 shows a clear decline in homophile identifiers.²⁰ In 1971 eleven Canadian gay-identified groups emerged, compared with seven non-gay-identified.²¹ While GO’s members had compromised, their name choice revealed that in a struggle between liberals and conservatives, the liberals had won control of the field.

On October 19, GO affirmed “as far as possible, [it would be] bilingual in all our operations”.²² Its name choice was apt. For Paul-François Sylvestre, “*that GO was ‘Gays of Ottawa’ and ‘Gai d’ Outaoais was an asset...’GO Centre, Centre GO’. It helped the whole bilingual thing. You didn’t have to constantly translate it. GO Info was*

¹⁹ Armstrong, 2000, pp. 100-01.

²⁰ Kinsman (1987 p. 181) found homophile-style organizing existed in Canada before the decriminalization of homosexuality, but its “fragmented character” undermined its future viability. Many such groups did not form until after decriminalization, which had come shortly before the pivotal New York Stonewall riots. Thus gay liberation in Canada did not take hold until a few years after it does in the U. S. Kinsman believes this was due to the “relative weakness [Canadian] gay and lesbian networks”. As a result homophile-style organizing dominates the lesbian and gay field in the early seventies.

²¹ Neither gay men’s groups *Spearhead* formed in Toronto 1970 nor the *Iron Cross Motorcycle Club*, formed in Montreal in 1972 had gay-identifying names. Nor did the *Ottawa Knights* formed in 1975 (McLeod 1996, p.48-113; 246). All three were socio-sexual organizations for leather and denim aficionados. Their opting for a non-gay moniker is interesting in that leather men through their sexualized dress and overt sexuality, together with drag queens, were often regarded as the bravest members of the lesbian and gay movement. At New York’s Stonewall riots in 1969, it was a crowd largely composed of leather men and drag queens which fought police. Yet here leather groups eschew gay names, possibly reflecting theirs was an agenda focused on sexual pleasure not politics.

²² CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Oct. 19, 1971.

GO Info".²³ Reflecting on the decision, David Garmaise said it reflected local (field) conditions. *"Well we believed...that our audience was English and French and we needed to do that. Not because we were the nation's capital, I don't think. We were thinking of our local audience"*.²⁴ Charlie Hill's take on bilingualism differed: *"Oh that comes from my Canadian government experience and the fact that I had a desire, and I spoke French"*. He remembers no opposition to being bilingual, as *"Most of the people had some French or were bilingual"*.²⁵ That many GO members were bilingual speaks to their cultural capita. Located in close proximity to Hull, Québec across the river, Ottawa was home to a Francophone population which imbued GO with capital rare among lesbian and gay groups outside Québec.

The federal government's Official Languages Act had come into force in September 1969 and the government moved rapidly to make its bureaucracy bilingual. I wondered if GO benefited from bilingual lesbians and gays drawn to Ottawa for work with the government, who then joined GO. I found no evidence of a wave of French speakers moving to Ottawa for this reason. Denis LeBlanc did move to Ottawa though because, *"I'm bilingual. Pierre Trudeau was in government, and they had these huge translation jobs to do. I was a translation clerk hired to translate all the forms. I became involved GO right away, by November I was on the executive. All I wanted was a job for a time because...I got involved with GO right away"*. However, for Denis LeBlanc, GO's bilingualism was unimportant. *"French was not my issue. I frankly didn't care. I am*

²³ Paul-François Sylvestre; Interviewed on : Octobre 30, 2007. CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Oct. 13, 1971.

²⁴ David Garmaise; Interviewed on: September 11, 2007.

²⁵ Charlie Hill.

*clearly bilingual, English is my second language. But that's not my issue...I was a gay activist".*²⁶

As a volunteer organization, GO would continually struggle to consistently operate bilingually. For example, in November 1974 the membership censured the executive for not having policy proposals translated for a general meeting.²⁷ However, GO's intentions were sincere. In late 1975 when Paul-François Sylvestre joined GO, the first person he met was fellow francophone, Yvon Thieverge. Born in Windsor's Essex County, Sylvestre identified as Franco-Ontarien. Thieverge, born in Sault Ste Marie, was a Québec separatist and appears to have been the GO member most passionate about language. In January 1975, Yvon proposed that GO's name be changed to Association of Gays d'Ottawa/Hull. Denis LeBlanc, for whom language was secondary, counter-suggested Gays of Ottawa / Gays d'Ottawa. Members defeated Yvon's proposed name 75 to 28.²⁸

Reflecting back on the language issue Sylvestre pointed out that while key players, Denis LeBlanc, Charlie Hill and David Garmaise spoke French, GO "*was a mix...but it was very unilingual...not unilingual French*". Gays of Ottawa welcomed a relationship with Hull's French-speaking community but this never materialized. While

²⁶ Denis worked translating government forms. "*We went from building to building finding all the English forms...translating and cataloguing them*". All forms were to be bilingual after 1973, so "*they hired 50 clerks. Mostly university people...it was a mind-numbing job. Especially translating the department of defense catalogues...technical translation basically, it paid the bills*". Given RCMP anxiety over the homosexual 'threat' to national security, it was ironic Denis required no security clearance to translate catalogues itemizing (literally) Canada's defence machinery.

²⁷ CLGA, GO, File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO General Mtg Min – 1973-1975, Nov. 19, 1975, General Meeting Min.

²⁸ CLGA, GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes 82-015/(), Jan, 5, 1975, Exec Mtg Min & Jan. 12, 1975; CLGA, GO, File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO General Mtg Min – 1973-1975, Jan. 14, 1975, General Meeting Minutes.

attending the October 1974 NGRC meeting in Québec City, Sylvestre was asked if he represented Gays of Ottawa or Gaies de Outaouais. This was, “because some people in Québec didn’t feel GO was really a both-sides-of-the-river [organization]. There was always a bit of friction with the Montréal guys” over language.²⁹

In November 1975 Yvon Thieverge’s ‘Francophobia’ essay was published in *GO Info*.³⁰ In it he drew a parallel between “francophobic francophones” for whom being French was part of their social not professional life and “homophobic homosexuals” who were homosexual at night and closeted at work. Thieverge believed English members were culpable or “guilty [for] the non-participation of francophones”. This ‘majority’ and by inference the GO executive, had failed to “create a more favourable atmosphere for their participation”. Thieverge pushed GO to publicly state its support for Québec self-determination.³¹ Paul-François recalls, “Yes, Yvon brought that up...no one else would have. Denis was proud of being an Acadian but did not want to flaunt it”.³² In November 1975 Yvon succeeded having a Parti Québécois meeting pass a motion to establishing a committee to address gay oppression and seek amendments to Québec’s Human Rights Code. When ultimately defeated Yvon took this as a sign the “party was not ready to talk about it”.³³

²⁹ Paul-François Sylvestre.

³⁰ Y Thieverge, ‘Francophobia’, *GO Info*, no. 6, 1975, p. 7.

³¹ See: Body Politic, ‘Editorial: Oui and us...’ *Body Politic*, no. 64, 1980, p.8. Ultimately Quebec self-determination would be endorsed by the larger movement.

³² Paul-François Sylvestre. (CLGA, GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes 82-015/(), Jan, 5, 1975, Exec Mtg Min & Jan. 12, 1975). On January 14, 1975, the membership defeated Yvon’s proposed name change, 75 to 28 (CLGA, GO, File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO General Mtg Min – 1973-1975, Jan. 14, 1975, General Meeting Minutes).

³³ *Body Politic*, ‘New Briefs: PQ Convention Withholds Support’, *Body Politic*, no. 22, 1976, p. 7; CLGA, GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-01/01A, File Name: General Meeting Minutes 1975 82-017/01 06, Nov. 25, 1975 General Meeting Min.

Simultaneous with GO's affirming its bilingualism in October, it held its first election. Reg Turcotte was elected Treasurer with Paul Wise and Maurice Belanger sharing the position of Chair. Described as 'provisional,' elections occurred despite a dwindling membership. Michael Black and Philip Bianco had recently withdrawn. In a subsequent letter Bianco wrote "I have withdrawn from all deliberations of that coven (sic), and wish to inform you in formal terms, that I have ceased to be an adherent or follower of your flock's doctrines". Bianco believed his "sensible suggestions were brushed aside as nonsense," revealing ongoing philosophical divisions in the group. He wished all record of his participation stricken. In response Terrence Reichey stated, records "must state the facts... [as]...laid down in the parliamentary procedure". Such was GO's commitment to its organizational habitus.³⁴

After receiving donations of \$5 from each member, GO opened its first bank account on Oct. 19th 1971.³⁵ When founded, GO joined a growing national LGF but it was not Ottawa's first gay group. Not long before GO's founding the Canadian Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CCHR) had folded. Formed in Ottawa in 1965 as the Committee on Social Hygiene, it was one of Canada's first organizations supporting changing homosexuality's legal status and raising awareness.³⁶ Operating in an era of

³⁴ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Oct. 19, 1971; CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Letter: Phillip Bianco to GO.

³⁵ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Oct. 19, 1971.

³⁶ Warner, p. 45. The Council was composed of gay federal civil servants and a number of supportive heterosexual doctors, psychiatrists, and clergy. Its creation followed a path first taken in the U.S. In July 1964 homosexual activists and Methodist, Protestant Episcopal, United Church of Christ and Lutheran clergy formed San Francisco's Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH). The CRH was instrumental in establishing groups in cities such as Boston, Milwaukee, Washington, DC and Winnipeg, Canada (One: National Gay Archives 2008 p.4-5); See: Lesbian and Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

intense anxiety about RCMP investigations, the few public servants who joined, all feared for their jobs.³⁷ Eager to learn from the Council's experience, GO co-chair Maurice Belanger met with former members, Mr. Dicks, of the Anglican Diocese and Reverend Playfair, St. George's Anglican Church, in November 1971. They informed Belanger philosophical clashes among Council executives led to its demise. Informed of GO's aspirations, Rev. Playfair offered St. George's church hall for meetings and community dances.³⁸

Playfair's supportive attitude was not unique. Near the end of 1971 GO benefited from a relationship a member had with Ottawa's Roman Catholic Diocese which offered GO use of its Pastoral Centre's printing press. Charlie Hill recalled, "*Oh yes...that might have been Maurice [Belanger] he worked for the Roman Catholic Church; for the labour division down by the headquarters by the cathedral*".³⁹ The press allowed GO to produce *GO Info* and other materials more easily and soon it began advertising via *Ottawa Citizen's* classifieds. Respondents were sent copies of GO's constitution, history and letter of introduction, making a printing capacity important. Clearly GO was amassing cultural capital and social capital as a result of its relationships with other organizations, even those we might not think were open to gays in the seventies.

Religious Studies Network, "Online Exhibitions: Council on Religion and the Homosexual 2009; Kinsman 1987 p.153).

³⁷ Kinsman & Gentile, 2010, pp. 131.

³⁸ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Nov. 2, 1971. Kinsman (1987 p.153) writes the Council folded in 1967, largely owing to the personal struggles of key organizer Gary Nichols, lack of cohesion among members and a lack of success in changing attitudes among any churches save for the Anglicans. The receptiveness of Canadian Anglican churches was noteworthy. In 1976 its magazine *The Canadian Churchmen*, devoted eight pages to a "very positive" discussion of gay issues, the editorial advocating an end to discrimination (Headon 1977 p.15).

³⁹ Charlie Hill; CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Nov. 23, 1971.

In early November of that year GO sent out a press release announcing a “New Gay Organization Has Been Born”, to local mainstream, lesbian and gay media and Canadian and U.S. homophile groups. It noted how few had heard of the Aug. 28th 1971, Parliament Hill protest as there was “no organization in this city to tell gays of the Rally”. Ottawa gays lacked a “collective body to air their grievances; hence, each dissatisfied gay was alone; an island of discontent”. Gays of Ottawa hoped to surpass the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, providing activities that “encompass as broad a sphere as possible for all gays in the Ottawa area—education, legal, medical, religious and social”. Here we can see GO using language, namely the term ‘gays’ to distinguish itself from the Council, aligning the organization with gay liberation.

Keenly aware of the uneasy relationship between the RCMP and lesbian and gay civil servants the press release said GO wanted to “dispel the fear which permeates the very fibre of gays in Ottawa”. It would be cautious. Gays of Ottawa was not a “radical, quasi-revolutionary, militant organization”; therefore “we must use different tactics”.⁴⁰ The dual dilemma facing closeted lesbian and gay civil servants was something GO understood. Were their sexuality to become known, they risked being labelled deviant. The RCMP believed that those remaining closeted were open to blackmail, making them a security risk.⁴¹ Gays of Ottawa critiqued the RCMP’s approach but at heart it was a liberal, reformist organization and its press release signalled above all, it would play by

⁴⁰ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972-82-017/-17 – Minutes: Nov. 10, 1971; CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01S – Gays of Ottawa, File Name: History – 1982-017/01 10 – Press Release “New Gay Organization Has Been Born!” Nov. 5, 1971.

⁴¹ Kinsman 1987, p. 14. The RCMP believed homosexuals suffered from a character weakness making them susceptible to Soviet exploitation, namely blackmail. Kinsman’s (1998 p.1-2) study of the RCMP’s purge of homosexuals from Canada’s civil service found, “not a shred of Canadian evidence of any blackmail” ever occurring.

the rules. Eager to accrue credibility (symbolic capital) GO did not challenge (too much) the field's existing, albeit uneasy, status quo.

At the end of November 1971, GO prepared for a first general meeting in December. Lacking economic capital, GO sought membership fees. John Duggan believes a formal membership provided a pool of people from which to “*build a network...so that when something happened, an issue happened, we could phone these people*”. Here Duggan clearly frames the move to establish a membership as a method of establishing a network of actors that GO could use. Such networks whether formal or informal had long been a “fundamental means of social interaction” for lesbian and gay community, as conduits for information, ideas, styles and “opportunities to learn to transgress”.⁴² However, GO’s primary rationale for creating a membership system was a means to raise funds: “*people who wanted to give [GO] money...so we did the membership thing*”.⁴³ Marie Robertson believed a formal membership necessary “*so we could elect the board. That was part of the whole thing you had to have a membership*”.⁴⁴ The emphasis on membership also reflected GO’s organizational habitus. It was a given that credible groups had members. While it could take donations GO could not provide tax receipts. For years this limited its access to economic capital and denied it the symbolic capital arising from accreditation by the state, for example, as a registered charity.

⁴² J Hill, ‘Learning to Transgress: A socio-historical conspectus of the American gay life world as a site of struggle and resistance’, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1996, pp. 259.

⁴³ John Duggan; interviewed on: October 23, 2007. CLGA GO File No.: 1982 – 017 / 01A File Name: GO General Mtg Notes & Min – 1972-1973 – 82-017/01 04 – Minutes: Oct. 17, 1972.

⁴⁴ Marie Robertson.

Having no money was already undermining its commitment to bilingual services. Volunteer translators, some of whom were professional translators, were not always available. One such volunteer, Paul-François Sylvestre, recalled, *“I think also Yvon Thieverge did some also. We were the two Franco-Ontarians who could translate and write in French without making mistakes. I’m a writer now so I think the seed was already there and I had done some newsletters for the Franco-Ontarien Association. I had some skills in writing, proofreading and translations”*.⁴⁵ Many believed Denis LeBlanc did most of GO’s translation but he rarely did any. Of GO’s volunteer translators few publicly associated with the organization. Nevertheless, any assistance was welcome. According to Charlie Hill: *“I think that was it from the start...everybody was ‘out’ as much as they wanted to be and made the decision for themselves. I don’t think we had any desire to force people to do things...”* This ethic was not unique to GO. Hill recalled, *“that, was my experience in Toronto, the same thing...the groups I was involved with. There was no feeling that you had to prove yourself to the group or society at large”*, for example having to be *out* in order to participate.⁴⁶

At the first general meeting on December 14th 1971 various committees were established, i.e., library, social activities, finance and research etc.⁴⁷ Establishing committees was a strategy based on Hill’s experiences with UTHA and the Community Homophile Association of Toronto (CHAT) which UTHA members had formed. *“Well we were trying to get things done...if it had been less structured”*. Without committees,

⁴⁵ Paul-François Sylvestre.

⁴⁶ Charlie Hill.

⁴⁷ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Dec. 1, 1971. The research committee was to scan newspapers for anything gay-related. In April GO formed a media committee which would establish *GO Info* (CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Apr. 20, 1972).

*“it [the group] may have gone away bit by bit. It was my experience in Toronto that’s what really drove [a committee structure]...it was task oriented”.*⁴⁸ LeBlanc concurs as to Hill’s influence: *“with [Charlie’s] input...the original rules within [GO] changed, we then had some structure as opposed to having very little structure before”.* Not wanting to make Hill seem rigid Denis LeBlanc added, *“Charlie wasn’t much of a structuralist but he understood that in organizations you have to have some structure. You can’t leave it completely open and loose...creates too many problems”.*⁴⁹

The emerging governing structure revealed a shared habitus. As Denis LeBlanc recalled, *“I think it’s because of the nature of the community, most of the people who attended the meetings or who were members at the time, were public servants. From our knowledge it was Robert’s Rules and ordinary boards and committees. With an executive, president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and then members at large if you need it”.* As Denis LeBlanc has said, *“we weren’t so Left...to even consider becoming called a collective”.*⁵⁰ It was incompatible with GO’s habitus. This aptly illustrates Bourdieu’s description of how habitus “continuously transforms necessity into virtue” instituting a choice that accords with conditions.⁵¹

Gays of Ottawa’s membership was a collective product of individual’s past experiences with hierarchical groups and workplaces thus they chose what was for them, the only credible governance structure. Speaking to GO’s structure Charlie Hill

⁴⁸ Charlie Hill.

⁴⁹ Denis LeBlanc; In May 1972 GO executive member Reg Turcotte suggests the executive have ultimate control over committee decisions and actions but GO decided to keep things more informal. Adding layers of control would only create work for the Executive (CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: May 3, 1972).

⁵⁰ Denis LeBlanc.

⁵¹ Bourdieu, 1977 pp. 170.

remembers, *"It all followed from the Toronto example...I think...it's how you run an organization. Maurice [Belanger] may have done the same thing. I think he came from a background of organizations too. We were all functionaries"*.⁵² Having been shaped by a particular organizational habitus may have insulated GO from conflicts besetting other lesbian and gay movement groups. For example, in November 1972, CHAT was struggling to respond to its lesbian members' desire for better representation and involvement. Only after a highly confusing and contentious meeting to consider equal representation on CHAT's board, did it begin using Robert's Rules at a December 14 meeting. Put in place earlier, the Rules might have assisted with votes over a divisive issue.⁵³

Gays of Ottawa *had* adopted Robert's Rules but was flexible with them. John Duggan remembers, *"Yea we did have some meetings with Rules of Order but we also had 'rules of order'. But you know in terms of any organization, you had to have a very clear way of arriving at decisions...supported by a majority of the members"*.⁵⁴ Clearly a hierarchical organization GO nonetheless strove for consensus, removing from its second constitution (the first developed *in-house*) a UTHA directive stating, "All decisions made by the executive must be unanimous". Barry Deeprise said, *"oh there was always consensus...I don't ever remember counting votes. Now and again there might have been, but my sense was there was pretty much always consensus"*.⁵⁵ Ian MacLennan attributed this capacity for reaching consensus to a deep familiarity between

⁵² Charlie Hill.

⁵³ H Spiers, 'CHAT Gets a Constitution'. *Body Politic*, no. 2, 1972, p. 14. The conflict at CHAT foreshadowed future struggles within the movement over how lesbians were to work in a movement dominated by gay men's issues; See: Fox, 1972.

⁵⁴ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017 Cmt Min Apr 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Dec. 18, 1972; John Dugan.

⁵⁵ Barry Deeprise.

GO's core members. We "hung around each other enough that you could suss [sic] out how something would be approached, shall we say. In my time there, I don't remember any major divisive issue".⁵⁶

After its general meeting GO sent letters to Ottawa social service agencies—a first foray into another field. Primarily it wanted to assess how welcoming these services were to lesbians and gays. Their assessment did not claim a 'right' to services rather it assessed availability and openness, etc. Outreach to social services was a major focus during much of the seventies, through which GO forged relationships, made referrals, offered and engaged in training. While GO lacked capital equal to the agencies it contacted, its cultural capital regarding gay life was invaluable. Thus is offered agencies complete "cooperation on any matter relating to homosexuality", in essence its expertise.⁵⁷

Prior to the end of November 1971, meetings took place in members' homes. Now it accepted Rev. Playfair's offer and began bi-weekly meetings at St. George's Anglican Church. A rented office was out of reach. Hosting community dances could generate income but GO lacked funds to organize one.⁵⁸ By February 1972, GO was alternating bi-weekly executive meetings with bi-weekly general meetings. Executive meetings were business-oriented but also open, as a social opportunity. Ian MacLennan recalled GO's meeting were, "*open to anybody. More than just board members were*

⁵⁶ Ian MacLennan; Interviewed on: November 27, 2007 by telephone.

⁵⁷ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Dec. 18, 1971.

⁵⁸ It approached Ottawa's National Capital Commission (NCC) but \$90 a month was too steep (CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Dec. 21, 1971). The National Capital Commission is a federal crown corporation responsible for Ottawa's major parks, historic buildings etc. and a major landlord.

*allowed...people would come in, who were really peripheral to the organization. It was another night that the Centre was open”.*⁵⁹ The social aspect of GO meetings provided a non-threatening way to join. David Garmaise attended his first meeting in July 1972. Newly out, David Garmaise was *“well, I was petrified and participated little at meetings...after one meeting, some people came and talked to me and said ‘we’re going to the Lord Elgin for a drink; do you want to join us?’ And I did. I don’t remember the exact sequence of events but after that I was hooked”.*⁶⁰

Meetings, whether executive or of the general membership, followed a format. According to Denis LeBlanc: *“There would be some bits of business at the beginning...whatever it was, the name of the organization, making money, the Gayline, whatever business we happened to have. Business was usually fairly brief and then we went into the discussion. We talked about stuff”.*⁶¹ Gay-related discussions were consciousness-raising (CR) exercises. LeBlanc had joined GO after leaving the University of Waterloo where he learned CR, a *“common technique in the seventies”*. Having had the most experience with CR while at university, Denis LeBlanc was tasked with establishing stand-alone CR sessions but these were soon cancelled due to poor attendance.⁶²

Meetings were open to gay and straight people which reflected the era’s belief that liberation was of benefit to all. According to the influential, liberationist BP, the

⁵⁹ Ian MacLennan speaks of meetings held later at the GO Centre, but GO’s approach was well established by then.

⁶⁰ David Garmaise. The Lord Elgin Hotel was the site of a popular, unofficial gay bar.

⁶¹ Gayline: GO’s support and education phone line.

⁶² Denis LeBlanc; CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – April 1972-Nov 1972-82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Mar. 19, 1973; (CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – April 1972-Nov 1972-82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Apr. 2, 1973).

problem for gay liberation was sexism which distorted the sexuality and sexual relationships of all. Founded in 1971 the BP provided lesbians, gays and the mainstream, “one of the most visible and contentious promotions of a liberationist perspective” in Canada.⁶³ Recalling the hard liberation line North American liberationists generally espoused in the late sixties and early seventies Bronski states that anyone not regarded as “a gay liberationist...anyone who went to mob-controlled bar” was considered “unliberated”.⁶⁴ Bronski’s comment demonstrates that some in the emerging lesbian and gay community were thinking critically about the kinds of spaces the commercial scene offered them. Clearly some were not so desperate they would go mindlessly to just any place. In its ‘Program for Gay Liberation’ essay the *Body Politic* had established its liberationist credentials.⁶⁵ A “deeply rooted sexism in our society and its institutions” negatively impacted gays and straights. A gay liberation movement would ultimately win support from a “majority of straights because they too [were] oppressed by the distortion of human sexuality”. Here the BP championed the liberationist goal of releasing “human sexuality from...the bondage of the current sex / gender system” and from proscribed social roles.⁶⁶ In keeping with this sentiment, in April 1972, GO was very happy to see that one of its meetings had drawn about 35 to 40 people, including “about 10 straights”.⁶⁷

Maurice Belanger was open to heterosexuals attending but asked should they be “scattered around so that maybe they won’t take that superior or ‘doctor attitude,’

⁶³ Nash 2005, p. 120.

⁶⁴ M Bronski ‘Eros and Politicization: Sexuality, politics, and idea of community’, *Radical America*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1988, p. 47.

⁶⁵ *Body Politic*, ‘A Program for Gay Liberation’. *Body Politic*, no. 1, p. 4. 1972.

⁶⁶ Nash 2005, p. 120.

⁶⁷ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Apr. 4, 1972.

[namely by] studying people”.⁶⁸ Belanger did not say what made straights identifiable. However, at one meeting Denis LeBlanc noticed someone who *was* out of place: “*one time at St. George’s, Charlie and I spotted an RCMP officer, infiltrating. Most of us were young...long-hair types. And here’s this guy in a trench coat and suit. We’re all sitting on the floor with our legs crossed. He’s in the meeting leaning against the wall with a little notebook. He was just taking names of people*”. Hill and LeBlanc invited the gentleman to chat. “*In the end we said you know you’re really not...I mean if you’re gay come on in. But tonight, we’re not here to take down people’s names...he never came back*”.⁶⁹

By February 1972 GO’s workload was sufficient enough for it to consider applying for a federal, Opportunities for Youth Program (OYP) grant.⁷⁰ That CHAT in Toronto had received a \$16,000 grant from the federal Learning Initiatives Program (LIP) had been an influence.⁷¹ The CHAT grant funded operating a counselling line and education with church and social groups for 13 weeks.⁷² Ultimately GO declined to apply, being a “*nascent organization*” (LeBlanc), but that it considered applying attests

68 Ibid.

69 Denis LeBlanc.

70 The Opportunities for Youth program was the centrepiece of the Trudeau government’s summer youth initiative. As governments witnessed increasing student unrest at Canadian universities and high levels of unemployment, “politicians and Manpower officials [worried] that the summer months would witness large numbers of discontented youth hitchhiking across the country”. The government hoped to divert youth into “socially relevant” projects. The Local Initiatives Program (LIP) begun in 1971 addressed youth seeking work at Canada Manpower offices (s Dicerni, S ‘Towards a National Youth Employment Initiative: A case of overlapping spheres’, *Public Policy Forum*, Ottawa, 1998, p. 22. Dicerni 1998 p.22) See: D. Blake, ‘LIP and Partnership: An analysis of the local initiatives program’, *Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de Politiques*, vol. 2, no. 1 (winter), 1976, pp. 17-32.

71 Executive members, Reg Turcotte met CHAT’s George Hislop to discuss the grant (CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Feb. 14, 1972).

72 CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Feb. 8 & 14, 1972. The GO meeting minutes relay a second-hand conversation about CHAT’s LIP grant which may be inaccurate. Drawing on a variety of sources McLeod (1996, p.70) states CHAT’s grant was for \$9,000 not \$16,000. See: E. Jackson, ‘Notes from the Bagnell Closet’, *Body Politic*, no. 6, 1972, p. 3.

to its confidence and sense of entitlement.⁷³ In part the workload had grown due to outreach to local agencies and media. For example, St. John's Church wanted assistance with a forum on homosexuality. The Ottawa Distress Centre now referred homosexual callers to GO's Gayline, marking its first formal relationship with an accredited and recognized agency. Clearly GO's credibility (symbolic capital) had increased. In May 1972 Maurice Belanger underwent Distress Centre training. In turn Belanger trained 12 Centre staff that fall.⁷⁴ The relationship with the Centre evolved quickly due to the receptivity of the then executive director, Patricia Delridge.

Local media had also noticed GO. In December 1971 the *Ottawa Citizen* sought input for a piece on homosexuality. After speaking with *Citizen* Reporter Burt Heward, GO's Belanger and Turcotte reported being "favourably interviewed". However, the resulting January 1972 piece drew a mixed reaction. Heward had misquoted people. Moreover the *Citizen* had run a side story profiling Ottawa's Club Private, a gay bar which converted to a bathhouse after hours.⁷⁵ For GO bathhouses were not an issue. For John Duggan, they were "*one of the institutions of the gay community*".⁷⁶ Charlie Hill said views on the baths "*depended on what circle you moved in*". Most baths were

⁷³ Denis LeBlanc.

⁷⁴ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Apr. 4, 1972 & May 3, 1972; CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – April 1972–Nov 1972–82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Nov. 19, 1972.

⁷⁵ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Dec. 28, 1971; Jan 4 & Jan 11, 1972. The *Citizen's* story was nonetheless forwarded to Canadian movement groups as it offered a positive view of GO's organizing. However in April when the *Citizen* approached GO for a follow-up story it requested editorial control which was declined (CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Apr. 4, 1972). Subsequently GO told the *Citizen* it wished to delay a second story to give GO time to "...initiate more concrete actions" (CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: May 3, 1972).

⁷⁶ John Duggan.

“hidden away...mostly out of fear”.⁷⁷ What drew GO’s ire was how the Club Private piece perpetuated a stereotypical, hyper-sexual view of gay men. Its first interaction with mainstream media demonstrated to GO the pros and cons of a relationship.⁷⁸ As an organization, GO could not guarantee the media’s accurate coverage of its message. However, being contacted for input by mainstream media reflected its growing credibility and expertise.

Gays of Ottawa’s open courting of social services and media distinguished it from homophile-style groups pre-dating it. By making itself known to mainstream social actors GO hoped to achieve gay-liberation’s goal of social inclusion on gay terms. Gay liberation called into question fundamental concepts about sexuality, identity and gender roles, and mobilized people in a way homophiles balked at.⁷⁹ This evolution away from homophile-organizing was not always smooth, like the debate over GO’s name. Yet while GO spoke a good liberation line, it was not totally at ease with it. At a February 22

⁷⁷ Charlie Hill on Club Private: “That place was pretty alienating, cold, and not friendly. There were not that many people. The bath was temporary, [with] partitions between little cubicles. It was appalling”.

⁷⁸ Years later in July 1980 GO again criticized the *Citizen* for an article portraying gay men as hyper sexual. The *Citizen* had approached GO about an article it was writing about illicit gay sex. Resisting GO’s desire for a broader piece the *Citizen* said “the article would appear whether or not GO cooperated” (D. LeBlanc, ‘Speaking Out’, *GO Info*, no. 4, 1980, p.4). John Duggan recalls the article in question which reflected the “superficiality of the journalism at the *Ottawa Citizen*”. In its Saturday edition the *Ottawa Citizen* carried a major piece on GO, ‘Gay in the 80s’. The following Monday it “was gay sex in parks and we thought ‘Oh No, here we go again!’” Instead of responding to calls about GO’s good work the Gayline faced upset community members asking “why are they portraying this...midnight sex in parks”.

⁷⁹ Nash 2005, p. 119-20. Rosenthal points out that while homophile and liberation groups both attended to the social and affiliation needs of lesbians and gays, liberationist groups emphasized publicness and actively mobilizing people as part of a movement. Yet types of groups saw the development of affiliation among individuals as a precursor to fulfilling any of their future goals. Here the role of same-sex spaces such as bars to draw people into social networks was clear. However, publicly gay-identified bars or spaces were frowned upon by homophiles. By not seeing them as a resource, this weakened homophile’s organizational effectiveness. Homophiles believed bars drew people together but they also isolated them from the larger society homophiles wished to join and liberationists wished to change (D. Rosenthal, ‘Gay and Lesbian Political Mobilization and Regime Responsiveness in Four New York Cities’, *Urban Affairs Review*, vol. 32, no. 1, 1996, pp. 45-70).

1972, meeting, GO's executive discussed how best to use education to change attitudes in a gay movement marked by "radicalism and militancy". How to do this was put off to a future date but I found no subsequent discussions. However, by May 1972, something had changed. The GO executive declared, "After some discussion it was agreed that GO is a Gay Liberation Movement".⁸⁰ At subsequent May and June executive meetings it further distinguished GO from homophile-style organizing. Preparations for its first public community dance began. It began publishing a publicly available newsletter, *GO Info*, further signalling GO differed from homophile groups. They too had published newsletters but typically these were via secret membership lists.⁸¹ It now had a logo to be used in *GO Info*'s masthead, its letterhead and memberships cards. All of which demonstrated it had cultural capital befitting a tangible, credible organization.

At a June 1972 meeting Maurice Belanger urged GO to replace UTHA's homophile-identified constitution by developing one in-house and with its own by-laws. This task was assigned to the Steering Committee, formerly GO's Executive Committee. At Belanger's urging GO established a political action committee, its Law Reform Committee (LRC).⁸² One of its earliest acts was arranging a meeting with Michael Cassidy, NDP MPP for Ottawa-Centertown, marking its entry into the field of politics.

⁸⁰ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Feb. 22 & May 16, 1972.

⁸¹ At a June 13 1972 executive meeting it was decided a working logo was ready for the membership. *GO Info* was floated as a possible name for the newsletter (GLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: May 30, 31 & Jun. 13, 1972; CLGA GO File No.: 1982 – 017 / 01A File Name: GO Steering Cmte Min June 1972 – August 1972 – 82-017/01 03 – Minutes: Jun 26, 1972. Gays of Ottawa's Media Committee was responsible for *GO Info*. In July 1972 GO decided *GO Info* would publish monthly and bilingually. However, stories would not always appear in both languages, in the same issue. Initially 200 copies were produced monthly (CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: Media Cmte – 1972-1976 – 82-017/02 32 – Minutes: June 15, 1972).

⁸² It was here that GO formally adopted Roberts Rules (CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972–82-017/-17 – Minutes: Jun. 13, 1972).

At the August 17th 1972 meeting GO assessed Cassidy's views. He admitted knowing little about "homosexuality or gay liberation" but shared some GO concerns based "on civil libertarian grounds". *GO Info* reported GO expected "to confront other politicians on the GAY (sic) rights issue in the future".⁸³ Clearly GO believed it had sufficient credibility to establish relations with mainstream political actors.⁸⁴

GO Gets a Home

In July 1972, GO moved to open an office. Building on its relationship with Ottawa's Pestalozzi College where GO had held community dances, it submitted a brief to the College rental committee. Here GO made the case for "a distress/information centre in the name of Gays of Ottawa". Having a "physical presence in the community" was critical. The social capital gained from a tangible location was clear. Publicly occupying space in an era that preferred gays take up no space, and certainly not public space, broadcast a strong message.

In its brief to Pestalozzi, GO made it clear the college appealed to the organization because of its central location. It also noted, "We feel that Pestalozzi has sought a new lifestyle than what is currently accepted by today's society. You are

⁸³ *GO Info*, 'NDP Meet', *GO Info*, no. 2/3, 1972, p. 4.

⁸⁴ The Ontario NDP had not yet taken a stand on gay rights but it would emerge as the political party most supportive of lesbian and gay rights. Cassidy was a member of Ottawa's Unitarian Congregation. I speculate this influenced his relative openness. As a religious community, Unitarians had opposed anti-homosexual discrimination since the late sixties. In July 1974 the U.S.-based Universalist Unitarian general assembly passed a resolution calling for an end to discrimination against homosexuals and bisexuals and that congregations develop sex education programs promoting a positive view of all forms of sexuality (Universalist Unitarian Association, '*History of the Universalist Unitarian Involvement in Support of Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Transgender Rights*', In UUA, 2005, viewed on March 2011, <<http://archive.uua.org/obgltc/>>). See: Canadian Unitarian Council, '*Social Responsibility Resolutions: – Human Rights and Sexual Orientation*', In CUC, 2009, viewed on July 2011 http://www.cuc.ca/social_responsibility/sr_res_61-84.htm>.

progressive in your efforts”.⁸⁵ Pestalozzi College was an alternative student housing co-op, cum college, similar to Toronto’s Rochdale College. Rochdale opened in 1964, the first of a series of student co-ops funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Both colleges provided some courses but were primarily student residences. Designated colleges to avoid paying higher municipal property taxes, in the late sixties municipalities re-categorized them as residences. Massive tax bills caused financial strain and Pestalozzi was open to any renters. Ultimately Pestalozzi alone would eventually be 6.2 million dollars in arrears.⁸⁶

Notwithstanding a murky financial future and down-at-heel status, Pestalozzi gave GO a home. *GO Info* reported: “Gays of/d’ Ottawa now has a home—a liberation, information, and distress centre”.⁸⁷ Opening the Centre was only part of GO’s expansion that fall. Prior to the 1972 academic year, GO facilitated the formation of a gay group at Carleton University, its Carleton Section, and contributed GO materials to information packages for incoming students. In an August letter to the Student Association, David Rand, GO steering committee, described GO as a “liberation organization”, focused on education for “both straight and gay”, about homosexual issues, fighting discrimination, stereotypes etc. Its Carleton Section had an “aim of organizing Gay liberation on campus and providing a voice for gay students”. Its main purpose was helping individuals

⁸⁵ The reference to Pestalozzi’s openness to ‘a new lifestyle’ highlights its relaxed, communal-living atmosphere rather than a particular acceptance of a gay lifestyle. Generally the early lesbian and gay movement resisted labelling lesbian or gay desire, a lifestyle choice; CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02C File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02 35 – Document: Directors of Gays of Ottawa - “Distress and Information Centre” Jul 10, 1972: 1-2.

⁸⁶ D Sharpe, *Rochdale: The Runaway College*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1987, pp. 94-99. According to the Ontario Student Co-Op Association, CMHC’s decision to mortgage co-ops was based on the strong, past performance of student coops, beginning with the Guelph Campus Co-op in 1913. The 1964 legislative change that led to CMHC funding co-ops in Fredericton, London, Waterloo, Toronto, Ottawa, Kingston, Winnipeg and Edmonton (Ontario Student Co-Op Association 2009).

⁸⁷ *GO Info*, ‘The GO Centre’. *GO Info*, no. 2/3, 1972, p. 1.

overcoming “problems caused by stigma attached to homosexuality by this society”.⁸⁸ The Section was financially independent of GO but adhered to its approach. However, after its initial inception there were few records concerning the Carleton Section. In January 31, 1973 GO’s Inter-Group Communications committee told the GO executive “to clarify our relationship with Gays of Carleton”.⁸⁹ What needed clarifying is not clear.

GO’s Second Constitution

In a February 1973, letter to members, Denis LeBlanc reported GO’s first in-house constitution and bylaws had been approved by the membership in December 1972.⁹⁰ A brief review of the language found in GO’s first two constitutions, reveals that with its second constitution GO distinguishes itself from past homophile-style organizations. In the preamble of the first, UTHA-inspired constitution, the description of GO’s organizational purpose reflected homophile thinking. For example, GO was “dedicated to *educating the community* about homosexuality, working to combat discrimination against homosexuality, and bringing about a social and personal acceptance of homosexuality” (emphasis added). In GO’s second (in-house constitution), education is not emphasized in what is a richer, more complex statement of intent:

⁸⁸ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/05A File Name: Carleton University 1972 82-017/05 09 – Letter: D. Rand, GO Steering Committee to Ann Frazer, Student Association, Carleton University.

⁸⁹ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B File Name: InterGroup Communications – Ltrs Sent – 1973-1974 – 82-017/02 28 – Letter: D. LeBlanc, Chair Inter-group Committee to All our Friends in Gay Liberation, Feb. 9, 1973. Inter-Group communicated with other groups, namely gay liberation movements and “other human liberation movements, whether directly related to gay liberation or not, in order to seek out and assist in common problems”.

⁹⁰ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B File Name: InterGroup Communications – Ltrs Sent – 1973-1974 – 82-017/02 28 – Letter: D. LeBlanc, Chair Inter-group Committee to ‘All our Friends in Gay Liberation,’ Feb. 9, 1973; CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Dec. 18, 1972.

Recognizing that sexual orientation is but one facet of the complex human make-up and affirming that such orientation cannot reasonably be used as a basis for persecution, exclusion, or discrimination any more than can race, religion, sex or national origin, and in order to achieve a social and personal acceptance of homosexuality, we hereby organize and constitute the homophile liberation movement to be known as Gays of/d' Ottawa. In so doing, we claim the right to our own feelings, the right to love, the right to be persons, the right to express our individual consciences.⁹¹

The first constitution had mentioned 'rights', specifically informing "individuals of [their] moral and legal rights". The second moved beyond this 'need to inform', by using 'rights talk' to that argued for a change in social mores. Gays had an inherent 'right to love', therefore no corresponding right to deny this existed.⁹² Also GO added a clause emphasizing action on legislatively acquiring rights: "Clause VII: To secure the legislation of full civil and human rights for homosexual men and women...to advance the struggle for our liberation".⁹³ Had GO adhered to a homophile habitus, it could never have written this. The securing of 'full civil and human rights' reflected a gay liberation strategy implemented by organizations taking up positions in a new organizational field. This was a strategy for "creating gay community, for raising gay consciousness, and for bringing gays out of the closet, in short...the creation of [a new] political identity". Homophiles could neither have imagined nor supported a strategy that ran so counter to their habitus, existing field conditions and the capital they possessed.⁹⁴ Here we can see Gays of Ottawa strategically using linguistic (cultural) capital to distinguish itself from homophile organizations whose own cultural capital was losing

⁹¹ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Constitution n.d. – 82-017/01 09.

⁹² Smith 1999, p. 18-22. This 'rights-talk' reflected the gay liberation movement's challenge to dominant social codes. Here rights-talk was mobilized in arguments for legal change, as a means to achieve social change.

⁹³ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Constitution n.d. – 82-017/01 09.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 44-5.

value in the face of gay liberation. The shift that GO signals through the language of its second constitution was in keeping with the larger movement's moving away from the "assimilationist [or homophile] politics of the late sixties to the intervening liberationist perspective of the seventies".⁹⁵

"Rooted in the new social movement organizing of the sixties" gay liberation posed a "challenge to the public/private split and the politicization of sexuality and gender roles that was pioneered by feminism"⁹⁶. This challenge could be seen in Clause VII's emphasis on securing 'civil and human rights' to liberate both men and women. The debt gay liberation had to previous movements was highlighted in the November 1971 BP essay "Program for Liberation".⁹⁷ Gay liberation had emerged from "the growing anti-authoritarianism of youth, together with activist movements, especially women's liberation, and above all the inability of gay people to individually escape their oppression because of the deeply rooted sexism in our society and its institutions". Past movements had provided valuable cultural capital and recognizable ways of acting, through their protest habitus.

Each version of GO's constitutions referred to 'community' in different ways. The first spoke of working to "inform and enlighten the Ottawa community about homosexuality" a reference to an uninformed heterosexual community. In the second, GO addressed its desire to "foster a sense of community by providing opportunities for people to meet as individuals with dignity and without fear". Shifting away from enlightening a wider, heterosexual from which it sought acceptance, GO now addressed a

⁹⁵ Nash 2005, p. 119.

⁹⁶ Smith 1999, p. 44.

⁹⁷ *Body Politic*, 1, pp. 4-5.

potential lesbian and gay community whose formation it would shape. Again homophile influences give way to gay liberation.

The second constitution's aspiration for a community reflected how in the early seventies GO did not sense there was a community *out there*. At this time Denis LeBlanc cautioned, "*remember again the thought of a community was not even thought about. It was just individual persons at that point*". A community came, "*a little later, yes*" but in "*the first few years we were just organizing. We were finding out about ourselves and, the community too*".⁹⁸ In the early seventies Charlie Hill suggests lesbian and gay community existed but in the form of 'friendship groups' reflecting specific local conditions and a general state of affairs. In Ottawa "*there were masses of people who were terrified of [GO], gays and lesbians*". They wished GO would "*just shut up and [not] cause trouble. That was true in Toronto too,*" but in Ottawa there was an "*added fear for some people because of being civil servants*".⁹⁹ Ian MacLennan concurred: "*you might say there were a number of small gay communities...sort of circles of friends...pre-1968, pre-Stonewall or whatever, because of the fears, the social fears, the political fears, [and] the employment fears*".¹⁰⁰ David Garmaise remembers the media was keenly interested about the community's existence: "*we were asked to death by the media*". Unaware of the size of the community GO responded by say, "*obviously we can't speak for every single gay person in Ottawa but we were the only organized group*".¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Denis LeBlanc.

⁹⁹ Charlie Hill.

¹⁰⁰ Ian MacLennan.

¹⁰¹ David Garmaise.

Changes to GO's constitution regarding rights, gay liberation and community illustrate its changing self-concept. Coming in the latter part of 1972 I believe it reflects key personnel additions. Denis LeBlanc, a keen political thinker had moved to Ottawa in the summer of 1972. By the fall he was on the executive and GO vice president in February 1973.¹⁰² Remembering Denis LeBlanc, Marie Robertson stated, "*political action was his thing. He was brilliant as an analyst...Denis in particular had such an amazing analysis and he was a great strategist*".¹⁰³ David Garmaise too after attending a first meeting in July 1972, became deeply involved in GO. "*I was asked to man the [Gayline]...I don't remember if it was the first day but I was asked pretty quickly to be one of the staff*". Within a few months he joined GO's Law Reform Committee which was a better fit. "*The day after I came out I knew it was right, that being gay was right and I knew we had to change things. So it seemed natural for me to get involved with the Committee that was going to lobby for change*". When he joined GO, Garmaise was employed primarily as a writer, in the public relations department of Canada Post. At university he "*was involved in journalism in college for three years*".¹⁰⁴ While Garmaise was drawn to politics, his cultural capital as a writer would be of benefit to the entirety of GO.¹⁰⁵

But it was Charlie Hill's return to Ottawa from Toronto in June 1972 that appears to have had the greatest impact on GO's evolution. So strong was Hill's influence that it is commonly and erroneously believed he founded GO. David Garmaise recalls, "*I mean*

¹⁰² CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017 Cmt Min Apr 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Feb. 12, 1973.

¹⁰³ Marie Robertson.

¹⁰⁴ David Garmaise.

¹⁰⁵ For example, meetings from a February 1973 GO executive meeting record GO thanking David for getting *GO Info* ready for the next dance (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017 Cmt Min Apr 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Feb. 12, 1973). Garmaise was also a frequent contributor to the *Body Politic*.

you know...Charlie Hill was the driving force...he started GO..."¹⁰⁶ Ian MacLennan who joined in early in 1975 described how, "*the organization of GO and the way GO operated, is really, really, Charlie... Charlie was the rock, and least for me he was...just always Mr. GO, nobody else*".¹⁰⁷ Gays of Ottawa's expanding relationships with social service agencies occurs during Hill's tenure as president. Prior to moving to Ottawa, Hill had helped found UTHA, which in turn gave birth to CHAT, in which he was also involved. After UTHA's attempts to expand beyond the limits of a campus-based group failed, it formed CHAT. For a time it was Toronto's primary social service agency for lesbians and gays. Hill remembers UTHA had wanted to rent an off-campus office and establish a phone line etc., but this was not appropriate for a group mandated to serve a student population.¹⁰⁸

In July 1972, Maurice Belanger and Gaston Charpentier met with Hill and asked for his assessment of GO as an 'unbiased observer'. Overall Hill was pleased but believed it needed more promotion.¹⁰⁹ By November Hill was GO's secretary-treasurer; in February 1973 its vice president. A month later after the departure of Maurice Belanger he became president.¹¹⁰ Unusually modest, Hill denies making a dramatic contribution: "*obviously I carried through with my experiences...what I thought worked and what I thought was important...what interested me...not in a self-serving way...but it*

¹⁰⁶ David Garmaise.

¹⁰⁷ Ian MacLennan.

¹⁰⁸ Hill also recalls UTHA had encountered people from the off-campus gay community who "would not have anything to do with [UTHA] because it was a U of T group" but did not elaborate why. Hill credits community activist George Hislop as the driving force behind CHAT's success. For a thorough discussion of UTHA, see Churchill, pp. 292-302.

¹⁰⁹ CGLA GO File No.: 1982 - 017/01A File Name: GO String Cmte Min June 1972 - August 1972 - 82-017/01 03 - Minutes: Jul. 11, 1972.

¹¹⁰ *GO Info*, 'Update', *GO Info*, no. 4, 1973, p. 2; CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017 Cmt Min Apr 1972 - Nov 1972 - 82-017/01 02 - Minutes: Feb. 12, 1973.

was also other people, not just me. There was a consensus that this was very important". He did though, acknowledge that aspects of his past work provided a framework for GO: *"...a lot of what we were trying to do was based on what I'd done in Toronto...discussion groups, speakers, chatting to people about coming out, setting up the gay line...making connections with social services; calling to affirm that [GO] was there"*.¹¹¹ Not to diminish the contributions of others but GO's increasing sophistication during Hill's tenure is obvious. Even executive meeting minutes improved with Hill as secretary-treasurer, becoming more formal and organized.¹¹²

It was at Hill's first executive meeting in November 1972 that newly elected President, Maurice Belanger pushed GO to form 4 'super committees', namely: 1) education (public speakers, *GO Info* and media relations); 2) law reform (preparing legal briefs and contacting political parties); 3) social services (Gayline and counselling services); and 4) social (dances and social events).¹¹³ Reflecting other areas of interest GO also established a Social committee (responsible for dances), Inter-Group (communications with gay liberation groups), By-laws, Library and Religious (contacts

¹¹¹ Charlie Hill. Many including myself see Hill is a kind of father-of-the-movement. In 1978 the *Body Politic* (40, p. 18) reviewed highlights from Canadian media coverage of the movement including Hill's January 21 1978, guest appearance on CBC Radio's Cross Country Check-up. During what was "easily the national media's longest and fairest presentation of a gay spokesman," Hill "parried with callers-in from across the country, often challenging biblical hermeneutics".

¹¹² In the minutes Hill added his own touches. Notes from the Nov. 7 meeting reference, "Charlie's...endless rap on his subjective views regarding gay liberation" (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Nov. 7, 1972). At this meeting Debbie Servage became v.p. She departs GO in January 1973. No reason was given (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Jan. 30, 1973).

¹¹³ GLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Nov. 7, 1972. In February 1973 Maurice Belanger left GO without a stated reason (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Mar. 12, 1973). As to Belanger's departure, Charlie said, "Maurice sort of dropped out".

with organized religious groups) committees.¹¹⁴ Charlie Hill recalled that creating committees allowed the executive to formulate priorities “instead of dissipating our energies on too many different projects”.¹¹⁵

From an organizational development perspective these moves reflected GO’s strengthening of its internal structure (by-laws); establishing group-to-group relationships; systematizing service provision (Gayline and drop-in); and providing social outlets (dances). At this stage, GO’s size was such that in terms of decision making, GO’s executive was driven by a desire for members to take the lead, deciding that, “The Executive shall not make any independent actions without consulting members”.¹¹⁶ Within a short time however this consultative approach would prove problematic. In an activity report to the National Conference in Winnipeg in September 1974, GO stated, “Since the Waterloo Conference [May 1974], Gays of Ottawa has come in for much criticism from its membership. Lack of direction, participation and support, as well as apathy, have been their main concerns”. In this same report, GO noted issues of fatigue, overwork and disillusionment were common among the executive. Thus it chose to close down for a month in August 1974.¹¹⁷ For most of its history GO relied heavily on a

¹¹⁴ CGLA GO File No.: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972-Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Nov. 12, 1972. The Religious committee did not exist for long. Critiques of organized religion’s views of homosexuality were taken up by the Law Reform Committee.

¹¹⁵ Charlie Hill.

¹¹⁶ CLGR GO File No.: 1982-017/01A>, File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 - 82-017/ 01 02: Minutes: Exec Mtg Nov 12, 1972.

¹¹⁷ CLGR GO File No.: 1982-07/05B, File Name: National Gay Conference, Winnipeg, 1974 82-017/05 38: Document: Report to the National Conference, Winnipeg, September 1 1974, n.p. At the movements many conferences groups reported on activities. While this revealed the breadth of all the movement’s work it also meant listening to hours of reports. After a 1973 Québec City conference, Charlie returns to Ottawa complaining of how 5 hours of reports was “a wasted day” (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972-Nov1972 – 82-017/01 02: Minutes: Oct. 11 1973).

small core group of perhaps 5 to 8 people who usually sat on the executive and one committee.

In its committee structure we see the beginnings of a conscious strategy to broadly focus on three areas simultaneously, namely, social services in which education was a key feature, (providing) social opportunities and political action. As GO matured a similar tri-partite approach is employed in its political work. One member (John Duggan) worked on local Ottawa issues, one (Denis LeBlanc) on provincial matters and one (David Garmaise) at the federal level. The creation of a Law Reform committee marked GO's growing engagement in the field of politics and law. It also reflected the influence of Duggan, LeBlanc and Garmaise, all of whom were passionate about working in the political field. However, GO viewed all its actions, social, services and political moves through a political prism. In a position paper the Community Services Committee stressed that for GO and the larger movement, this was the era when "everything was political". The provision of support services "by gay people, for gay people...interconnected significantly with the struggle for gay civil and human rights".¹¹⁸

Within a year of its founding Gays of Ottawa had taken up a position in the nascent field of the lesbian and gay movement. Drawing on its extensive cultural and social capital it implemented the full range of activities and services it would deliver for nearly the next 15 years. Through forays into other fields such as social services and politics it began to accrue more capital. I turn now to a series of chapters, each engaging with a specific aspect of GO's activities.

¹¹⁸ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A – Gays of Ottawa, File Name: History – 1982-017/01 10 – Document: Position Paper: *Gays Rights and Community Services*.

Chapter Four: Gay Liberation Thru Print

In this chapter, I consider the role of media, in particular GO's publication of *GO Info* and the *Body Politic*, and the role they played in an emerging lesbian and gay organizational field as vehicles through which positions were established. In the early seventies with the expansion of gay liberation groups, a North America nascent gay media developed, providing an emerging community a means of communicating a sense of gay identity and strategies for organizing this field.¹ Through public publications GO and other organizations invested their cultural and social capital while amassing further capital, bolstering their credibility. As lesbian and gay community newspapers increased their credibility as the sources for information, their social capital increased through the relationship to the community.

GO Info

With its newsletter cum newspaper *GO Info*, GO took up a position within the movement's organizational field and established what it saw as particularly important distinctions. These served to establish how credible organizations were to understand the nature of the lesbian and gay movement and thus, behave within the field. For example, *GO Info* distinguished between *out*, liberated and aware individuals whom it labelled 'gay' and those who remained closeted whom it labelled 'homosexual'. In the April 1973, issue, Charlie Hill stated ten percent of federal government employees were homosexual

¹ Murray 1996, p. 172. In Canada, *Gay* the country's first substantial gay publication predated the *Body Politic* by almost a decade. See: D McLeod, *A Brief History of Gay: Canada's First Gay Tabloid, 1964-1966*, ECW/Homewood Books, Toronto, 2004.

or bisexual.² Through its hiring policies and anti-homosexual security clearance restrictions, the government was offering “no protections for *homosexuals*”. To confront this Hill states, “*Gays must organize*” (emphasis added). Clearly for Hill, only out gays could effectively redress the inequality of closeted homosexuals.

Like most early lesbian and gay movement organizations, GO’s message was simple: “Gay is Good and You’re Not Alone” (sic). Boosting self-esteem while engendering solidarity, the phrase embodied era sentiments and informed movement media production during the seventies. Movement organizations producing newsletters, newspapers, pamphlets, posters etc. drew on the cultural capital of participants, such as people who knew how to write, layout, design etc. Having little economic capital, GO and other groups freely distributed their cultural capital in the form of written content informed by their expertise, advice etc. This ‘redistribution of (movement) wealth’ (capital) provided essential content to the BP. In its early years it relied heavily on content provided by lesbian and gay groups, namely through regional reports, news and commentary.³ Without this content the BP might have reflected only a Toronto-based lesbian and gay movement.

Communicating through home-grown newsletters, GO adhered to an organizational habitus dictating the unquestioned importance of things like organizational newsletters. The GO executive knew it *had* to communicate with Ottawa lesbians and gays. Gays of Ottawa had been formed because there had been no group in Ottawa to inform lesbians and gays about the August 1971 ‘We Demand’ Rally. When *GO Info*

² C Hill ‘Government Guilty’, *GO Info*, no. 6, 1973, p. 1.

³ Body Politic, ‘Ottawa: Gays Meet’, *Body Politic*, no. 9, 1973, p. 7.

first appears in July 1972 it was a folded newsletter. Over the years its format varied, ultimately becoming a tabloid-style newspaper in 1981. *GO Info*'s format changes, use of colour, photography, printing styles and the consistency with which it appeared reflected changes in GO's available social and cultural capital, namely its volunteers.

Throughout GO's existence *GO Info* was its primary means of communication. For most of the seventies it retains a newsletter format and feel. John Duggan noted that, "*In the very early days of GO, it was a bulletin...an in-house bulletin. Something that we leafleted with and took to bookstores that would take it in those days. Like counter-culture bookstores, like Octopus Books*".⁴ In the early eighties owing almost entirely to the efforts of graphic designer Lloyd Plunket, *GO Info* emerged as substantive tabloid. Whatever its form, *GO Info* was *the* lesbian and gay community newspaper in Ottawa. For Denis LeBlanc it was simply, "*our memory*", documenting for the community, "*decisions we made, things like that. What was going on internally*"? Early on this was important because there "*wasn't a lot happening external to the group just yet*".⁵ When it premiered *GO Info*'s masthead stated it was, "Published by Gays of Ottawa, Ottawa's only homophile liberation movement". This mixture of homophile and liberation language revealed GO's self-concept remained in flux. Possibly too, it sought to appeal to both as homophile thinking remained relevant to many.⁶ In fact, well into the

⁴ John Duggan. Octopus Books still exists as Ottawa's main leftist, progressive bookstore. From 1972 to 1974 and for a year in 1977, its format was folded sheets of 11" X 14". From 1975 to 1976 it was 8.5" X 11" sheets stapled in the left hand cover. Spot colour was often used on its cover and last page. Photographs appear rarely initially, due I suspect to the poor quality of photocopy reproduction and the reticence of most to be photographed. As GO is recovering from a 1979 fire *GO Info* was reduced to almost a brochure for many months.

⁵ Denis LeBlanc.

⁶ CGLA GO File Name: 1982-017/01A, File Name: Minutes – Various Committees – 82-017/01 04, Minutes – Media Committee, June 22, 1972.

seventies, in its correspondence and publications, GO readily and simultaneously used the terms homophile, liberation, homosexual, gay men and women etc.

GO Info was a mechanism of introduction, a way GO generated social relationships (social capital) with the community. For Denis LeBlanc it “*was a way for us also to introduce ourselves and talk to people and give them something*”.⁷ This ice-breaker role was born out of necessity. *Gays of Ottawa* was new, and had neither a member mailing list nor a grasp of the community. Distribution by hand established ties, giving rise to a network from GO which drew support, volunteers, members etc. Interestingly, when GO launched *GO Info* it was in a weaker position organizationally than San Francisco’s Mattachine Society was twenty years previously when it first distributed its *Mattachine Review Extra*. By 1954 the Mattachine already had a 2,500 strong mailing list although mailing costs soon proved onerous.⁸ Regardless, an organizational publication was beneficial. Murray concluded that the movement’s early use of the mail system was critical to its growth.⁹ Only through getting out its message could “social organization within gay community...rise above that of cliques and friendship networks”.

GO Info lacked capital for mailings, relying instead on handing it out. As well, in a city dominated by a civil service terrified of RCMP scrutiny, generating a mailing list was difficult.¹⁰ Yet Denis LeBlanc believed “*we had to get it out there and the way we*

⁷ Denis LeBlanc.

⁸ M Meeker, ‘*Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s–seventies*’, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2006, pp. 44-6; 88. The *Mattachine Review Extra* was the Society’s ‘teaser’ publication designed to generate interest in its forthcoming *Mattachine Review*.

⁹ Murray 1996, pp. 69-70.

¹⁰ Kinsman and Gentile (pp. 131) note in the sixties, members of Ottawa’s Council on Religion and the Homosexual feared in particular, it might send them material by mail.

got it out was to hand deliver it to individual gays". This method was also necessary as neither of Ottawa's two early gays bars would allow GO to leave copies behind.¹¹ John Duggan recalled that even years later, *GO Info* could still experience *second-class treatment*. Initially the paper had to push City departments to use *GO Info* as a vehicle for city advertising. While today no self-respecting politician would fail to have a presence in the local community paper, this was not the case for GO. Access to this kind of economic capital was essential, because "all those other community newspapers would not have existed were it not for city hall ads".¹² Although advertising revenue was important to *GO Info's* survival, GO never appears to have contemplated legally challenging the City over its apparent refusal to run ads in the paper. This was in contrast to the actions taken by GATE (Vancouver) in 1974 against the *Vancouver Sun* which led to the first formal anti-gay discrimination case in Canada. After the *Sun* refused both to print a GATE advertisement and to provide a clear rationale for its refusal, GATE complained under BC's human rights code. After a fourteen month wait a board of inquiry ruled in GATE's favour, finding the *Sun* had discriminated against it. Subsequently the BC Supreme Court refused to hear the *Sun's* appeal of the decision.¹³

¹¹ Denis LeBlanc. These were the Coral Reef and an 'unofficial' gay bar at the Lord Elgin Hotel.

¹² John Duggan.

¹³ *Body Politic*, 'Vancouver paper turns down ad GATE protests, demands justice', *Body Politic*, no. 11, 1974, p. 6; 'GATE wins first hearing in Canada under BC human rights legislation', *Body Politic*, no. 18, 1975, p., 5; R Cook, Gays win protection under BC Rights Code', *Body Politic*, no. 23, 1976, p. 1; R Cook, 'Gays 2, The Sun 0', *Body Politic*, no. 27, 1976, p. 6. While the case was a huge win for the movement its limited effect soon became apparent. In March 1976 a landlord refused to rent GATE (Vancouver) office space because "he would not rent to homosexuals". When GATE tried to lodge a human rights complaint it was turned down as the Code did not cover situations like this. Earlier GATE has won its case against the *Sun* under the Code's public services provisions which held a newspaper was a public service. However the Code's sections dealing with tenancy rights offered protection related only based on "race, religion, colour, ancestry, or place or origin" not sexual orientation (R Cook, 'BC Rights Code: now you see it, now you don't', *Body Politic*, no. 24, 1976, p. 1).

GO Info manifested and communicated the movement's clarion call: lesbians and gays should lead public lives. For David Garmaise, *GO Info* was a manifestation of this, allowing GO to talk "about the things it did, in public...trying to change peoples' attitudes". Yet GO knew its audience was not necessarily ready. "We needed to change the attitudes of gay people. So we spent as much time on people in our community as we did on the general public. Writing in *GO Info* was a vehicle for getting the message out to our community. So was writing for [*Body Politic*]", which many GO members did.¹⁴ In a July 1973 letter, BP coordinator, Jerald Moldenhauer asked that lesbian and gay organizations appoint a member to forward him material. Photographs in particular made, "layout more interesting and bear witness to the joy and commitment of gay liberationists".¹⁵ If one wondered why under-resourced organizations should assist BP, Moldenhauer stressed that as Canada's "only gay liberation newspaper" the BP was the "most effective vehicle whereby the gay movement can reach all gay people".¹⁶ The BP had already declared itself an "instrument in effecting the growth of gay consciousness", with a clear impact on the "growth and organizational quality of the Canadian Gay Movement".¹⁷ When asked, David Garmaise agreed that of the two papers, *GO Info* was less ideological. Instead it delivered a "basic gay liberation message but beyond that no,

¹⁴ David Garmaise was perhaps GO's most frequent *Body Politic* writer, submitting material on behalf of GO, and, the NGRC.

¹⁵ Generally GO actively supported the *Body Politic*, providing copies to members and distributing copies at its Centres. In August 1972 GO's Maurice Belanger defended *Body Politic* writer Gerald Hannon after Hannon's article, *Of Men and Little Boys* was attacked. Toronto newspapers had sharply criticized Hannon's piece on intergenerational sex (See: Bagnell, p. 2). For gay community reaction, see: Jackson, p. 3; Rand, p. 3; and *Body Politic*, 1973, Special Issue. Maurice Belanger protested how the "press used the issue to place a slur on Gay Liberation and homosexuals in general" (CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO String Cmte Min June 1972 - August 1972 - 82-017/01 03 - Minutes: Aug. 30, 1972; No. July/Aug 1972).

¹⁶ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B File Name: InterGroup Communications - Gay Groups - 1973-1974 - 82-017/02 27 - Letter: J. Moldenhauer July 18, 1973). Moldenhauer's letter followed-up on a decision by delegates at a May 1973 Ottawa conference at which *Body Politic* asked for submissions.

¹⁷ *Body Politic*, 'Editorial: Growing', *Body Politic*, no. 7, 1973, p. 3.

it was not particularly ideological". Particularly in the seventies the BP could correct those whose analysis it found wanting.¹⁸ Thus I sometimes think of BP as the movement's 'little red book'. Clearly, within the lesbian and gay organizational field, the BP held a dominant position. And it possessed the cultural and social capital necessary to ensure it remained there.

Over time, as GO became more overtly political, so too did *GO Info*. For John Duggan, "as [GO] got involved in political issues [GO Info] became another vehicle. Where you could inform the community to motivate them, get them active and involved".¹⁹ The paper informed and mobilized, reflecting GO's conclusion that a liberated, mobilized lesbian and gay community would emerge only after individuals recognized their oppression. Education was a means to this end and here *GO Info* was a tool of pedagogic action. Through pedagogic action culturally arbitrary belief(s) are imposed, and inculcated, in actors who then misrecognize their arbitrary nature. Bourdieu maintains that misrecognition (through pedagogic action) is an effect of symbolic violence, which acts to maintain and strengthen existing power relations, ultimately reproducing them.²⁰ Through such pedagogic action *GO Info* challenged arbitrary, subjective notions that homosexuals were bad, homosexuality a sickness. Also

¹⁸ In an editorial *Growing* editorial the *Body Politic* (7, p.3) collective stated it was "sympathetic to every attempt to better the social and political situation of homosexuals". However it must also "uphold the critical function of social analysis". Its "critical eye" would "look at gay oppression...outside and within the gay movement". For example, in 1976 the *Body Politic* took Québec's Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG) to task for suggesting NGRC's agenda was too male oriented. Moreover the *Body Politic* rebuked the RMG for its "inopportune interventions once a year at annual conferences are merely destructive" (Body Politic, 'Editorial: On diversity and diversion', *Body Politic*, no. 27, 1976, p. 2). Yet for many it was only at yearly conferences could they influence the movement's agenda.

¹⁹ John Duggan.

²⁰ P Bourdieu & J Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Sage, London, U.K., 1977, p. 10. Bourdieu and Passeron described three modes of pedagogic action: 1) diffuse education through one's peer group; 2) family education; and 3) through institutions, e.g., schools, church etc... *GO Info* and GO engaged in first form, engaging in peer education lesbians and gays.

through pedagogic action papers like *GO Info* and the BP inculcated in readers particular notions about sex, identity, gender, race, style etc. which developed a kind of 'base-line' gay habitus or in Sender's words, "instruction in socially correct participation".²¹

As representatives of a stigmatized group GO used *GO Info* as a vehicle for counter-pedagogic action, challenging a dominant homophobic culture that stigmatized lesbians and gays. Thus GO imposed on lesbians and gays a new, equally arbitrary, cultural norm, engaging in its own symbolic violence. This process required that *GO Info* make lesbians and gay men conscious of the impact of internalized homophobia (a form of symbolic violence) on individuals. Later GO and the wider lesbian and gay movement would document their experience of this symbolic violence. This documentation would then be mobilized as cultural capital, for example, in lobbying to secure recognition of sexual orientation in human rights codes.

GO Info manifested the cultural capital held by GO members skilled in writing, translating, editing etc. However, for years GO lacked the economic capital for its production. Thus members took stealthy and regular advantage of their employment by the civil service. *GO Info* and GO's other printing needs were commonly met after-hours, through government offices. In an era before photocopiers kept tally of the number of copies made, it was easy to disguise the printing of entire issues. Paul-François Sylvestre stated that, "*I think a lot of us who were civil servants...did a lot of work, used*

²¹ K Sender 'Gay Readers, Consumers and a Dominant Gay Habitus: 25 Years of the Advocate Magazine', *Journal of Communication*, March, 2001, pp. 76. Sender is discussing the U.S. gay publication the Advocate as a vehicle for this kind of *instruction*. She draws on the work of Ohmann (1996) in whose study of late 19th century family magazines the notion of "instruction in socially correct participation" was articulated.

*the phone lines, used the photocopying. I would print thousands of sheets". Moreover, "I'm sure I took a typewriter from my office".*²²

Asked to confirm if she and others used government jobs to benefit GO, Marie Robertson was unapologetic, *"absolutely...photocopying, and the pens and the paper. Absolutely, it was the least they [the government] could do. I was certainly stealing supplies and stuff. It would always be particular members of GO who could [do it] in their workplace. It certainly wasn't a huge secret they were going in after work to the workplace and doing all photocopying".*²³ Denis LeBlanc too was unbothered by GO's accessing 'government assistance'. With a wink he said, *"I heard rumours that there may have been resources donated by the people of Canada to the people of Canada...like photocopy paper. When we ran out of money to get GO Info printed, somehow we would arrive the next morning...and they were printed. I didn't know how they got done, whether it was in a government office. Couple of hundred copies, no big deal..."* By the close of the seventies however, GO found more legitimate means of printing. Now having sufficient capital as a result of advertising revenues, *GO Info* was printed by Performance Printing in nearby Smith Falls. Asked how Performance reacted to *GO Info*, Lloyd Plunkett remembers they were, *"not nervous at all. They were very good and on time...our concern was it had to be done professionally because of our advertising; we had to meet deadlines and such. They were business-like, no issues at all".*²⁴

²² Paul-François Sylvestre.

²³ Marie too remembers the taking of a typewriter: *"Yes...oh yeah, get in the car. We're going over to Hull on a Sunday and we came out with an IBM Selectric typewriter"*. What is not clear is whether Robertson and Sylvestre are speaking about the same typewriter.

²⁴ Lloyd Plunkett. Performance was also the only local printer who could handle *GO Info's* tabloid format.

After an initial production of two issues, *GO Info* suspended its publication, possibly due to opening the GO Centre. Returning in February 1973, *GO Info* was more standardized and had bilingual material. Also, possibly owing to Charlie Hill's arrival in Ottawa, it became more political.²⁵ Charlie Hill had happily left Toronto's politically charged scene: "*gay liberation as a profession was not really me. I wasn't interested in social work, social studies or even politics. It was not a prime interest of mine*".²⁶ While in tone Charlie Hill's writing was political, he himself is not very. Fellow UTHA founding members, Ian Young ("*a libertarian*") and Gerry Moldenhauer ("*sort of left*") were. "*And they fought like cats and dogs. I was sort of little liberal Hill in the middle*". In *GO Info* Hill positioned GO vis-à-vis gay liberation. In the essay, 'Why Gay Lib?' Hill presents an inclusive liberation, comprising 'minority groups' who share similar needs but lack the "rights to fulfill these".²⁷ Minorities had grouped into a "liberation movement" and now "homosexual men and women are uniting" in to acquire rights, eliminate prejudice etc.²⁸ "Above all the gay liberation movement is educating people" enabling homosexuals to live in a "society that cherishes diversity within unity".

Hill's gay liberation was reformist, even homophile in approach stressing education as *the* means to an end of creating space within society, an approach different from other liberationists. A year earlier, the BP declared gay liberation was a "socio-

²⁵ On Nov. 12, 1972 the executive reports *GO Info* No. 4 (October) had been "destroyed and that November's issue [was] to be No. 4" (CGLA GO File No.: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972-Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Nov. 12, 1972). *GO Info* was to carry more French material, and, the executive decided more of the general meetings had to occur in French. The Gayline was directed to provide service only in English until more francophone volunteers were available to provide a high quality service.

²⁶ Charlie Hill.

²⁷ C Hill, 'Why Gay Lib?' *GO Info*, no. 4, 1973, p. 1.

²⁸ During the movement's early years lesbians were often referred to as 'homosexual women' or 'gay women'. Later in the seventies, as lesbians recognized they faced lesbian-specific issues, lesbian became a more common term.

political force” that could “transcend the politics of power”, freeing people from “unnecessary repression and oppressive, political structures”.²⁹ Liberation’s prime target was sexism and breaking “historical myths and institutions responsible for the inhumanity of society”. Months before, in its Program for Gay Liberation, the BP had addressed education but its role was informing closeted homosexuals that, “you are not alone, gay is good, gay is proud”.³⁰ Revealing sexism’s effects, even to “straights, because they too are oppressed” was the goal. Charlie Hill and GO reformed society while the BP refashioned it. Each paper’s statements reflected different positions within the field, owing to different local conditions. Were GO to espouse a more radical analysis, its credibility in Ottawa would vanish. In Toronto the BP had emerged in part due to the more general reformist approach taken by Community Homophile Association of Toronto (CHAT). Dissatisfied with this much of CHAT’s social services staff departed in 1973, some of whom became involved with the *Body Politic*.³¹

Both papers believed in the essential strength of being *publicly* gay. *GO Info* ideologically, materially and publicly manifested this. The power of being out in public was a rationale for producing it. Late in 1971 BP emphatically stated “the most important tactic” of gay liberation was well-organized and *publicized* actions such as demonstrations, public meetings etc. In order to speak to a “majority of gays, not a

²⁹ *Body Politic*, 4, p. 2.

³⁰ *Body Politic, A Program for Gay Liberation*, *Body Politic*, no. 1, 1971, p. 4.

³¹ R Bébout, ‘On the Origins of the Body Politic: Chapter 2, Conception and Birth’. Rick Bébout, January 2000b, viewed on March 2011, <<http://www.rbebout.com/oldbeep/concep.htm>>. Charlie Hill stressed that the departure of liberationist-oriented staff from CHAT was “*the catalyst for [establishing] the Body Politic*”. A year prior to this the attempt by CHAT to establish gender parity on its board had left the organization beset by divisive tensions. The 1973 walk-out by social services staff was prompted by CHAT management’s, namely George Hislop’s resistance to their desire for more autonomy and that CHAT was seeking mainstream funding for its social work. Staff feared this would further weaken the liberationist elements in its social service work (Churchill 2001, pp. 302-16).

handful of militants”, these were essential.³² In 1972, Waite in the BP, elaborated further, urging the movement to consider the effectiveness of a women’s movement that drew lessons (cultural capital) from suffragist and anti-Vietnam war movements. Each understood the power of “publicly demonstrating on as wide a basis as possible” in addition to letter writing, meetings etc. Demonstrations revealed the power in numbers. “As the [gay] movement and size of demonstrations increase over a period of time, it will become clear that we are not a tiny, isolated minority”. Gay liberation accrued political strength via numbers revealed by “public actions”.³³ The emphasis on publicly demonstrating the movement’s challenging of a political status quo reflected its adoption of a protest habitus characteristic of previous social movements. J. Hill concluded that since the sixties civil rights groups, women, people of colour, anti-war activists and students had shifted away from “more traditional educational tactics to explicitly political ones” utilizing more, public protests.³⁴

Yet lacking sufficient economic capital to effectively alert the general public to its actions, the lesbian and gay movement depended greatly on the attentions of mainstream media. Less likely to draw media attention the way the spectacle of civil rights marchers being set upon by dogs and police with fire hoses did, liberationists had to seek out and manipulate a media more accustomed to restating homophobic myths than reporting corrective demonstrations. David Garmaise notes GO believed in going after “*every bit*

³² Body Politic, no. 1, 1971, p. 4.

³³ B Waite, ‘Strategy for Gay Liberation’, *Body Politic*, no. 3, 1972, p. 4. See also R Sands, *Gays in the Media Continued*, *Body Politic*, no. 2, 1972, p. 19. Sands notes the benefits blacks and women gained through their entry into journalism as a career. This made it possible for them to “push their political/social attitudes into their material, to give it the added scope of their own personality”. The movement would do well to consider a similar strategy.

³⁴ J Hill, Learning to Transgress: A socio-historical conspectus of the American gay life world as a site of struggle and resistance’, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1996, pp. 266-67.

of the media exposure we could get” in order to reach people. So critical was *any* exposure, that even coverage of GO’s losing battles was “*secondary*” to it receiving coverage.³⁵ Garmaise’s words echo Smith’s finding that gay liberationists knew that even “defeat could provide a mobilizing spark”.³⁶ In the early years GO merely struggled to be known, wins versus losses were beside the point. *GO Info* and mainstream media coverage were critical to garnering a public profile. As Sands argued in the BP, using mainstream media was key to movement success. Involving the media ensured success “in a much faster way”.³⁷

It was vital that the movement be a public phenomenon. Thus Garmaise suggests that at least initially seeking change through behind-the-scenes lobbying was largely rejected. To shift the public’s perceptions “*we had to be very visible*”.³⁸ Denis LeBlanc agreed that the best way to reach and develop community was “*through the press. That’s the easiest way to do outreach. What better way is there to communicate with the public at large; to sensitize them?*”³⁹ Publicity was crucial and Garmaise recalled, “*we were very good at making news*”.⁴⁰ According to Denis LeBlanc, “*Even the smallest thing... [well] there was no such thing as a small thing. Everything that had to do with [GO] was important*”.⁴¹ Every GO action involved the strategic use of media, even if only

³⁵ David Garmaise.

³⁶ Smith (1999, p. 22) references Castell’s (1997) view of social movements as being, “purposive collect actions whose outcome, in victory as in defeat, transforms the values and institutions of society”.

³⁷ Sands 1972, p. 2.

³⁸ David Garmaise.

³⁹ Denis LeBlanc.

⁴⁰ David Garmaise. Reflecting on the shifts that led to today’s legalized same-sex marriage, Garmaise sees this as the legacy of the nascent LGF’s drive for publicness. Activists realized early, “*the more we get on TV and in the papers...talking about the fact we were normal people, the more people would lose their fear and I think that strategy worked really well*”.

⁴¹ Denis LeBlanc.

through letters to editors. So frequent were GO's letters to local papers, members lent their names to letters written by GO's executive, disguising the real size of the group.

This tactical use of media reflected the movement's lack of economic and social capital. Therefore any free, media coverage was taken as a success. *GO Info* and the BP championed any references to mainstream coverage of the movement. After GO's hosting of the third annual National Gay Rights Conference in June 1975, *GO Info* noted media coverage of the "struggle for equal rights for gays".⁴² Discussing the same conference, the BP's Ken Popert stated "capturing the attention of the national media was of inestimable value to the gay movement". Coverage of the conference by CBC National news made "many thousands of gays...aware that homosexuals and lesbians are fighting for their rights".⁴³ When GO picketed Pierre Trudeau's arrival at the November 1975 Liberal Convention, *GO Info* reported its making the CBC national news.⁴⁴ Recalling this picket Marie Robertson said she received "*a call...we're meeting at the Chateau Laurier? Okay, Trudeau's going to be speaking. He's going to be coming out the side door off Sussex Avenue... So [we'd better] be there with placards*".⁴⁵

Any media coverage was evidence of the movement's growing visibility and its growing credibility (capital). Often as not though, the media failed to play its assigned part. When Toronto City Council became the first Canadian city to bar sexual orientation

⁴² *GO Info*, National Conference Nationale, *GO Info*, no. 4, 1975, p. 1.

⁴³ K Popert, Third National Conference Launches Gay Rights Coalition, *Body Politic*, no. 20, 1975, p. 3

⁴⁴ R Dayman, GO Pickets...Liberal Convention, *GO Info*, no. 2, 1975, 1975, p. 3. This picket was the first public action of the National Gay Rights Coalition.

⁴⁵ Marie Robertson. Gays of Ottawa protested the Liberal government's failure to grant gays civil rights. However, its signs read: "Trudeau, Thanks...but no thanks" which were references to reports that during the 1974 campaign, Trudeau had found the gay community insufficiently thankful for his 1967 omnibus bill decriminalizing homosexuality (Dayman 2(6) 1975 p.3).

discrimination for city employees in October 1973, no Canadian mainstream media reported it.⁴⁶ A furious BP declared “of all the enemies of gay equality, the most powerful at the moment are the media”. The resolution’s impact on other institutions “had been effectively sabotaged by the media’s refusal to report the event”.⁴⁷

The relationship between the movement and mainstream media was asymmetrical. Each needed the other but mainstream media had discretion over what and how to cover the movement. In its premier issue in November 1971, the BP highlighted the peril and promise of media. Coverage was essential because as long as “government, the media, churches and education system” saw gays as a “small minority” nothing would change.⁴⁸ Lesbian and gay movement media would explain what needed to change, through critiques of mainstream coverage. In its second issue, BP collective members, and representatives from CHAT, UTHA etc. jointly criticized the documentary *Nothing to Hide*, which CBC aired the previous November. A 1970 Canadian documentary filmed in New York, it revealed a “new social phenomenon, the gay liberation

⁴⁶ Body Politic, City bars job discrimination, *Body Politic*, no. 10, 1973, p. 5. McLeod (1996, p. 141) concluded that although Toronto city council was the first Canadian legislative body to recognize “gay people as a legitimate minority, with a right to equal opportunity in employment” not a single mainstream paper reported it. Only small gay or left-leaning papers in Canada and the U.S. did so. See: *GO Info* Gays win real victory, *GO Info*, no. 8, 1973, p. 1.

⁴⁷ The *Body Politic* editorial singled out the *Toronto Star* for its reaction to Gerald Hannon’s (*Body Politic* 5 1972 p.5) Of Men and Little Boys essay (*Body Politic*, no. 5, 1972, p. 5). *Toronto Star* editors (24 Aug. 1972 p.6) speculated if perhaps those who had opposed decriminalizing homosexuality were right all along. Based on Hannon’s essay *Star* Editors concluded that homosexuals were now using their “freedom from prosecution as adults to “jeopardize children” (*Toronto Star*, No Open Season on Children, *Toronto Star*, 24 August, 1972, p. 6). See: *Body Politic*, The *Star* Sells Hate, *Body Politic*, Special Issue, 1974, p. 1. Yet in 1975 the BP would be critical of LGF actors who failed to garner media coverage. After the media ignored CGRO’s effort to make gay rights a provincial election issue, BP labelled its tactics a failure that left Ontario gays, “stranded in their closets” (*Dress Rehearsal*, *Body Politic*, no. 21, 1975, p. 2).

⁴⁸ In its Program for Gay Liberation (*Body Politic*, no. 1, 1971, p. 4) the BP critiqued a recent *Newsweek* article on gay liberation. Overall *Newsweek* had been positive but its tone suggested the magazine supported “our right to homosexuality” but not the “fact that we’re normal”. *Newsweek* also opposed a gay mass movement because homosexuality was an “intensely personal issue”. However for the *Body Politic* a mass movement was the “most powerful lever at our disposal,” requiring an “an organization and a program”.

movement,” one apparently devoid of women but keenly watched by psychiatric experts.⁴⁹ The film’s emphasis on gay men’s sexual activity irritated the BP’s collective members and others.

The documentary was “completely irrelevant” to the present “gay liberation movement” focusing as it did on the Mattachine Society, “one of the oldest and most conservative of homophiles associations”.⁵⁰ Gay liberationists saw the Society as in “no way representative of the greater political awareness seen in other groups”. The gay liberationists who authored the critique distinguished themselves from the homophile, assimilationist Mattachine Society whose cultural capital was now less relevant. The critique worked to further devalue ‘homophile capital’ while it bolstered ‘liberation capital’. Having entered the lesbian and gay organizational field with a liberationist habitus and cultural capital, gay liberation players sought to dominate it. For groups like the Mattachine Society, the U.S. civil rights movement had provided it with “the language and politics,” namely a habitus befitting a minority group.⁵¹ However, in the latter sixties the criticism of the Society’s approach by gay liberationists reflected the growing influence of the more assertive and militant “black power and women’s liberation movements”.⁵²

⁴⁹ H Spiers, ‘CBC: Put-off or Nothing to Hide? Nothing to Show’, *Body Politic*, no. 2, 1972, p. 2. The producers claimed they were unable to film in Canada as no homosexuals were willing to appear; See also Bébout, 2000a. “How They saw Us; How We saw Us; How We see the World” [Online]. Available at: <http://www.rbebout.com/docs/nlgja.htm>.

⁵⁰ The Mattachine Society saw homosexuals as an oppressed minority. However, rather than foster social change by rejecting sexist gendered roles and sexuality, Mattachine and others championed integration and assimilation (Warner 2002, pp. 57-58).

⁵¹ S Valocchi, “The Class-Infected Nature of Gay Identity,” *Social Problems*, vol. 46, no. 2, 1999, p. 217.

⁵² S Valocchi, ‘Riding the Crest of a Protest Wave? Collective action frames in the gay liberation movement, 1969-1973’, *Mobilization: An International Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1999, pp. 59-73.

Gays of Ottawa's first interaction with the mainstream media came in an October 1971 letter to *Ottawa Journal* editors, criticizing F. Daley's review of the film '*Fortune and Men's Eyes*'. Based on his review, GO concluded Daley believed homosexuality to be the situational behaviour of prisoners, whereas GO contended "*all mankind is basically bisexual*".⁵³ Making informed corrections of ill-informed media coverage was a core GO task. Based on lived experience, GO members had the cultural capital to set the media straight. Calling the media to account simultaneously fulfilled four goals. It corrected inaccuracies, established GO's position in the field, demonstrated its expertise and publicized GO's existence. However, calling the media to account through letter writing or even participating in shaping a story was not the only means GO employed. Thoroughly dissatisfied, even horrified by the impact of reporting in the *Ottawa Citizen* GO was ultimately compelled to utilize the complaint mechanism of the Ontario Press Council in order to air its concerns.

The Ontario Press Council Hearing

Furious over the *Ottawa Citizen*'s coverage of a male prostitution case, the so-called Vice Ring affair, GO complained to the Ontario Press Council in 1975. Ron Dayman, of GO's Political Action Committee (PAC) believed the *Ottawa Citizen*'s naming of the men arrested violated a Press Council 'direction' that the individuals were to be named only

⁵³ CGLA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A – Gays of Ottawa, File Name: History – 1982-017/01 10, Document: History of Gays of Ottawa / Gays de Ottawa. In June 1971, a film based on Canadian, John Herbert's 1967 play, "Fortune and Men's Eyes" opened in Toronto. Gays of Ottawa's letter most likely came shortly after it opened in Ottawa. Herbert appeared at CHAT in Toronto in 1970. Addressing 135-strong (mostly male) audience he urged gay people to come out and fight prejudice (McLeod 1996, p.70; 63).

“with careful consideration of all the circumstances involved”.⁵⁴ At a Council hearing on August 15, Dayman and Hill suggested the *Citizen* failed to report facts, often publishing verbatim, police morality squad press releases filled with hyperbole and falsehoods. Managing Editor Bill MacPherson defended the *Citizen*, emphasizing the need to cover an ‘unprecedented, organized ring’. It was true police reports were inaccurate; however, errors in reporting were justified in similar reports by other media. MacPherson suggested those accused were “victims of their own actions”.⁵⁵ On Dec. 12 1975 the Council rejected GO’s complaint. In *GO Info* Denis LeBlanc was angry the *Citizen* faced no consequences for “sensationalist coverage of last March’s anti-homosexual witch-hunt...once again the liberal press has done another white-wash of the public”. For GO the *real* vice ring victims were the accused, “forced into using the services” of an agency “because of the anti-homosexual pressure of a hostile society”.⁵⁶

After the hearing however, GO detected a shift in reporting. In the BP, Ron Dayman said press “obviously feeling guilty, had toned down their coverage” of court proceedings.⁵⁷ By now many cases had been dismissed. David Garmaise agreed; “coverage after [the vice ring] of similar events changed dramatically”, but believed GO had forced a change in reporting prior to the press council hearing. For example, on the

⁵⁴ Established in 1972, the Press Ontario Council was an industry-created body created to deal with complaints. The *Ottawa Journal* was never a member. Press Council Executive Secretary Fraser MacDougall then informed Dayman that GO must first seek satisfaction from the *Citizen* (CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Complaint to Ont Press Council Against *Ottawa Citizen* 1975 – 82-015 / (), Letter: R. Dayman, GO to F. MacDougall, Ontario Press Council (OPC), Apr. 9, 1975). Dayman sent documentation to *Citizen* Editor, Chris Young who responded by asking what it was Dayman expected? The *Citizen* published letters critical of coverage, and Dayman could write on behalf of GO (Ibid, Letter: R. Dayman, GO to C. Young, *Ottawa Citizen*, Apr. 21, 1975; Ibid, Letter: C. Young, *Ottawa Citizen* to R. Dayman, GO, Apr. 23, 1975).

⁵⁵ CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015/(), File Name: Complaint to Ont Press Council Against *Ottawa Citizen* 1975 – 82-015 / (), Minutes: Press Council Hearing, Aug. 15, 1975.

⁵⁶ D LeBlanc, Press Council Decision, *GO Info*, no. 6, 1975, p. 3.

⁵⁷ R Dayman, ‘Ottawa: Show Trial Continues’, *Body Politic*, no. 21, 1975, p. 3.

same day that GO picketed *Ottawa Journal* offices a *Journal* editorial hinted future reporting might not be handled “the same way again”, owing to police mistakes, *not* those of the media.⁵⁸ *Journal* editors blamed police for calling “a press conference...to announce they had cracked a ‘white slavery ring’”. Because “initial documentation” of the vice ring’s activities were incomplete, police had created an “expectation of more to come”. Therefore, editors argued “if the police hadn’t made special efforts to draw attention to the case, it would have received less attention”.

Two days later, the *Ottawa Citizen* weighed in but not to criticize police or reconsider its actions. Editor Christopher Young said the paper relied on Ontario law allowing for publishing the names of accused, aged 16 or older. Without a hint of irony Young warned readers of the “dangers of secrecy”, spreading of false rumour and reputations damaged via guilt by association, etc.⁵⁹ Perhaps in an effort to break any apparent connection between their editorials and GO’s protesting their actions, neither paper reported on the protest until the day after. The *Ottawa Journal* reported that onlookers had taunted and laughed at GO protesters, yet “sentiments were decidedly with the gays”.⁶⁰

Gays of Ottawa, like many others, critiqued newspaper coverage, in particular for the naming of names. That GO’s press council complaint was rejected was not hugely surprising. Nor does it necessarily reflect a lack of capital, the standing needed to win.

⁵⁸ ‘A most difficult case’, *Ottawa Journal*, 20 March, 1975, p. 6. One day before the *Journal* began referring to the vice ring as an ‘alleged prostitution service’ or ‘what the police have described as...’ rather than a ‘teenage sex ring’ or ‘teenage vice ring’ (see: *Ottawa Citizen*, Gays protest ‘persecution’, *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 March, 1975, p.4; *Ottawa Journal*, Police arrest 18th Suspect, *Ottawa Journal*, 27 March, 1975, p. 2).

⁵⁹ C Young, ‘Editor’s Notebook: Why we name names’, *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 March 1975, p. 6.

⁶⁰ B Cory, ‘Gay Society protests vice case persecution’, *Ottawa Journal*, 21 March, 1975, N.P. See: *Ottawa Citizen* 1975, p. 21.

Wins before industry-formed watch dogs are rare. However, GO detected a shift in reporting and took credit as part of its project to build community credibility. Moreover, a year later when reporting on men arrested for having sex in washrooms, the *Ottawa Citizen* did not publish the names of accused, which had been a widespread practice. Whether a direct result of GO's actions or not, it championed its role and claimed victory. After all, any media coverage was a win and testament to GO's growing social, cultural and political capital. Increasingly as an organization with a public presence, it could not easily be ignored.

In the next chapter I consider GO's moves into the public sphere and the creation of public social opportunities for lesbians and gays through its hosting of community dances, the opening of its GO Centre and its critique of Ottawa's few gay spaces.

Chapter Five: Creating Social Space and Opportunities

Many social movements have approached space, especially public space as both tool and goal. As a forum for visibility, the making of claims and fostering social contacts space has been part of many social movements strategic arsenal. For lesbians and gays, simply appearing gay in public in the early seventies was fraught with risk. Lesbians and gays have a long history of subversively occupying public space, with those around them oblivious to this. Just as one's class leads to the cultivation of a specific habitus, so does a connection to gay community or other gays. Lesbians and gays can often hide in plain sight yet identify each through so-called 'gaydar', which "through sub-cultural [sic] cues, points to a shared understanding of gay habitus".¹

For the lesbian and gay movement, specifically taking over space through protest or establishing a claim to space manifested their belief that being gay was not an individual, private matter. For many lesbians and gays, a desire for a space, for support, nurturing and acceptance is deeply tied to a history of being socially marginalized.² By claiming, and creating social space, GO advertised itself and amassed social capital through generating social opportunities. That it understood the value of doing so reflected its unique cultural capital. In this chapter I explore GO's use of and claim to, public space through its community dances and engagement with local Ottawa bars. Additionally I consider its establishing of its own private space through the opening of its GO Centres.

¹ Sender 2001, p. 75. As with all habitus, a gay habitus is structure through "an economic relation to taste...[and] by established and changing aspects of gay sensibility". There is however no single gay habitus owing to how "gender, gender identity, race, class and generation" act to segment the community (Sender 2001).

² J. Hill 1996, p. 255-6.

Dancing for Liberation and Community

Canada in the early seventies offered few social spaces to lesbians and gays. Gay-identified bars or community centers were just emerging. Same-sex couples brave enough to dance in a straight club faced harassment or arrest. Lesbian and gay patrons were commonly ill-treated, refused service or denied entry. Lesbians could be especially unwelcome in the few available men's bars. Even attending a gay club was risky. In Montréal in 1966, police charged Charlie Hill and a friend with committing indecent acts in public. In court the arresting officer had to concede the 'groping' he witnessed, had not occurred and both were found not guilty. This arrest happened during one of the periodic crackdowns Montréal police engaged in.³ In Toronto in the early sixties police attempted to mobilize the public in a sustained crackdown on homosexuals owing to their increasing visibility. Yet police were undermined by Torontonians who apparently "lack a disgust" for homosexuality. Police feared this served to enable the "growth of the city's sex deviant population".⁴

Keenly aware of Ottawa's lack of social space, GO moved to host community dances. Coming at a time when bars were rare, often grim spaces, dances offered an alternative. The first GO dance took place June 17, 1972 at Pestalozzi College on Rideau

³ Warner 2003, p. 38. In the early sixties in Toronto, the growing number of gay-frequented and gay-owned businesses had drawn police interest. As media coverage of homosexuality increased this further fuelled anxiety among police. Ironically, as gay bars became more visible to lesbians and gay men, this also increased their surveillance by police (Kinsman 1987 p.145-46).

⁴ E. Chenier 'Rethinking Class in Lesbian Bar Culture: Living 'the gay life' in Toronto, 1055-1965' In *Rethinking Canada: The promise of women's history*, in Gleason, M & Perry, A (eds), Oxford University Press, Don Mill, 2006, pp. 314. The concern among Toronto police was new. Just a few years earlier they were less concerned about 'deviates'. Toronto Chief of Police John Chisholm, told a Royal Commission that in fact "motor vehicles were a greater threat to children than were sex perverts".

Street. Lacking any capital, dances were a prime fund raising tool.⁵ However, when *GO Info* reported on the dance, fundraising was secondary to demonstrating to “gay community that GO was doing something for them”.⁶ In a public service announcement for the dance Charlie Hill described GO as a “non-profit community organization...dedicated to informing and educating the general public on the subject of homosexuality”. Dances were “part of its educational process of GAY LIBERATION aimed at integrating both gay and straight society, as human beings and not sexual objects”.⁷ The emphasis on presenting gays as not just ‘sexual objects’ may have been an attempt at impression management; challenging the belief that homosexuals, especially gay men were overly sexual. Additionally it alerted potential attendees, a community dance was less sexually charged than a bar, namely a positive alternative. Lloyd Plunkett points out “*there were people who came to our dances that would not go to the bar because of the cruising situation...so a lot of couples, quite a diverse group, came to the dances*”.⁸ In its report, *GO Info* noted more than 100 gays and straights attended. From time to time “curious onlookers [had] appeared”. Hopefully, they left satisfied, “that we are not all freaky-looking faggots, but just people”.⁹

Cognizant of the risks inherent in a public dance, GO approached firms about providing security. After being turned down several times GO ceased telling potential firms what kind of dance it was. Once on-site, it assumed whomever it hired would just

⁵ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min – 1971-1972-82-017/-17: Minutes: Dec. 21 1971.

⁶ *GO Info*, Ottawa Comes Out, *GO Info*, no. 1, 1972, p. 5.

⁷ Emphasis in the original; CLGA GO File No.: 1082-017/02B File Name: InterGroup Communications – Ltrs Sent – 1973-1974 – 82-017/02 28: Document : PSA.

⁸ Lloyd Plunkett; Interviewed on: November 7, 2007.

⁹ *GO Info* 1972, no. 1, p. 5

deal with it. Rather than actually hold a dance, the executive had discussed and rejected more militant actions, namely a 'ZAP', whereby GO members, took over 'straight space'.¹⁰ Gays of Ottawa's Action GO committee discussed zaps such as a sit-in where members would "appear at different hotels in Ottawa as a group" or a 'walk-in', where people walked hand-in-hand. Not wanting to be too militant Action GO cautioned that during any zaps, "we should, at all times, be aware of the legality of actions to be taken".¹¹ Zaps were, ultimately, rejected which may have been influenced by the *Body Politic* questioning of their effectiveness.¹²

After costs, GO's dance raised \$23, bringing its bank balance to, \$139.¹³ Even this small amount was essential. Lloyd Plunket recalls, "*we tried to get [dances] every two months...it was really the way we funded ourselves*".¹⁴ Denis LeBlanc concurred, "*They were our fund raisers. Some people would make donations but we didn't count on donations*". Generally any such donations came from GO members. "*If we needed something we just went out and bought it. If we needed money for something we didn't have we just chipped in and got it*".¹⁵ Less often, donations came from outside. Barry

¹⁰ Zaps could involve gays occupying public space, the flooding of an opponent's phone or fax machine with calls etc. (Teal 1995). The executive also discussed renting one of the tour boats plying the Ottawa River as a means of "zapping, in a way, the tourist board" (CLGA GO File No.: 1982 - 017 / 01A File Name: GO String Cmte Min June 1972 - August 1972 - 82-017/01 03: Minutes: Jun. 26 1972).

¹¹ The Action GO Committee was a short-lived forerunner to GO's Law Reform Committee (CLGA GO File No.: Minutes - Various Committees - 82-017/01 04, File Name: Action GO Mtg Min: Minutes, Jun. 27, 1972).

¹² Considering zaps, "as they have been planned to date", the *BP* (no. 1 1971 p.4) had declared they said, "nothing about the issue of gay liberation. Freaking someone out does not, by itself, raise consciousness". While the *BP* questioned zaps Kinsman (1987 p.180) points out that only after a series of zaps and altercations, had gay liberationists succeeded in moving the American Psychiatric Association to de-list homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1974.

¹³ CLGA GO File No.: 1982 - 017 / 01A File Name: GO String Cmte Min June 1972 - August 1972 - 82-017/01 03: Minutes: Jun. 26 1972

¹⁴ Lloyd Plunkett.

¹⁵ Denis LeBlanc. Charlie Hill also recalls everyone, "just forked-in".

Deeprise remembers a mid-level civil servant, “*supportive of Gays of Ottawa financially...who would make generous donations. As I recall, [it was] always on postal orders, so nothing could be traced*”.¹⁶

Rapidly the dances began raising more income. But they remained an unpredictable income stream. The quality of the rented hall or the vandalizing of dance posters could reduce receipts. Many of GO’s early dance posters were created by a then up-and-coming Canadian (photographic artist), Evergon, whose work soon became part of major gallery collections around the world. Unfortunately, none of these posters survive.¹⁷

Gays of Ottawa’s lack of economic capital was not unique. Warner and Smith have each noted Canada’s early liberation groups lacked the resources one would expect to find among actors with such high aspirations for social and legislative change.¹⁸ Reflecting on the early state of movement finances, Denis LeBlanc drew a comparison of GO’s financial status to that of the contemporary women’s movement.¹⁹ While GO felt a strong connection to it, LeBlanc felt like its poor cousin. There were, “a lot more resources...for women’s liberation at that time. NAC was starting to organize; women’s issues were starting to get government funding. Gays were still far, far away from

¹⁶ Barry Deeprise. Charlie Hill points out GO was not alone in seeking ‘gay dollars’. “*One group that was out there, the [Ottawa] Knights (the leather crowd)...a very strange group. The manager of the Lord Elgin was a member. I used to get ticked off because they’d raise money and give it to children’s groups and things like that. They [events] were all in private houses....they wouldn’t give to gay groups or causes. It was always as if they were trying to whitewash themselves*”. The Ottawa Knights did not form until 1975. With the advent of the HIV crisis they became much more engaged with the gay community but their ‘toys for tots’ fundraiser remain a big event.

¹⁷ For example, an April 1973 dance raises \$213; October’s, \$250. CLGA GO File No.: 1982 – 017 / 01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/ 01 02: Minutes: Dec. 18 1972 and Apr. 16 1972 & Oct. 25 1973

¹⁸ Warner 2002, p. 69; Smith 1999, p. 42.

¹⁹ Found in Smith 1999, p. 36.

getting any money from government”. For GO dances remained critical to its finances well into the eighties.

Equally important was the social opportunity dances provided, and their tangible sense of community. With a barely existent bar scene, dances constituted a kind of lesbian and gay town square where one could *see* and be *seen*. They offered visible proof that lesbians and gays existed and of the potential for community. Those attending a dance could begin to recognize one another as comprising a network identified by their embodiment of shared social capital, namely ways of dancing, standing, dressing, speaking, cruising etc. Dances then, were communication venues and a means of mobilizing which homophile-style groups had tended to avoid. Largely invisible to each other as a group in the sixties, lesbians and gays had relied on individual, less public social opportunities with a trusted underground of contacts. In turn this obscured evidence of a larger gay population, impeding the creation of organizations capable of intervening on their behalf.²⁰ Greater visibility in the seventies would generate cultural and social capital groups like GO could use. Like other movement groups, GO realized demands made by an invisible citizenry were easily ignored. A movement invisible to itself could never grasp its ‘power in numbers’.

Yet dances were small initially. As Charlie Hill recalled, “*Oh god, they were deadly at first. If we could get 40-60 people we were doing well at the first. But eventually they became popular... [providing] the idea of creating community, the idea of bringing people together, giving them an option in terms of where to go*”.²¹ Creating an

²⁰ Rosenthal 1990, p. 48

²¹ Charlie Hill.

Ottawa community depended on members attending dances and coming out, sometimes simultaneously. John Duggan stresses coming out was “*key to changing society. For lesbians and gays to be organized...you had to get people out... [dances] were an easy way for people to start coming out. A lot of people sweated bullets but that was one way to do it, you saw other people*”.²² Throughout 1972, Pestalozzi College was GO’s main venue. By May 1973 however, the GO executive feared dance attendance was levelling off. Thus GO accepted Rev. Playfair’s offer to host dances in St. George’s Anglican Church hall.²³ Charlie Hill described St. George’s as “*a much warmer space...the sound was better*”.²⁴ St. George’s dances drew more people possibly owing to its location in Ottawa’s Centretown, noticeably less seedy, and hippie-oriented than Pestalozzi. Duggan recalls church dances often “*drew 300 people, which in those days was quite a few people...in those closety days*”.²⁵

Whereas Pestalozzi dances had primarily attracted men, more lesbians attended dances at St. George’s. Charlie Hill noted that, “*Once at the church, a group of women started to come and they all knew each other*”.²⁶ For John Duggan this group demonstrated “*the lesbian community seemed...very different from the gay men’s*”. For gay men “*GO dances were a coming-out point, the bars a coming-out point, a meeting point...it was very possible [for gay men] to not know everyone but among the*

²² John Duggan.

²³ CLGA GO File No.: 1982 – 017 / 01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/ 01 02 – Minutes: May 6, 1973.

²⁴ Charlie Hill. For example, St. George’s had no issue with GO having to provide food at its dances owing to the conditions of its liquor permit. This was something Pestalozzi College had resisted owing to the fact the space GO used for dances was the college’s gymnasium (CLGA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / () File Name: GO Executive Committee Minutes: Aug, 26, 1974: Minutes: Oct. 22 1974).

²⁵ John Duggan.

²⁶ Charlie Hill.

lesbians...they all seemed to know each other already. They all went to the women's centre, the bookstore....they seem to have had the same social circle".²⁷ While gay men initially often formed sexual ties in sexually charged settings such as cruising areas, lesbians tended towards making social connections in less sexual settings, such as women's centres.

Eventually however, the success of St. George's dances became problematic. Denis LeBlanc recalls a particularly popular dance at St. George's in October 1975. This was a "*special one because we had a lot of people...like 300 people from out of town...in addition to the usual 200. So like 500 and it wasn't licensed for that many people*". However, the weight of so many people on St. George's 2nd floor hall put the building at risk. Playfair wrote to the GO executive saying, "*the floor can't hold us...the building was not sound. The priest [Rev. Playfair] said, "Look we'd have to renovate"*", to bear the weight. Subsequent letters between GO and St. George's confirm this fact and no homophobia was suspected.²⁸ Charlie Hill did wonder if maybe St. George's was uncomfortable about the drinking that occurred at dances.²⁹

Returning to Pestalozzi did not appeal but accessing other venues was difficult. Once a hall had been located, after GO held one dance, the space became mysteriously unavailable. There was no redress for GO, "*because we were not protected by human rights legislation yet*". Denis LeBlanc remembers a favourite dance, "*we had at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Lower town. They didn't know [GO] until we all showed*

²⁷ John Duggan; The 'women's centre' Duggan mentions was located on Somerset Street. As to the bookstore, a women's bookstore did not open in Ottawa until the eighties.

²⁸ CLGA GO File No.: C. Hill – 1982-015 / () File Name: GO Executive Committee: Minutes: Oct. 27 1975. The minutes report St. George's structure had been inspected for its weight-bearing capacity and this "inspection was negative".

²⁹ Charlie Hill.

up. *That was the last dance in a Catholic hall. They were in shock because they had their regular stuff going on upstairs!*” Many subsequent dances were held at the Saint Dom Polski Hall on Waverly St. *“The Polish hall served us well for years and years”*.³⁰

The era’s lack of legal protections and prevailing negative attitudes presented a potential minefield as GO sought liquor permits. Because of how *“the Liquor Control Board would look at us”* Ian MacLennan suspected officials thought *“‘gay organization’... ‘oh how can we stop this?’”* There was a sense the GO should *“always follow [the rules] to the letter of the law”*. MacLennan believed *“that if we didn’t (do it right) they would be more than pleased to pull the license”*.³¹ Caught in the regulatory gaze of the state GO enacted the habitus of the responsible citizen. Ironically, while this probably increased its standing before the state, this self-regulation aligned GO with the moral framework of the very state it resisted.

Asked if he felt GO’s dances drew greater official scrutiny, Charlie Hill said from, *“the police yes and the inspectors, yes. The inspectors would come occasionally. I remember I was quite drunk one night and them coming in. We had to be careful”*.³² I raised the issue of drug use, a not unheard aspect of the era and GO’s dances, asking Hill about a set of GO executive minutes from 1972 that stated neither hard nor soft drugs were tolerated at “GO parties”.³³ Was GO morally regulating members? Hill denied this saying, *“Whether people did drugs or not, we didn’t really care. It was a fear of losing the liquor licence...our sole source of funds, our main outreach activity to the community*

³⁰ Denis LeBlanc; ‘Lower Town’ is the Ottawa neighbourhood that lies below Rideau Street.

³¹ Ian MacLennan.

³² Charlie Hill.

³³ CGLA GO File No.: 1982 – 017/01 01 File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min 1971-1972 – 82-017/01 17: Minutes: May 16 1972.

outside the group".³⁴ Greg Spurgeon believed that if GO was singled out, it revealed the attitudes of individual inspectors. *"My personal experience was very good...about the dance I ran. They knew we were way over the limit... [of] allowable people that evening. They were professional...would have known in an instant... [yet] they didn't do anything...I think it was really about individuals"*.³⁵

GO's dances illustrated the personal was political.³⁶ Attendance raised awareness of how one's personal coming out struggle was tied to a larger political problem. In Ottawa with its insular, small-town outlook, civil servants attending a dance (or gay bar) risked career-destroying attention. Charlie Hill, who was not a civil servant, could be more defiant. *"My decision from the outset was [to do] everything publicly and there's nothing they can do...you're not hiding anything. They want to know, they can know. We weren't doing anything illegal... [GO was] proper and creative and I didn't give a damn about the RCMP"*.³⁷ For all his defiance, Hill's emphasis on GO being 'proper' reflect the potential costs of rocking the boat too much.

Looking back we can easily think dance attendees keenly thought dances were a political act. Yet when asked if this was the case, responses were mixed. The important

³⁴ Charlie Hill; CLGA GO File No.: 1982 – 017 / 01 01 File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min 1971-1972 – 82-017 / 01 17: Minutes: May 16 1972. Gays of Ottawa was regulating behaviour but for a strategic not moral reason.

³⁵ Greg Spurgeon; Interviewed on: January 23, 2008. Gays of Ottawa actually faced few barriers when seeking permits. Yet, throughout the seventies authorities would increasingly overtly police gay men, commonly raiding bars and bathhouses. Not until years later, with the advent of rights, would this type of sexual-policing decline. However, increasingly authorities would police lesbian and gay communities through more morally-neutral means, through regulations pertaining to fire codes, space capacity, liquor regulations etc. (See: M Valverde & C Miomir, Governing Bodies, Creating Gay Spaces: Policing and Security Issues in 'Gay' Downtown Toronto, *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 43, 2003, pp. 102-21.

³⁶ A catch-phrase long associated with the sixties era feminist movement Weeks (1977) in *Interrante* (1981 p.80) suggests the roots of the "personal life is political" concept far earlier. Not until the seventies, did a "homosexual liberation movement...discover" the concept.

³⁷ Charlie Hill.

political aspect of dances was clear but for most, dances were social occasions. For Denis LeBlanc they were *“one of our ways of breaking the chains”*. Of course, *“everything we did in those days was political. Everything is political...risking having the RCMP take down your name and number. I wasn't paranoid about that so I didn't worry about it. But a lot of people did.”*³⁸ Paul-François Sylvestre agreed dances were political *“but personally I never saw [them] as political. Later, years later...I can see yes, at that time, with attitudes in the mid-70s...but I did not have that feeling. To me it was a social thing”*. Sylvestre recalls attendees preferred that dances be social: *“most people who came to the dances did not want to hear about the politics. They came to dance, to socialize, to cruise...it was not the place to have them sign a petition...join us for a march on Parliament Hill or City hall or the Ottawa Police station. People at a GO dance did not want to hear that”*.³⁹

Ian MacLennan recalled GO did little *“political, politicizing of the dance...”* but for him dances were spaces of ‘social action’, *“a place where gay people or again people questioning, can come and interact socially”*.⁴⁰ For Greg Spurgeon dances were community building *“work that I believe really assisted people who may have had some doubts about [GO's] political mission or who may have been shy or maybe thought some of us were being too loud and brazen”*. Spurgeon believes *“those people eventually became supportive of some of [GO's] other ideas through social mission side of [dances]”* Spurgeon cannot recall GO *“always agreeing on what exactly they were about”*. When GO organized a dance, *“we didn't use those words (political, community*

³⁸ Denis LeBlanc.

³⁹ Paul-François Sylvestre.

⁴⁰ Ian MacLennan.

building). *It was just 'how are we doing the next dance; where's it gonna be?'*⁴¹ Charlie Hill too believes dances built community; they *were* political. *"By their very nature, to organize a gay dance was a political act...in so far as you're affirming that you're there and that you exist and you're not going to be quiet and shunted away"*.

While attending a dance provided a sense of community, advertising dances also provided evidence of its existence. Denis LeBlanc recalls plastering the downtown core with dance posters. Postering was a way of *"getting the word 'gay' out...breaking the chains of isolation. Gay people walking by on their way to work, see gay, they see the word 'gay'. It was a way to reach out to other people. It seemed to me that, this was much more worthwhile. That was a political action"*.⁴² Similarly, John Duggan believed when postering *"we were breaking a taboo, breaking the silence. What we were saying just by doing that was we didn't accept what society said about us and we were doing to define ourselves and be ourselves"*.⁴³

Dances were enormously, physically-liberating events. At them, lesbians and gays broke with the habitus of the closet and began to enact the 'liberatory' habitus of "gay is good" and "gay pride". Dances provided, albeit briefly, a simultaneously liberated and liberating space. And, of course, as Ian MacLennan recalls, *"They were fun. The only time I ever did drag was actually at one of the Halloween dances. Denis*

⁴¹ Greg Spurgeon.

⁴² Denis LeBlanc.

⁴³ John Duggan; Advertising in the papers was political too. After the *Ottawa Journal* newspaper failed to run a GO classified ad, John Duggan asked, *"if the Journal has a policy of discriminating against lesbians and gays, we want to know about it"*. The *Journal* was apologetic. The ad had 'gone astray in internal mail'. *"After that [the ad] always appeared. But even things like that which other organizations would take for granted, GO did not"*.

*LeBlanc made my dress. I hadn't realized he was a seamstress!"*⁴⁴ Greg Spurgeon agreed, dances *"were about having fun, being with and building a feeling of community. On a particular night there are 450 people gay men and women who want to get together. They are not hiding"*. Therefore, GO championed their dances as a positive alternative to the economically exploitative commercial bar scene. Unlike commercial venues, GO's dances fostered rather than fed off community. For Ian MacLennan dances were different: *"at a dance you could circulate, and be as private or public as you wanted. It was providing an opportunity for a safe place and there weren't too many of those"*.⁴⁵ Charlie Hill believed, *"there was certainly a need to have gay dances that were cooperative and not be confined to the bars"*.⁴⁶

Bars: the Coral Reef & the Lord Elgin Hotel

As a venue for the creation of social networks, gay bars proved critical to the formation of lesbian and gay community. Even in the early seventies as a nascent commercial scene was emerging, gay bars already formed an important niche. In part this had been the result of the sixties homophile movement's failure to engage with an emerging bar scene. Because the U.S. Mattachine's Society did not confront police harassment of bars, a "separate kind of political activity based in the bar culture" emerged, distinct from the homophile movement.⁴⁷ Bars along with other commercial and community spaces that emerged in the sixties were locations that provided the early lesbian and gay movement "with a ready-made, concentrated constituency available for political and social

⁴⁴ Ian MacLennan.

⁴⁵ Ian MacLennan. During these years Hull's bars stayed open until 3 AM and many people went to Hull after the Ontario-side bars closed at 1 AM.

⁴⁶ Charlie Hill.

⁴⁷ D'Emilio, p. __

organizing.⁴⁸ Reflecting back on the role of U.S. gay bars circa 1972, Michael Bronski stresses “gay bars were not simply for cruising, they were community centres, public meeting spaces, and town squares, clotheslines people could hang over to gossip and bulletin boards...the bars were where you found information”.⁴⁹ Yet Ottawa in early seventies had few gay bars; none particularly appealing. Ian MacLennan recalls there was the “*Lord Elgin... the Coral Reef... where else: the Chez Henri after hours. It was a pub in Hull. There were a lot of hookers there, drag queens went there. Some dealers went there. It was a pretty rough place. Going to the Chez Henri over in Hull...you were living dangerously*”.⁵⁰

While in retrospect we appreciate the role gay bars played in fomenting community, the bars on offer in the seventies were often experienced with mixed feelings. Charlie Hill described Ottawa’s bars as “*not very interesting at the time. Bars came and went in Ottawa and Hull. Certainly the Coral Reef...was pretty deadly*...”⁵¹ These ‘not-very-interesting’ bars were typical of the time, being dirty, grim, dark and seedy spaces that did not inspire pride. Among the earliest political concerns of early liberationists was the “shabby, rundown character of the few commercial establishments” that served the community.⁵² In a March 1973 edition of *GO Info*, Charlie Hill considered the social and political implications Ottawa’s bar scene. He despaired how

⁴⁸ Nash 2005, p. 115. Rosenthal (1990, p. 48) concluded the ability of same-sex spaces such as bars to draw people into social networks was clear. However, publicly gay-identified bars or spaces were frowned upon by homophiles. They believed such bars drew people together but away from the larger society. But the failure to see bars as a resource weakened the effectiveness of homophile organizing.

⁴⁹ Bronski 1988, p. 48.

⁵⁰ Ian MacLennan.

⁵¹ Charlie Hill.

⁵² Nash (2005, p. 116) is speaking of the situation in Toronto in the early seventies, but analysis is readily applicable to the whole of Canada.

many gays feared going out because of “rumours of RCMP surveillance of bars”. This “kept a majority of Ottawa gays stuck in their closets” except during gay weekends in Toronto or Montréal. Rather than “hide or flee” some took to drinking in anonymous bars or “alienating street cruising”. Few Ottawa bars tolerated gays, being “owned by non-gays and...ostensibly straight bars”. Thus gays lacked “control over our economic lives and minimal control” over “institutions profiting from our ghettoization”.⁵³

The time for change had come; at the hands of GO who offered “a place to meet people without having to go to bed with them”. Hill described GO’s Centre and dances as place to “*work and learn from and with other gays, finding joy and pride in our gayness, no longer in shame and fear*”. Hill was not alone in championing the alternatives the movement could provide. In 1973 Gays for Equality (Winnipeg) described its community space as one “where gays and straights may mix in a non-cruisey, non-exploitative atmosphere”.⁵⁴ Many of the era’s activists believed the commercial bar scene economically exploited a population with few options. Forbes writing in the BP compared bar owners as “vultures who get pig fattened from the money of people who believe there is no alternative”.⁵⁵ Whether gay-identified or merely tolerant, businesses were owned by people with little sense of community. Social

⁵³ C Hill, ‘Where are you going out tonight?’, *GO Info*, no. 5, 1973, p. 1. At a GO general meeting on January 9, 1973 it was reported that patrons leaving the Coral Reef and Club Private were being followed by Ottawa Police. Some had been stopped and asked about the nature of the clubs. It was also reported Club Private had been charged with selling alcohol without a licence (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972-Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02: Minutes: Jan. 9 1973). This did not draw an outcry from GO. As Charlie Hill remarked, the owner “was playing with fire...[serving] booze without a licence...he was running a real risk”.

⁵⁴ G Bourgeois & B Wallace, B A More Aggressive Stance: Gay in Manitoba, *Body Politic*, no. 9, 1973, p. 17.

⁵⁵ J Forbes, The Gay Ghetto, *Body Politic*, no. 1, 1971, p. 17.

opportunities would not be provided for free.⁵⁶ This critique could apply to movement members also. Charlie Hill was critical of CHAT president George Hislop: “one criticism I have of George is that he had a very strong commercial sense. And he was really much more interested in working with bar keepers and the commercial gay scene rather than outside of it”.⁵⁷

Many feared an emerging bar-scene and the growth of gay-identified neighbourhoods ghettoized a community just as it claimed a place in the public sphere. It was true bars and neighbourhoods generated a sense of community but they did so problematically. In its first issue the *Body Politic* Collective wrote, “unlike other oppressed minorities, the vast majority of gays cannot be identified and will prefer the security of the gay ghetto for a long time to come”. So “despite all its shortcomings the gay ghetto is extremely attractive compared to being in the closet”.⁵⁸ As the movement and ‘gay-bourhoods’ became more established, ambivalence continued. In February 1975 Ken Popert noted that outside Toronto the movement “sprang up to provide, in a cooperative and more human form, that which gay Toronto already took for granted and had even begun to despise: the Ghetto”.⁵⁹ Popert reminded readers that when the movement appeared in Ontario, participants knew “bar owners weren’t going to lead gays out of the ghetto and into a promised land”. Since then gay life had “grown far the

⁵⁶ Kinsman 1987, p. 144-45.

⁵⁷ Charlie Hill.

⁵⁸ *Body Politic*, no. 1, 1971, p. 4.

⁵⁹ K Popert, ‘Comment: All Together Now’, *Body Politic*, no. 17, 1975, p. 10. For a detailed discussion of the emergence of Toronto’s Church Street as a gay neighbourhood and the community’s relationship and reaction to over time see: Nash, C., 2006. ‘Toronto’s Gay Village (1969-1982): Plotting the Politics of Gay Identity’, *The Canadian Geographer*, 50(1), 1-16. Nash points out how for most of the movement’s first decade or so most people opposed the creation of gay-identified spaces. By the eighties however as the movement’s politics change, the ‘gay village’ becomes a celebrated ‘gay-space’ demonstrating political strength.

beyond the cramped existence permitted in the city's commercial gay ghetto". For liberationists like Popert, GO and other movement groups, commercial bars were a barrier. To bring about their dream of community, more positive alternatives had to be made available.⁶⁰

Based on Ottawa's few offerings, many pined for such alternatives. Consider for example the Coral Reef's inauspicious location: the basement of a multi-level parking lot across from Ottawa's (then) court house and police station. Given local anxieties about local police and the RCMP, it could not have been more poorly situated.⁶¹ Ottawa's oldest gay bar, it would close in 2000 after a 33 year run. When it opened in 1967 it was the only bar at which one could dance and drink. It operated as a gay bar on weekends; Friday nights were primarily for lesbians, Saturdays for gay men, while Sundays featured drag performers.⁶² Therefore, for lesbians the Coral Reef was an important, albeit problematic space. By the 1990s the Coral Reef (Oral Grief in local parlance) was an aging and ill-favoured space. Lit with Saturday Night Fever-era disco lighting, the Reef's constant presence nonetheless offered reassurance.

Ottawa's other 70s-era gay bar was an un-official gay bar in the basement of the Lord Elgin Hotel (LE) that existed at the mercy of the hotel's none-too-happy-about-it management. Denis LeBlanc recalled the LE "*allowed us, more or less, to use the*

⁶⁰ Warner 2002, p. 90-1.

⁶¹ The Reef did not initially open as a gay bar. The Coral Reef opened as a registered private club for the "better understanding and appreciation of the music, and appreciation of music, art and literature of the countries of the Caribbean, Central and South America" (Jay, Lesson to the gay community, *GO Info*, no. 8, 1973, p. 10).

⁶² See: D Smith, 'Rejuvenating the Reef', In *Ottawa Xpress*, 2 March 2006, viewed on March 2011, <<http://www.ottawaxpress.ca/news/news.aspx?iIDArticle=8536>>; MacKinnon, N 'Relive Life on a Coral Reef'. In *Capital Xtra*, 26 February, 2006, viewed on March 2011 <http://www.xtra.ca/public/Ottawa/Relive_life_on_a_Coral_Reef-1407>.

basement until such time as we started to make too much noise and they locked us out". The bar had operated since WW II, "*when the Navy Boys used to hang out there...because of their temporary buildings [housing] across the street. It was mostly a hang-out for navy guys that were gay*". Later it became popular with an after-work crowd. "*The evening crowd was a bit more lively...just ordinary gays from the community*".⁶³ Greg Spurgeon concurred, saying "*of course it had been a gay place in Ottawa as I understood it, for decades...it was kind of an Ottawa establishment*".⁶⁴ Clearly, neither the Reef nor the LE felt particularly connected to the community.⁶⁵ Bars like the LE that merely tolerated gays, left the community no "form of cultural ownership", limiting the degree to which these spaces validated or helped foster individual or community identities.⁶⁶

Yet given that they served as community spaces, bars fell under GO's critical eye. In 1972 the Reef, located very near the University of Ottawa, briefly initiated a policy of admitting only people with a valid student ID, weeding out gay clients. In *GO Info*, Jay took to task those who failed to be angry with the Coral Reef, asking: "Do you still think that gays don't need to be liberated? Shit, what more do you need?"⁶⁷ The Reef would back down but community reaction had been muted. Nor would the community be galvanized by a series of negative incidents at the LE. In February 1974, *GO Info* reported staff had refused to serve two gay men. In another incident a man (Charles

⁶³ Denis LeBlanc. There were two bars at the Lord Elgin; a mixed (straight and gay) bar upstairs and a downstairs bar which gay men preferred as did some lesbians.

⁶⁴ Spurgeon, Greg.

⁶⁵ In later years, the Reef would become a valued and supportive community member, hosting numerous fundraisers for various causes.

⁶⁶ McDiarmid 1999, pp.63-4.

⁶⁷ Jay no. 8 1973, p.10.

Block) who had ignored staff insisting he not move from table to table was expelled and barred. Jay asked “are we going to let them get away with this type of discriminatory behaviour?”⁶⁸ Owing to Ottawa’s conservatism or perhaps *GO Info*’s limited circulation, GO’s calls for protest had no effect. Gays of Ottawa executive members intervened on behalf of Charles Block, speaking with Anna Whitely, Ottawa contact for the Ontario Human Rights Commission. But Ontario’s Code offered no sexual orientation protections.⁶⁹ The GO executive facilitated a meeting between Block and LE management. It lifted the ban, expressed regret, and displeasure with *GO Info*’s reporting.⁷⁰ While GO did not yet have the cultural capital to mobilize the community to act, LE management clearly believed it did. Yet in other cities, such as Toronto, the poor treatment lesbians and gay in bars could led to confrontations which in turn became rallying points for movement action, adding to its social and cultural capital.⁷¹

Conflicts with the LE bar continued. In the summer of 1975 patrons who typically wore jeans and t-shirts faced a new dress code.⁷² Greg Spurgeon believes it was part of a campaign to ‘get rid of us’. Greg remembers a LE “*guard, Emile I believe was*

⁶⁸ Jay, ‘More Trouble at the LE’, *GO Info*, no. 9, 1974, p. 1. John Duggan believes Block had actually run afoul of Ontario’s liquor regulations. In 1974 patrons were not allowed to move about with a drink. “*If you were at one table with a beer in front of you, the waiter took your beer to another table if you wanted to move...and that meant you should tip him*”.

⁶⁹ CGLA GO File No.: GO Files, File Name: 1982 – 017/01A > 82-017/01 02 – Exec Mtg Min > Dec. 17, 1973: Minutes: Feb. 12 1974.

⁷⁰ CGLA GO File No.: GO Files, File Name: 1982 – 017/01A > 82-017/01 02 – Exec Mtg Min > Dec. 17, 1973: Minutes: Mar. 4 1974.

⁷¹ In 1977 in Kingston, Ontario after a male couple were instructed by management their dancing together was not allowed, the Queen’s Homophile Association organized a protest attended by GO members (McDiarmid 1999, p.123-4). However, one of the seventies era most notable confrontation occurred in Toronto’s Brunswick House Pub in January 1975. After four lesbians had participated in the pub’s amateur night by singing ‘I Enjoy Being a Dyke’ they were asked to leave. Refusing, they were forcibly removed by eight police officers. Subsequently, Toronto’s community rallied to the ‘Brunswick Four’. For Warner (p. 40-1) this signalled a “radical change in the consciousness of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, and of a hardening resolve to fight” police harassment and discrimination (See: *Body Politic*, ‘Partial Win for the 4’, *Body Politic*, no. 14, 1974, p. 6.

⁷² I MacLennan, Lord Elgin = Homophobia,, *GO Info*, no. 4, 1975, p. 4.

*his name...a big chubby kinda' cheerful guy who didn't seem to mind the community but he was being given his instructions". Emile would "patrol the place and check the washrooms to make sure nothing was going on and of course things probably did go on. I think he was told to clamp down and it became a less comfortable environment".*⁷³ In the community GO was blamed for the imposition of the dress code. Reports in *GO Info* were blamed. Among GO's executive there was only anger at the LE. Greg Spurgeon said, *"I think the activist part of the community kind of went, 'well we can find another place.'... they're throwing us out. We thought of it as 'well screw them'. Why should we spend our money here if they don't appreciate and haven't appreciated all the business they've got over all these years?"*⁷⁴ Ultimately, the LE's bar closed in the summer of 1976. Some believe a particularly boisterous night at the LE enjoyed by delegates attending the third National Gay Rights Conference was a last straw. According to John Duggan delegates, *"probably did things at the Lord Elgin, like standing on tables that they would never do in their local bar back home...went to the local bar to have a good night and they were not controlled. And they were drinking standing-up....you had to be sitting down. It was wicked...and the Lord Elgin reacted by closing it down".*⁷⁵

Gays of Ottawa picketed the LE and Charlie Hill met with management but it came to naught.⁷⁶ Interventions by GO on behalf of the community had backfired as well. John Duggan remembers that *"of course the community was very hostile and held*

⁷³ Greg Spurgeon.

⁷⁴ Greg Spurgeon. Poor service at the LE led to an effort to establish a gay clientele at another bar. *"Unfortunately, it meant we had to go to that bar every night for weeks trying to get people to move to this new place. It didn't work and in the end something settled down at the Lord Elgin and I think things went back to normal".*⁷⁴

⁷⁵ John Duggan. Under Ontario liquor regulations at the time, patrons were not allowed to move their drinks from one table to another nor drink standing up.

⁷⁶ CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / () File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes: 82-015 / (): Minutes: Jul. 8 1975.

GO responsible for that’.⁷⁷ This outcome reflected how conservative and under-the-radar Ottawa’s gay community was. One positive outcome of the LE’s closing was that it led to the opening of the nearby 166B Tavern on Laurier Avenue. A gay bar, it ran for many years staffed by ex-LE waiters who actually preferred gay clients—they tipped better. Located above a Hungarian Restaurant in what had been the restaurant’s second floor bar, the ‘B’ was unique. Few gay bars had an entire wall taken up by a three-dimensional, lighted, wall mural of downtown Budapest.

Community hostility towards GO was not unusual. Accused of being too political, too public, too ‘out there’, and of ‘rocking the boat’ that sustained the status quo, GO often felt unappreciated. As Lloyd Plunket recalls, in *“early days GO was considered a fairly radical organization....This [(gay liberation)] was all new to society in general...some early spokespersons were not your standard fare. When I was involved in GO, when I’d go to the bars, if I’d raise the political thing they just push that away, [saying] ‘I’m just here to cruise etc.’”*.⁷⁸ Mike Johnstone believes some, *“looked on Gays of Ottawa as a political group... [people] who resisted the idea of a public gay*

⁷⁷ John Duggan.

⁷⁸ I asked Lloyd if he was thinking of Charlie Hill when he referred to GO’s spokespeople not being your ‘standard’ fare. *“Yes, and his radical drag and the whole fairy movement and that sort of thing”*. Hill often wore his hair & beard long with beads woven into them but denies wearing radical drag. He admitted to once wearing a long denim skirt at work...*“my office was on the 5th floor, the library was on the 4th floor. And if you’ve ever tried to carry a stack of books upstairs in a long skirt...you practically break your neck. So I didn’t do it again”*. Lloyd’s reference to the ‘whole fairy movement’ reflected a commonly held belief that Hill belonged to the Radical Faerie movement. Hill denies being involved and indeed the Faeries did not emerge until the eighties. Faeries challenged the hyper-masculine, clone-look style that urban gay men had adopted in the late 60s, a style meant to counter the popular image of homosexual men as effeminate and not ‘real’ men. Often Faeries sporting beards, hats etc. met in rural settings to engage in radical drag, donning a dress without attempting to ‘pass’ as female (P Hennen, ‘Fae Spirits and Gender Trouble: Resistance and Compliance Among the Radical Faeries’, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, vol. 33, no. 5, 2004, pp. 499-533). Hill’s style which included a long beard, colourful clothes, hats etc. could easily led one to believe he was a Faerie.

community. *It was hard for some people*".⁷⁹ Who found GO problematic? Greg Spurgeon believes primarily it was conservative gay men, "*people who one would think of as suits. It's hard to understand now how very afraid people were at that time. The people who were most afraid, most of them were probably men...conservative in other choices in their lives...who tended to say over and over again, 'my sexual orientation is just one little tiny part of me...the rest of me is just fine*".⁸⁰ The fear of discovery by one's family or the RCMP was intense in seventies Ottawa. Looking back Barry Deeprise wondered if GO's core gay liberationists simply did not grasp the anxiety felt by older gay men. "*People [who] were really afraid and GO being [made up of] kind of young, not established people, didn't appreciate this*". Many people "*didn't want to write 'Gays of Ottawa' on a cheque. But they would write 'GO'. All these little nuances today, just seem quaint*".⁸¹

Other executive members experienced varied community reactions to GO. Charlie Hill did not find the community hostile, "*it was more avoidance*".⁸² For David Garmaise it was, "*mixed...but we can't say the community spoke with one voice on [GO]*". Some people "*applauded what we were doing*", people who were perhaps not "*ready to do it themselves*". Some became GO members, but many "*people...resented what we were doing because they thought [everything was] okay*". People who were closeted at work, hitting the bars at night, "*happy with that lifestyle*". Some asked, "*What are you out campaigning for? I don't feel discriminated against...I'm happy with*

⁷⁹ Mike Johnstone, Interviewed on: March. 19, 2007. Johnstone joined GO late in 1979. Even then many remained uncomfortable with GO politics.

⁸⁰ Greg Spurgeon.

⁸¹ Barry Deeprise.

⁸² Charlie Hill.

*the way I'm living my life. You know [GO] might screw it up".*⁸³ Denis LeBlanc too found people who regarded GO as disruptive. When *"we gay-liberationists arrived...there was this old song 'don't rock the boat'"*. There were *"some civil servants, who really didn't want to get involved, who really didn't want to hear...have their social networks changed at all. They liked having the home parties...being able to pick and choose whose in and out of their group"*.⁸⁴

On the matter of house parties, these played a role in generating social capital for lesbians and gays early on. For example, African-American lesbians in Detroit, circa 1940-1975, experienced stronger social networks through parties than they did at bars, and, less racism.⁸⁵ In late sixties Philadelphia, the importance of social parties grew as more gay men moved to its City Centre district.⁸⁶ MacDiarmid in her study of lesbians and gay in Kingston, Ontario from WW II to 1990, found house parties offered a more relaxed atmosphere than did the city's gay-tolerant bars. Broadly speaking, parties came in two types: smaller, more intimate parties designed to "cultivate tightly knit communities" or others supporting a "loose social network based on communality: the common ground of sexual otherness". These smaller parties tended to draw people based on their shared class, gender and/or occupation. Regardless of this gay men tended to

⁸³ Garmaise, David.

⁸⁴ Denis LeBlanc.

⁸⁵ Thorpe 1996, p. 41. Because bars were expensive and often unwelcoming to African-Americans, for Black lesbians in particular, house parties were more accessible.

⁸⁶ House parties were socially more open, allowed greater physical contact, and little risk of police raids. In Philadelphia, Stein (2000, p. 27) found lesbians avoided the City Centre's gay-identified bars and neighbourhoods, preferring parties elsewhere in the city. For them the City Centre area was too gay. Meeker (2001 p.88-9) notes that in the U.S. before the sixties, both house parties and bars provided a shared sense of, "unity based on their secret identity and mutual interest in keeping each other's identities from becoming public knowledge". In those days if one's sexual identity became public knowledge it could led to social exile from heterosexual and homosexual social spheres.

desire women at their parties “so no one would know that they were gay”.⁸⁷ In Canada generally, Warner found house parties played a role outside of larger centers such as Toronto. In smaller centers, “life was often more circumscribed. Well into the seventies, private parties and other social functions, such as dinners and potlucks, were the main social activities for homosexuals in cities like Edmonton and Calgary”.⁸⁸

In Kingston Ontario, MacDiarmid found house parties played an important role in maintaining gay identity and strengthening community connections because of the city lacked the kinds of “public gay institutions” found in bigger centres.⁸⁹ The impact of parties on Ottawa’s gay scene is less clear. Charlie Hill stated, “*when I lived with some other friends in New Edinburgh we threw lots of parties, but they were just parties*”. Asked if they were important to the community, Hill said, “*no, I don’t remember them as being so. Even when I was in Ottawa in the 60s, they were just private parties*”.⁹⁰ Some actually preferred house parties which were not aligned with an *out* community, providing distance from GO’s gay liberationists. Parties also revealed community class divisions. In 1977 when Barry Deeprise arrived from Vancouver he encountered a “*kind of dinner party circuit and [its members] were really afraid of Gays of Ottawa*”. Some of those he met were from a Male Homophile Anonymous group. “*Definitely well-to-do. The A-gays...yes that's what you call it. That group regarded GO as too political and too open*”. Potential new members were first met at restaurant. “*I guess to judge that you*

⁸⁷ MacDiarmid 1999, p. 71-2; 98-9.

⁸⁸ Warner 2002, p. 53.

⁸⁹ MacDiarmid 1999, p. 81.

⁹⁰ Charlie Hill. New Edinburgh is an Ottawa wealthy neighbourhood east of its downtown core.

weren't too radical".⁹¹ Denis LeBlanc too speaks of the parties and class. The parties "we gay-libbers had were very different. They were open, noisy, and the doors were open...a whole different kind of house party; 200 people...A-gays had their parties, yes, where you'd invite 10 friends and one new person. You were very carefully screened...very cautious...a 'boys in the band' type of style".⁹² Marie Robertson had a similar experience, remembering "going to parties [(circa. 1975)]...I was like 25, the [lesbians] guests would be 45 then....these career civil service women who thought I was an idiot [being involved with GO]....'why are you trying to rock the boat?' You're an idealistic young fool! Why are you wasting all your energy on this, it's not important".⁹³ Kinsman and Gentile found that for Ottawa lesbians, socializing through house parties was of greater importance than it had been for men who could choose from various bars and cruising areas.⁹⁴

Gays of Ottawa GO Centre(s)

In July 1972 Gays of Ottawa proposed establishing "a distress/information centre in the name of Gays of Ottawa" at Pestalozzi College. This would become GO's first community centre or GO Centre. In a submission to Pestalozzi College, GO quoted research conducted by the Ottawa Distress Centre. In May 1972, the Centre surveyed

⁹¹ Barry Deepröse. McDiarmid's (1999, p. 74) research in Kingston, Ontario found a similarly cautious approach. Some social networks were based on "a mutual need to keep their [same-sex] desire hidden".

⁹² Denis LeBlanc. 'Boys in the Band style' refers to a 1970 film, based on the 1968 play of the same name. Set during a New York birthday party in the late sixties, it depicts a group of gay men who are by degrees outrageous, catty, self-loathing, alcoholic, vicious, manipulative and effeminate. Gay liberationists quickly labelled Boys, dated, stereotypical and homophobic. In March 1975, when Ottawa's Camelot Little Theater produced the play, GO protested. It argued the play failed to "take into account changing attitudes which have occurred since the birth of gay liberation in 1969" (GO Info, GO Leaflets Boys in the Band, *GO Info*, no. 2, 1975, p. 4).

⁹³ Marie Robertson.

⁹⁴ Kinsman & Gentile 2010, p. 208.

125 gay-related calls. It knew the Canadian Council on Religion and the Homosexuals (CRH) had folded but had heard a new group was forming. The distress centre was concerned where “people were being referred as there is no recognized agency in town which caters to their needs”.⁹⁵ In a letter supporting GO’s submission, Centre executive director, Patricia Delbridge stated Ottawa had a clear need for “non-judgmental, specialized help for homosexual people”. Ottawa’s existing resources had “a definite heterosexual bias and worked with little factual information”.⁹⁶ Possibly GO proposed opening a ‘distress/information centre’ because of the Distress Centre’s support, presenting a familiar type of agency to Pestalozzi. But once opened, the GO Centre was not called a ‘distress centre’.

Having a space at Pestalozzi was “vital to establishing ourselves, as a viable community organization”. A physical Centre provided GO a “solid foundation and the beginning of a physical presence in the community”. In addition to Pestalozzi’s central location, Denis LeBlanc recalled “*well...it was cheap*”.⁹⁷ The GO Centre was not just space GO would passively occupy. In its application GO made clear its space was a “vital tool”, acting as, “our equipment of communication with the distressed and/or uninformed wanting a helping hand or an understanding ear”. Pestalozzi accepted GO’s submission, signing a lease in August 1972 for suite 601 at \$100 a month.⁹⁸ Through its

⁹⁵ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02C File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02 35: Document: Directors of Gays of Ottawa - Distress and Information Centre, Jul. 10 1972 p.1-2. Paul Wise, Maurice Belanger and Gaston Charpentier authored GO’s submission. In its submission GO stated the, “CRH never got off the ground”, portraying itself as a “new group, new blood”.

⁹⁶ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02C File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02 35: Letter: P. Delridge, Ottawa Distress Centre, 6, July 1972.

⁹⁷ Denis LeBlanc.

⁹⁸ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02C, File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02 35: Letter: G. Charpentier, GO to J. Heneault, Pestalozzi College, Aug. 29 1972.

Centre GO made its first physical foray into establishing itself in the field of lesbian and gay organizing.

Ian MacLennan remembers Pestalozzi was “*really sort of grotty and not clean...I knew what Rochdale College was like and Pestalozzi seemed to be sort of a down-market version of that. I don't remember it ever being really well kept*”.⁹⁹ Charlie Hill states, “*Pestalozzi was supposed to be Ottawa's Rochdale. Actually, it was pretty tame. It was set up by the same group of people but certainly it was not as vibrant or radical*”.¹⁰⁰ David Garmaise found the College a “*strange place, it was supposed to be an institute of learning but I don't know that it ever really operated like that. It was mostly just cheap apartments and people of all types lived there*”.¹⁰¹

GO Info reported GO's opening of a “liberation, information, and distress centre in suite 601 Pestalozzi College”. The Centre was “a drop-in centre for the gay community, and a locale for organizing, printing, committee meetings etc. Informal information, counselling and referral services relating to homosexuality will be provided”.¹⁰² Without specifically mentioning lesbians, GO appealed to the out gay community implicitly inclusive of lesbians. The Centre provided GO an opportunity “to organize and present itself to the community, both gay and straight: i.e. to COME OUT” [sic]). *GO Info's* story never mentions homophobia but the Centre was designed to counter it, being a place to learn “about our position in society, to increase our awareness of how we, as homosexuals, are oppressed by this society...how this oppression

⁹⁹ Ian MacLennan.

¹⁰⁰ Charlie Hill.

¹⁰¹ David Garmaise.

¹⁰² *GO Info*, The GO Centre, *GO Info*, no. 2/3, 1972, p. 1.

inevitably becomes implicit in our own thoughts and actions so that we oppress ourselves...denying our GAYness in the face of the surrounding straight environment” (or field). Here *GO Info* unwillingly provided an apt description of homophobic habitus, its influence on the field, and its enactment in ‘thoughts and actions’, through embodied habitus.

Here homophobia’s effect, acting so ‘we oppressed ourselves by denying our gayness’, is described as a form of symbolic violence. The GO Centre would counter the lesbians and gay acceptance, namely their misrecognition, of common sense (arbitrary) notions of homosexuality as an illness. The Centre sought to impose a new cultural given, namely ‘Gay is Good’ (sic).¹⁰³ Visiting it was a “first step toward combating [oppression] and achieving personal liberation”.¹⁰⁴ Thus the Centre is envisioned as a dynamic, pedagogic space. Just as in a classroom, GO volunteers (teachers) speaking with visitors (students) mobilized a counter pedagogy. Designed to impose a positive, albeit arbitrary view of homosexuality, the GO Centre engaged in its own symbolic violence.¹⁰⁵ This effort to counter the dominant culture’s view of homosexuality through education, transformed the Centre into what J. Hill refers to as a ‘site of transgression’ where “representations constructed by heteronormative” society could be cast aside.¹⁰⁶ At the GO Centre, volunteers manifested and distributed counter forms of self-

¹⁰³ For Bourdieu (Schubert 2008 p.184) language as an “instrument of power and action”, makes symbolic violence possible. Gays of Ottawa and the wider movement would wield language in a similar manner.

¹⁰⁴ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02C File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02 35: Pamphlet: Gays of/d’ Ottawa GO Centre 08/09/1972).

¹⁰⁵ Classrooms are spaces of pedagogic communication. Teaching, involves the imposition (symbolic violence) of a cultural arbitrary which students tacitly agree to accept with a minimum of resistance or interpretation (Bourdieu 1989 p. 14).

¹⁰⁶ J. Hill 1996, p. 261-62.

representation and self-presentation, namely new forms of cultural capital while mobilizing the adoption of a gay liberation habitus.

The Centre's stress on action and change distinguished it from more socially-oriented space that other movement organizations offered.¹⁰⁷ The Centre's intent was political, which GO clearly stated, declaring it was "not a social club for gays; its' a GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT...seed of GAY LIBERATION" (sic). Perhaps as a nudge to the recalcitrant, *GO Info* concluded by asking, "If we CARE about YOU, why not care about US"?¹⁰⁸ In a subsequent promotional pamphlet the Centre was a "liberation house to work towards and achieve the aims of Gay liberation" where GO hoped, "gay sisters and gay brothers unite for a better world for all". Opening the Centre demonstrates GO's organizational habitus, and its growing cultural and social capital. To occupy a public space, offer programming etc. signalled it was a *real* organization. Open 7-10pm on weeknights, and from 2-7 pm on weekends, the Centre remained at Pestalozzi College until December 1975.

The Centre's space was practical if imperfect given Pestalozzi had been designed as a residence. Denis LeBlanc points out "*[Pestalozzi] wasn't designed as an office. It was okay for the beginning. We had a little living room area and two offices, one for the office-office and one for the Gayline. A tiny cubicle area we used for printing*".¹⁰⁹ Regardless it was also critically needed social space, hosting a hugely popular Friday

¹⁰⁷ The Centre differed from Winnipeg's Happenings Social Club which opened in 1972. Happenings, "saw itself as strictly a social centre for lesbians and gays as opposed to a force for political action" (McLeod, 1996, p.72).

¹⁰⁸ Another bonus of the Centre's location was its closeness to "the Pestalozzi Free Medical Clinic...the Ottawa Distress Centre...and an Ottawa lawyer who has agreed to provide free legal advice" (*GO Info* no. 2/3, 1972 p.1).

¹⁰⁹ Denis LeBlanc.

night drop-in, primarily attended by men. Paul-François Sylvestre remembers drop-ins commonly saw 20 or more people, of “*all ages...someone who was 50, someone who was 20. Anyone could come because there was no alcohol*”. Attending one was a first step for many. Sylvestre “*discovered very late that I was gay, probably 25-26 years old. and I thought I was the only one...So I went one night. The first night I just walked around the block. I waited till the next meeting to go inside*”.¹¹⁰

Relations with Pestalozzi were a bit chaotic owing to its relaxed management but it was mutually supportive. It provided GO with a space while the College received rent. When GO departed in 1975 it was partly due to the Centre’s success. Denis LeBlanc recalls how on Friday nights, “*there were so many people dropping in...that place as jammed. You had 35 people in that room and it was wall to wall people*”.¹¹¹ However, finances also factored in. In January 1975, Ontario’s Liquor Licensing Board had re-categorized Pestalozzi as a residence meaning it could no longer host licensed events such as GO dances. In a January membership letter GO suggested dances continue without alcohol as they provided, “*a unique spin-off in educational, social and political effects*”. Unlike “*the commercial exploitation of gay people at private clubs, the dances are reasonably priced*”.¹¹² However, ‘dry’ dances failed leaving GO “*financially precarious*”.¹¹³ This led GO to request a four month reprieve on rent which Pestalozzi granted. Also cash strapped, it needed GO to stay. But a place to hold dances had to be

¹¹⁰ Paul-François Sylvestre.

¹¹¹ Denis LeBlanc.

¹¹² CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02C File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02: Letter: GO to Membership, Jan. 25 1975.

¹¹³ *GO Info*, \$\$\$ GO Needs Help! *GO Info*, no. 2, 1975, p. 4. The Centre had also lost \$500 in equipment after a break in.

located as they were “the only regular social event of Gays of Ottawa”. Therefore in August the GO executive concluded the Centre must relocate.¹¹⁴

GO’s Carleton Section

Simultaneously as GO prepared to open its first GO Centre in September 1972, it established its Carleton Section, GO’s “spearhead of gay liberation on the Carleton University campus”.¹¹⁵ The Carleton Section was short lived and little detail remains about it. Here I primarily discuss the Section within the larger context of campus-based student organizing that took place during the sixties, in support of civil rights, feminism and ending the Vietnam war, from which the lesbian and gay movement drew cultural and social capital and enacted its organizational habitus.¹¹⁶ Among GO executive members memories of the Section were poor. Some who joined GO in the latter seventies had never heard of it. Denis LeBlanc had the best recollection, remembering it was primarily an outreach mechanism and as a “part of GO’s legacy of giving rise to other organizations”. Carleton University had been chosen as a location because “*there was always a separate group it seems at the University of Ottawa. They always seemed to be able to get their organization together but Carleton didn’t seem to be able to*”.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02C File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02: Document: GO – Report to the Education Committee and the Board of Directors Pestalozzi College, Jan. 1975; CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02C File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02: Letter: Charlie Hill, GO to Boyd MacGillivray, Education Committee, Pestalozzi College, Sep.16 1975. In CGLA, GO, File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes 82-015 / (): Aug. 9 1975, Exec. Mtg Min.

¹¹⁵ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/05A File Name: Carleton University 1972 82-017/05: Pamphlet: The Gays of / d’ Ottawa – Section Carleton University, Aug. 1972.

¹¹⁶ Murray (1996, p. 58) concluded in the U.S. the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee was an influential organizing model for the lesbian and gay movement.

¹¹⁷ Denis LeBlanc. Charlie Hill confirms the University of Ottawa had a home-grown group formed without GO’s assistance.

The impetus to organize on campus reflected the past experiences of GO members. Denis LeBlanc had been involved with University of Waterloo's Gay Liberation Movement as had Marie Robertson. In turn Robertson helped found the Hamilton Homophile Association at McMaster University in 1970.¹¹⁸ Charlie Hill helped form UTHA and believed campus organizing was essential for movement's growth.¹¹⁹ Marie Robertson spoke to the importance of on-campus groups, stressing how in "*smaller cities like Kitchener, Waterloo or London...the [gay] organization [was] attached to a university*". In the "*early phase [of] gay liberation...in many cities, [groups were] attached to universities*". People, "*invested a lot of energy when they were in University*". Upon leaving it, "*depending on what they were doing and how conservative their town was...they'd still support stuff [like] going to the dances but [the] focus was very different*", less purely social. At university "*it was very social and you [felt you] were safe*" taking part.¹²⁰ This sense of security was critical. For example, when Charlie Hill became UTHA's first president, he had been "*the only student willing to go public*".¹²¹ Continuing to be out after leaving university however, was never an issue for key GO members. Robertson stated, "*Charlie, Denis, John and myself, we were totally out so it didn't matter, nothing shifted for us [after university]. Nobody was going to put Denis back in the closet!*"¹²²

One drawback of on-campus groups was their inherent instability owing to student turnover. Marie Robertson points out a student "*population is more transient.*

¹¹⁸ Hamilton's group had formed after members of Waterloo's Homophile Movement, including Robertson had attended McMaster University conference on sexuality.

¹¹⁹ Charlie Hill.

¹²⁰ Marie Robertson.

¹²¹ Charlie Hill.

¹²² Marie Robertson.

People, while students, they're very involved...but then people are leaving" once school ends. *"Kitchener-Waterloo is a city where people come to go school but then leave"*. Charlie Hill concurred, *"Yes...all these things at universities depended on the individuals who were the catalyst. Once students graduated and moved on there was no one to carry it on"*.¹²³ Writing in the BP, H. Brewster drew a similar conclusion. To address this, Brewster suggested campus groups "seek a stable base in the community and act as catalysts for the foundation of community groups".¹²⁴ Perhaps GO hoped its Carleton Section would be similarly stabilized. In Toronto UTHA had essentially acted as Brewster suggested, setting up the off-campus CHAT.

Given this instability, it is not surprising that Carleton's Section ceased to exist quickly. At the first national gay Conference, in Québec City, October 1973, GO reported that, "autumn brings more students to Ottawa and more students means more members for GO and renewed life...[but]...there is no group at Carleton University this year so our efforts will be more unified in one group". Clearly, GO saw students not as people to be won over but as potential new members.¹²⁵ Back in Ottawa one month later, GO learns a new Carleton group had formed. The Carleton Gay Integration Group was more socially oriented than the Section had been.¹²⁶ This development put the short tenure of GO's Section in a different light. That a home-grown, stand-alone group had formed was seen as evidence GO's 'seed of liberation' had taken root.

¹²³ Charlie Hill.

¹²⁴ H Brewster, *Non-Urban Gay Ghetto Continued: Gay University Groups, Body Politic*, no. 2, 1972, p. 19.

¹²⁵ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/05A File Name: National Gay Conference, Québec 1973 82-017/05 37: Document: GO Report from Gays of Ottawa, Québec Conference, Oct. 6 1973.

¹²⁶ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: General Mtg. Notes & Min - 1972-1973 - 82-017/01 04: Minutes: Nov. 6/7 1973.

Always willing to share its cultural capital, one year later Paul Wise, of GO's Intergroup Relations Committee was assisting with a Queen's University initiative to establish a lesbian and gay presence on campus. Queen's student, Rolland LeBrasseur wrote GO in November 1973 asking for guidance while actually doubting a campus gay group could be set up. Deeply lonely at Queens, Rolland envisioned a group that would save "people from the loneliness". He worries about "being labelled deviant and of not being able to combat and escape the persecution (as one can in a city)". Wise urges Rolland to secure recognition from the student council for credibility. In closing he cautions "progress will be slow but the feasibility of such groups has been adequately proved".¹²⁷ In 1973 the Queen's Homophile Association was formed and remained in operation until 1980, working to educate members and the community so "gays, lesbians, and bisexuals felt safe to 'come out'".¹²⁸

Gays of Ottawa did not emerge from a campus organization but nonetheless benefited from the cultural capital members gained from them. However, Marie Robertson believes GO's emerging independent of a university, was a strength. "*Here in Ottawa we had no attachment to either of the universities....it was independent queer people who had jobs. So their history and commitment to [GO] lasted for many years. And I think that made a big difference*".¹²⁹ I concur. Many of GO's key executive members, namely, Denis LeBlanc, John Duggan, Lloyd Plunket, Marie Robertson, David

¹²⁷ Wise counselled against overreaching, namely moving into areas such as legal reform, a newsletter, off-campus activities etc. until a solid on-campus group was established (CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B File Name: InterGroup Communications – Ltrs Sent – 1973-1073 – 82-017/02 28: Letter: P. Wise, GO Inter-Group Relations Committee to Rolland LeBrasseur, Queen's University, Nov. 3 1973). In his letter Wise quotes from Rolland's letter.

¹²⁸ McDiarmid 1999, p. 95. Where as many movement groups had chosen names that disguised their 'gay' aspect, here the Association chose a sexually ambiguous name in order to appeal to both men and women and stress it was "not a sexist organization" (1999, p. 98).

¹²⁹ Marie Robertson.

Garmaise, Ian MacLennan, and others, were both strongly committed and employed, most remaining involved for five to ten years, giving GO a degree of stability rare in movement groups.

GO's Second GO Centre

For its second GO Centre a location in Ottawa's Centretown area was desirable. Centrally located, Centretown was home to a growing visible lesbian and gay community. Quickly GO located a space, a second floor, 700 sq. ft. space above a photostudio located at the corner of Elgin and Gladstone. While not ideal because GO had to share an entrance and washroom, at \$225 a month plus hydro it was manageable. Interviewees made no mention of GO encountering resistance from potential landlords but executive minutes indicate their fellow tenants were unhappy. The landlord informed GO that the photo studio's owner and building janitor opposed their presence. In response, the executive discussed a 'telephone zap' to harass the photographer, an OHRC complaint, and/or, issuing a press release. Ultimately it did nothing as most tenants expressed no opposition.¹³⁰ However, neither Denis LeBlanc nor John Duggan actually remembered opposition to their moving in. Duggan suggests that possibly this lapse in memory was because GO would constantly, "*encounter resistance and hostility everywhere...so it did not stand out*".¹³¹ LeBlanc recalled resistance from more conservative GO members who opposed signage outside the new space, something not

¹³⁰ In CGLA, GO, File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes 82-015 / (): Nov. 19 1975, Exec. Mtg Min; In CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-01/01A, File Name: General Meeting Minutes 1975 82-017/01 06: Nov. 25 1975 General Meeting Min.

¹³¹ John Duggan.

possible at Pestalozzi. Ultimately, a small sign went in a window facing Elgin street. According to Denis LeBlanc there were “*no regrets, no complaints*”.¹³²

GO Info's November-December issue celebrated the Centre's January 1976 opening as “proof of our growing success”. Gays of Ottawa had “a community centre which is available to the entire Ottawa gay community”. In what I regard as a bit of ‘spin’, the rationale for leaving Pestalozzi was reported as being due to how “the former office which met our needs...had grown too small”.¹³³ The was true but primarily the move was financially required. The new space was better, having two large offices overlooking Elgin and two meeting rooms. Denis LeBlanc recalls, “*the office was big...we had three desks in there. We could have three people typing in there at the same time*”, allowing GO to separate business from social activities and comfortably accomodated fifty people.

Sadly however, GO lost the improved Centre to a fire on Friday, February 16, 1979. It lost virtually everything it possessed but none present were injured. Denis LeBlanc provides a detailed account. The fire broke out during a Friday drop-in. Because, “*there was no bar, so no drinking; everyone was sober but Friday nights were very busy*”. Without warning, the Centre filled with “*acrid smoke. Electrical [fire] smoke is a peculiar thing; it became very black. The smoke accumulated on the ceiling. I wasn't the last one out [but] by the time I went out, I had to crawl on my hands and knees from the top of the stairs*”. Remarkably, “*we were all very clear headed. It was winter so just grab your coat and go! Within two minutes the place was full of acrid*

¹³² Denis LeBlanc.

¹³³ *GO Info*, GO Centre Moves, *GO Info*, no. 6, 1975, p. 1.

smoke. *It was five minutes before there were huge flames. The whole building was destroyed; everything down to the walls*". According to Denis LeBlanc "*Lloyd [Plunkett] made sure everyone was out...such a courageous individual*".¹³⁴

The next morning little remained but a ruined building entombed in ice. David Garmaise and Roger Galipeau agree an electrical fire was the cause. Galipeau pointed out "*the building was really old; not taken care of. So an electrical fire like that spread very quickly*".¹³⁵ David Garmaise said, "*I don't remember [the cause] being much of an issue. The police and the fire department did their usual due diligence and found there was nothing suspicious*".¹³⁶ Thinking back Greg Spurgeon said, "*I don't remember very well but my intuitive remembrance is that no one thought we were being targeted. Everyone thought it was an accident*".¹³⁷ Reporting on the fire in the BP, Garmaise stated that firefighters battled in vain for seven hours to save the building but arson was not suspected.¹³⁸

For GO the loss was devastating. Recalling events, Denis LeBlanc said, "*The fire at the GO centre...it was a disaster. We'd worked so hard and things were going so well...stuff going on with the [CLGRC], CLGRO, [and] our alliances were strong with*

¹³⁴ Denis LeBlanc. John Duggan confirms Denis' recollection of Plunkett's actions but Lloyd himself does not.

¹³⁵ Roger Galipeau. Photography studio chemicals might have accelerated the blaze.

¹³⁶ David Garmaise.

¹³⁷ Greg Spurgeon. John Duggan, however, wondered about arson, because "*well, they never were able to officially determine*". He had been told by an acquaintance, of an ex-partner who "*had started the fire. And this person had been charged with starting other fires in Ottawa*". After this person moved to Montréal, Duggan read, "*his name in the paper again; charged with a fire at a gay bar in Montréal. I think...I kinda think it's true...he started the GO fire*".

¹³⁸ D Garmaise, 'GO Centre Destroyed by Fire', *Body Politic*, no. 51, 1979, p. 10. The account Garmaise gives differs from Denis' who recalls flames erupting five minutes after people got out. In the BP Garmaise reported "it took over an hour for the smoke to turn into flames. The fire had been building up in the walls and firemen were powerless to control it once it broke through the roof".

members of the community and outside it".¹³⁹ At the time of the fire GO was the coordinating office of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition. Many Coalition files were apparently lost, along with petitions with several thousand signatories favouring amending the Canadian Human Rights Act. The \$600,000 fire destroyed GO's files, books, membership lists and financial records, furniture and its preparatory materials for 'Celebration '79', the 7th annual national conference of lesbians and gays which it was to host. Gays of Ottawa president John Duggan assured Ottawa's media the organization GO would keep working without a Centre. "Gays of Ottawa was an institution, not a building".

When writing his March 1979 account, David Garmaise reported that not all the files had been lost, many survived because they were, "packed so tightly in metal filing cabinets".¹⁴⁰ However, Denis LeBlanc believes the real reason was the fact all "*our filing cabinets were closed. That was our habit on Friday nights...there was some water damage but it was not much*". It was fortunate too that the filing cabinets sat along "*an outside wall and that piece of the floor did not collapse*". Retrieving the cabinets had been easy as they were water soaked but now frozen. Details of their rescue are vague. Denis LeBlanc believes it was "*one of our members [a] a Bell telephone linesman. The next day he climbed up there and brought them down; Danny Dodge. I didn't watch him do it but the next day our files were safe*".¹⁴¹ In a BP follow-up story, Garmaise reported

¹³⁹ Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁴⁰ In his report Garmaise (no. 51 1979 p. 10) reported GO had called on all Canadian movement groups to help in rebuilding. In particular, GO sought, "copies of any correspondence sent to GO or CLGRC since September 1978, since much of this material had not been filed away and was therefore destroyed by the fire".

¹⁴¹ Denis LeBlanc.

GO members, Serge Gauthier and Michel Lavigne, “at considerable risk to their own safety, entered what remained of the building and managed to get the files out”.¹⁴²

Gays of Ottawa was now homeless. Operations of its Gayline were transferred to member homes; regular meetings were suspended etc. However, Denis LeBlanc could not stress enough the importance of GO’s rescuing files from “*our early days. That was our history. We didn’t take a lot of photos at the time so all we had was our records. All the official records of the NGRC [CLGRC], briefs, all the original copies*”.¹⁴³ Much of these surviving files would be shortly donated to the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, comprising the bulk of its GO holdings. Much of this material was visibly scorched and/or water damaged, carrying a faint odour of acrid smoke.

Gays of Ottawa would open a third and fourth GO Centre; discussed in Chapter Ten. It would continue to host community dances well into the eighties. After the mid-eighties attendance declined with the growth of Ottawa’s commercial club scene and other social opportunities many of which had been established by GO. Clearly, the cultural and social capital of GO’s social offerings had declined in the face of a growing commercial bar scene. However, the value of its GO Centre as a space from which to launch its social services and education initiative remained even increased over the years. In the next chapter I explore further these initiatives and GO’s foray into the fields of social services and education.

¹⁴² D Garmaise, ‘Bigotry keeps GO homeless’, *Body Politic*, no. 52, 1979, p. 11.

¹⁴³ Denis LeBlanc.

Chapter Six: Social Services and Education

Like the homophile-style groups that preceded them, Canadian lesbian and gay movement groups focused on education, and more pointedly, social services. Here they further established themselves within the movement field, while fostering relationships in fields of social service agencies and education. In this chapter, I consider GO's substantial efforts in both fields and its achieving a position of near dominance in the LGF. Specifically, when it came to education, GO was regarded as a clear leader.

In the seventies, Gays of Ottawa's provision of social services and education could not rely on the symbolic capital of its members because none were accredited social workers. Rather it was the unique cultural capital they possessed as lesbians and gay men; knowledge garnered from direct life experience which gave them a dominant position. Constructed from gay experience, the insight GO possessed was a 'fugitive knowledge', that is, "knowledge that has escaped the control of society's privileged specialists". As Robert Hill describes it "gay fugitive knowledge emphasises what life really feels like".¹ Because such knowledge had practical and emotional content, this had the effect of making the boundary between social services support and education porous as each influenced the other.

From 1973 onward, GO pointedly worked to position itself through relationships with agencies such as the Ottawa Chapter of Big Brothers, Ottawa Family Services, Royal Ottawa Health Centre (ROH) etc. while expending and accruing cultural, social

¹ Hill 1996, pp. 258-9.

and symbolic capital along the way. The importance of social relationships with accredited professionals in established agencies is clear. Executive meeting minutes from April 1972 to December 1974 are replete with references to pre-existing, relevant social contacts with lawyers, doctors etc. and letters, calls and one-on-one meetings with agencies. Through these, GO became part of Ottawa's social service network.² That GO did not hesitate to go one-on-one with professionals, essentially inverting the power dynamic with actors richer in cultural and symbolic capital, spoke to its self-confidence. Gays of Ottawa clearly understood that when it came to understanding the needs of lesbians and gay men, it occupied a position of power.

Simultaneous with Charlie Hill's arrival in Ottawa, GO expanded its social service and education efforts. The relationship established with the Ottawa Distress Centre, evolving from the opening of the first GO Centre, was both important and timely. John Duggan described the relationship as critical, "*because the Distress Centre's phone line would get calls from closeted gays: 'I'm gonna kill myself'*". Early on the Centre told callers, "*phone Gays of Ottawa... [so we soon had] social workers who were referring people to us*".³ In the early years, many of GO's educational presentations were to support and social service agencies. At least initially, Denis LeBlanc recalls, "*Charlie did that mostly, talking to schools and colleges and that sort of thing*".⁴ Recalling one presentation at the Royal Ottawa, Ottawa's main mental health hospital, Hill said staff,

² CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02; CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: Ref: 1982 - 017/01A > 82-017/ 01 02, and, CLGA File No.: C. Hill 1982-015/().

³ John Duggan.

⁴ Denis LeBlanc.

*“were very concerned, even then, about sexuality, among their younger emotionally disturbed patients”.*⁵

Hill stressed GO’s “*working through social agencies*”. This reflected its recognition that inevitably agency staff were “*going to meet gays and lesbians who need help. We had to change [staff] thinking, make them gay/lesbian positive or at least neutral*”.⁶ Hill stressed ‘working through’ rather than ‘working with’ staff to emphasize GO’s focus on doing, enabling, establishing etc., liberation and social betterment for lesbians and gays through agencies with greater capacity (capital) and reach (work in established different fields). Therefore agencies would be used in a manner not dissimilar to how the movement used mainstream media. Both could broadcast and help implement, the movement’s message. In a position paper GO’s Community Services Committee stated, “The media, with its capacity was the best means of educating society about gays and gay rights”.⁷ It was Hill who did many of GO’s initial media interviews. In January 1973, he appeared on CJOH television’s call-in show. *GO Info* reported “bigots” were furious at CJOH “for letting even one ostrich eye peak above the ground”. At an executive meeting Hill acknowledged “questions [on the] phone in were stupid... [We need] to get our people to telephone”.⁸ The experience was typical of the era. That same month Hill appeared on CBC television’s ‘Something Else’, where he found the interviewer “manipulative”. He urged more control “be ensured to GO” in the future.⁹

⁵ Charlie Hill.

⁶ Charlie Hill.

⁷ CLGA, GO, File No.: C. Hill - 82-015/ 01, File Name: GO Community Services Committee, Minutes 1974 – 1975, Document: Position paper, Community Services Committee, August, 1974

⁸ *GO Info*, ‘Update. *GO Info*, no. 4, 1973, p. 2.

⁹ CLGA GO File No.:1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Jan. 21, 1973; *ibid* Minutes Jan. 30, 1973.

Gays of Ottawa's Community Services Committee believed in support services 'by gay people, for gay people', revealing its political aspect. Gay people *had* to provide them as the "straight community invariably [did not] recognize gays".¹⁰ Even when addressing practical problems, whether through face-to-face peer or via telephone support, this was always "conducted as a consciousness-raising act". Each support service interaction was to facilitate accepting one's gayness, coming out etc. Coming out was a "necessary condition" for gays realizing gay pride and gay power. Thus in part, a goal of the Services Committee's support and counselling services was to identify "the political status of gay people in society". Additionally, it believed expertise and inter-agency contacts were necessary in the "political struggle for gay rights", namely those with greater social and symbolic capital to assist GO.¹¹ In *GO Info*, the Services Committee's work was characterized as a "fight for our own identity...in our own eyes and in the eyes of others, has just begun". Benign, organizational self-interest partly drove the work as those seeking assistance would "be encouraged and directed to become politically involved".¹² This seems a bit mercenary in retrospect; those in-need as potential recruits. However, it was in keeping with the era's everything-is-political atmosphere wherein every newly out person was claimed for the movement.

GO Centre Friday-night drop-ins were highly social evenings but John Duggan recalled how, "*especially at the men's Friday night [drop-in], we began to joke that it was a night of social work*".¹³ Yet if GO were to provide credible services, a physical

¹⁰ CLGA, GO, File No.: C. Hill - 82-015/ 01, File Name: GO Community Services Committee, Minutes 1974 - 1975, Document: Position paper, Community Services Committee, August, 1974

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.2.

¹² *GO Info*, GO's Community Services Committee, *GO Info*, no. 7, 1973, p. 7.

¹³ John Duggan.

location was an essential piece of capital. In February 1973, Denis LeBlanc wrote to other Canadian movement groups noting GO's progress was initially slow but, "a turning point came...when we rented an office".¹⁴ Having a Centre was key to GO's information and support Gayline. Denis LeBlanc noted, "*you'd start a relationship on the phone, because you'd have regulars. Like Tuesday, that was my phone night... so you developed a bit of a rapport with someone on the phone and then they came [to the Centre]...coming out of their shells a little bit*".

Established in 1972 and administered by the Community Services Committee, the Gayline was GO's longest running service, ceasing operation in the 1990s after logging tens of thousands of calls. In 1984, operation of the Gayline was transferred over to Pink Triangle Services. By the late 1990s, the Gayline became largely obsolete with the advent of the Internet. However, the Gayline was Canada's longest, continually operating gay information line. In North America it was second only to New York's Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, which predated the Gayline by a few months.¹⁵ Long-time volunteer Barry Deeprise remembers, "*aside from the fact that two thirds of the calls were hassle calls,*

¹⁴ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B File Name: InterGroup Communications – Ltrs Sent – 1973-1974 – 82-017/02 28 – Letter: D. LeBlanc, Chair Inter-group Committee to All our Friends in Gay Liberation, Feb. 9, 1973. LeBlanc closes the letter by asking for information about the services and facilities of other lesbian and gay groups. Gays of Ottawa hoped to produce "a small Gay Guide...[to] particular bars, clubs or other places of interest to gays". Apparently GO wanted to publish a more community services-orientated version of North American gay travel guides. Commercially available since the late sixties, famous was Bob Damron's Guide. First appearing in 1964, it has been regularly updated since 1968 (W Woods, T Daniels, & D Binson, ,Number and Distribution of Gay Bathhouses in the United States and Canada, *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 44, no. 3-4, 2003, pp. 59-60).

¹⁵ Deeprise 2005.

hate calls...that still left us with a one third of 60,000 calls that were meaningful, good calls".¹⁶

Although the Gayline was a formal service with set hours, Gayline volunteers were informal counsellors as the majority were not accredited social workers. Regardless Denis LeBlanc believes, *"we taught ourselves very well...how to counsel. We had done the consciousness-raising thing...a lot of us had taken psych courses".¹⁷* One GO member who was trained in counselling was Marie Robertson who had been through an *"experimental program that folded called Human Relations and Counselling Studies so I was very focused work and counselling".* She added, *"in terms of counselling I have always done extra stuff that makes sense to me for my practice. I want concrete practical stuff that I actually use in the room not some theoretical academic crap".¹⁸*

Denis LeBlanc notes the one concrete resource the Gayline had was *"the Distress Centre, we shared information with them".¹⁹* Since July 1972, GO executive member Maurice Belanger had been an on-call volunteer for the Centre. When the Distress Centre received a gay-related they were referred to Belanger's home number.²⁰ However, this was impractical in the long-term. So in early November 1972, GO approached the Distress Centre proposing reciprocal training sessions. This was in response to GO's Gayline volunteers needing more training to deal with caller's issues involving drugs and

¹⁶ In early 2000, Barry Deeprouse reported that PTS initiated a study of all the Gayline's calls but it was never completed.

¹⁷ Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁸ Marie Robertson. Judy Girard who joins GO in the early eighties was also experienced in social work. Girard was trained by Carleton University's School of Social Work and is now a frequent lecturer and teacher there.

¹⁹ Denis LeBlanc.

²⁰ It is unclear if this relationship meant less 'distressed' callers were referred to the Gayline (CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/02C File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02 35 – Document: Directors of Gays of Ottawa - "Distress and Information Centre" Jul 10, 1972: 5.

suicide, etc. Maurice Belanger trained twelve of the Centre's key volunteers that same month but it is not clear that the Center reciprocated.²¹ A year later, GO trained a further 50 Distress Centre staff.²²

Knowing GO volunteers had little cultural or symbolic capital when it came to mental health issues, at various points GO's executive expressed concerns about just how volunteers could advise people. In April 1973, Gayline volunteers were no longer to mention gay steam baths as GO did not know if baths were "legally secure". The Gayline was, however, not opposed to providing information that facilitated gay men making sexual contacts. Denis LeBlanc said the Gayline provided "*Information, like where are the gay guys, where are the baths, etc.*" when asked to. He remembers Gayline volunteers, most of whom were men, proactively gave information regarding "*say where the cruise spots were. There was a lot of cruising in those days...and [we'd] warn people about the rules, you know, don't get caught by the police*".²³ However, not all areas of sexuality should be addressed. In December 1974, Bob Papi, a local Ottawa counsellor, advised the Community Services Committee that counselling minors on sexual matters could put GO at risk of charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.²⁴ Even though it lacked the symbolic capital accrued through official credentials, GO was invited to present at an April 1973 distress center conference. Clearly the value

²¹ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Nov. 12, 1972; See: CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02.

²² *GO Info*, Talk at Distress Centre, *GO Info*, no. 8, 1973, p. 3.

²³ Denis LeBlanc.

²⁴ This concern about the legality of steam baths arose after Ottawa's Club Private was raided in December 1972. Concerns that GO might be put at risk over its working with juveniles were not unique. In 1972 CHAT discouraged gay youth from using its offices for the same reason (*BP 7*, 1973, p.2). CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Executive Meeting Apr 16, 1973); CLGA, File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO Community Services, Minutes – 1974-1975 – Minutes: Dec 12, 1974.

of GO's cultural capital was enormous, greater than that possessed by those with actual credentials in the field of social services. However, because GO's Gayline was not an accredited agency, it could not register as a delegate to the conference.²⁵

In its time the Gayline struggled to find francophone and lesbian volunteers.²⁶ Marie Robertson was often called on. *"There were times when there are no other women doing the Gayline. So if the guys were staffing it and a woman called, they phoned me at home, so I would be doing the Gayline from home"*. After joining GO Marie Robertson got involved in education. *"Probably my strength was the people stuff. So my strength was to get out there and put a face to this and to enter all those stupid questions...I would do more of the educational stuff, and then David [Garmaise] and those guys would...the smart guys...would be doing all the strategic stuff around the NGRC and that kind of networking"*.²⁷ Owing to GO's having strategically chosen to have gender parity at GO presentations; Marie Robertson became a near constant presence.

In 1975, Robertson and friend Candice Graham had formed a lesbian collective within Women's Place in Waterloo, Ontario.²⁸ In response GO's Ron Dayman sent a

²⁵ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Mar. 27, 1973; CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Apr. 2, 1972.

²⁶ Providing a quality service was critical so in November 1972, GO's executive decided the "telephone service will remain English 'til more Franco volunteers" (CLGA GO File No: 1982 - 017 / 01A > File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 - 82-017/ 01 02: Executive Meeting Minutes: Nov 12, 1972). In 1974, the Community Services Committee made recruiting more bilingual people, women, Francophones and making more referrals to Ottawa's Women's Centre, a priority (CLGA File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO Community Services Committee, Minutes 1974-1975: Minutes: Aug 27, 1974).

²⁷ Marie Robertson. Robertson moved to Ottawa with her best friend, Candice Graham (now deceased). Both attended Waterloo University, running a lesbian drop-in at Waterloo's Women's Centre. Together they attended the founding CGRO Conference in 1975 and moved to Ottawa that same year.

²⁸ Organizations like Waterloo's Women's Place and Ottawa's Women's Centre were established as part of a larger trend across Canada. In the early seventies as more women came out as lesbians they coalesced within women's collectives and organizations, even though these were often unwelcoming (Warner 2002, p. 78-9).

letter of congratulations, noting that in his experience “unless a lesbian collective was specifically formed within women’s centres, the gay issue is overlooked”.²⁹ Robertson and Graham had come to Ottawa because, “*Candace had grown up in Ottawa and we came for a weekend. They had gay bars here, oh my GOD! There was ‘Texas’, a lesbian bar in Hull*”. Ottawa, “*just seemed to be a more happening place. So we decided to move here*”. Wherever Robertson lives she gets involved. “*That is part of who I am and I have continued to do work wherever I am in the community*”. Upon arriving Robertson first contacted the Ottawa’s Women’s Centre on Somerset Street. “*So I got to the Women’s Centre and there are clearly other lesbians there, [but] totally closeted*”.³⁰ The Centre was in the midst of discussing its upcoming U.N. International Women’s Year march and what issues it would highlight. Robertson pitched including adding sexual orientation to the human rights code, custody rights for lesbian mothers etc. but the Centre’s women feared turning off straight women. Robertson responded, “*I said, you know what, fuck you...this movement is supposed to be about choice*” and left.³¹

Shortly afterwards Robertson found her way to GO. And subsequently at October’s UN Women’s Year March “*there were more fags in the march that year than there were women*”. Gays of Ottawa attended the march as a member of a coalition

²⁹ Dayman also asked if the Collective could help put together a national list of women’s groups (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12, Ltr: R. Dayman, GO PAC, to Lesbian Collective, Waterloo Women’s Centre, Feb. 18, 1975).

³⁰ Marie Robertson. Warner (2002, p. 79-80) recounts how in the early seventies, Ottawa’s Maureen Cullingham went to Ottawa’s Women’s Centre believing it was a lesbian group as so many were present.

³¹ Robertson recalled that while living in Hamilton, she and two friends attended a women’s consciousness-raising group. When “*my friend Eleonora [said] that she is a lesbian a straight woman sitting next to her got up and moved to the other side of the circle. It was totally common for that to happen. They were totally freaked out*”.

including Voice of Women; Canadian Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws etc.³² Reporting on it in the BP, Dayman stated it was the first time a “women’s movement demonstration had given such prominence to lesbian oppression”.³³ Denis LeBlanc recalled that working as a Coalition, “*we didn't even know it was called networking at the time. It was just a natural thrust to do an alliance with the women's movement because we also saw ourselves as part of the feminist movement. In a way, even though we were men*”.³⁴

As a lesbian, the chilly reception Robertson received was commonplace at a time when the feminist movement was wrestling with integrating lesbian issues. But it was not universal. For example, in the seventies at Kingston’s Women’s Centre the working relationship between lesbians and straight women was marked by neither “animosity nor complete ease”. MacDiarmid attributes this to lesbians negotiating potential strife by “willingly placing their sexuality second to feminism”.³⁵ However, Robertson’s experience was typical. While straight women could be homophobic, lesbians facing dual discrimination as women *and* lesbians did not know where best to place themselves. Few were attracted to GO. For Charlie Hill, it “*was all about feminism. And a lot of women in Toronto came out in that context, not the gay context. And [lesbians] were getting some rebuff from feminists, so there was a movement back and forth...operate in*

³² Kinsman & Gentile (2010 p. 288) also noted the Rally’s considerable gay participation, and, that it took place under RCMP surveillance.

³³ R Dayman, Lesbian Rights—Why Not!, *Body Politic*, no. 22, 1976, p. 6. Earlier in March 1976, gay men from Montreal’s Groupe homosexuel d’action politique took part in an International Women’s Day celebration. In Toronto also in March, International Women’s Day conference delegates demanded that Ontario add sexual orientation to its provincial human rights code (McLeod 1996,, p. 211).

³⁴ Denis LeBlanc.

³⁵ McDiarmid 1999, p. 158.

the feminist network or the gay network".³⁶ John Duggan stressed GO was "open to lesbian involvement but...the lesbians who were activist at that time were into something other than working with gay men...affirming themselves as lesbians and into any group that called itself feminist. They worked at things like bookstores being formed and this kind of thing".³⁷ Duggan's observation was apt. Williams and Chestnut and Gable document two cases where lesbian-feminist organizations in the U.S. provided the kinds of spaces and services to lesbians that gay male-dominated cultural scene did not.³⁸

When Marie Robertson joins GO it was at Pestalozzi College and found, "they were thrilled to have more people, because [GO] had a very small, core group of people doing the work. It was like yes, we need more women; we need more lesbians.... [GO] was an instant place to connect with other queer people in those days". Being the pre-gay rights era Robertson found, "a lot of work to be done. So it was a political and also a social thing for me to go to Gays of Ottawa...and connect with some fantastic gay men".³⁹ Marie Robertson's impact on GO was huge. John Duggan believes it changed GO in that, "very much with Marie being involved...suddenly GO was beginning to be perceived as not just a gay men's organization".⁴⁰ At the time the movement in general was seen as too male dominated and male-issue oriented to be relevant to lesbians. Denis LeBlanc, however, gives an additional practical explanation for GO's initially inability to

³⁶ Charlie Hill.

³⁷ John Duggan.

³⁸ Williams (1999) charts the development of the Feminist Union, Louisville, KY. Chesnut and Gable (1999) describe the formative impact of the lesbian owned Charis Books, Atlanta, GA on the local lesbian community.

³⁹ Marie Robertson. The welcome GO gave Robertson differed greatly from the reception Maureen Fraser of Kingston received from the Queen's Homophile Association. When she phoned the organizer, Terry Watson, "he thought his straight friends had put him up by having a woman call". Watson had apparently never considered, "there women homosexuals out there who might be interested" (McDiarmid 1999, p. 98.)

⁴⁰ John Duggan.

increase lesbian participation. First LeBlanc is adamant: GO was “*always, always open to women. And always welcoming to women I think*”. But “*the thing is how do we reach women when I as an individual gay man...my social network after work, was exclusively gay male...First of all there were no lesbian bars at all. Where would I have gone to do outreach to lesbians? It wasn't my world*”.⁴¹

Robertson would be one of the few early GO members who had some experience with social work, counselling etc. Yet even Marie Robertson's skills would not address the depth of need the Gayline was encountering. Quickly the Gayline learned of Ottawa's need “for a competent and sympathetic psychiatrist for referral of cases”.⁴² In June 1973 *GO Info* reported that after hundreds of calls, volunteers had identified a profound inability of religious leaders, social workers and psychiatric counsellors to “cope with homosexuals in any meaningful way”. Many calls were “emotionally charged calls from men and women who have never before spoken to anyone of the homosexual feelings...encounters are sometimes painful”.⁴³

To address this, the Community Services Committee wrote to Ottawa social service organizations alerting them about GO. It even considered joining the Ottawa Social Planning Council.⁴⁴ Few agencies responded which *GO Info* saw as emblematic of “the community attitude toward gay people”. Those who did respond were “some

⁴¹ Denis LeBlanc.

⁴² Denis LeBlanc.

⁴³ *GO Info*, GO's Community Services Committee, *GO Info*, no. 7, 1973, p. 7.

⁴⁴ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Executive Meeting, Nov 19, 1972: “GO may apply to be members of Social Planning Council”; Ibid – Minutes: Executive Meeting, Apr 16, 1973: “SocServ ltr to agencies has gone out”; Ibid – Minutes: Executive Meeting, May 27, 1973: “Contact EFry & Big Brother”.

very responsible organizations such as the [Ontario Human Rights Commission]”.⁴⁵ Here we can see the dual nature of GO’s relationship with cultural capital. Because ‘responsible organizations’ had responded GO was clearly seen as a credible organization. In turn GO’s credibility increased as a result. Like interest accrued on savings, credibility brought more credibility. Probably GO benefited from being the only actor in the local manifestation of the lesbian and gay movement field. All too easily, we could conclude those who ignored GO’s letter were homophobic, yet for many of the services GO wrote to the organization simply lacked any credentials (symbolic capital). No matter how well intentioned, this must have given them pause. Throughout the seventies the breadth and depth of GO’s relationships with other community services in the field expanded. Detailed records of these are sparse, yet reveal a wealth of activity. For example, in September 1975 the Committee met with Big Brothers, the Centertown Health Clinic, Ottawa Distress Centre, John Howard Society, and the Royal Ottawa Hospital. That same month the Committee did speaks for the Ottawa Regional Detention Centre, Planned Parenthood etc. In October, it took part in French language family planning sessions, maintaining a booth at its week-long event and assessed social agency attitudes.⁴⁶

Education and Project Community Outreach

By November 1975 the Services Committee is so busy managing both support and education that GO established a formal Education Committee. This became responsible for educational community outreach, namely work with heterosexuals, liaising with

⁴⁵ *GO Info* no. 7, 1973, p. 7.

⁴⁶ CLGR File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO Community Services Committee, Minutes 1974-1975: Minutes: Sep 21 1975; *Ibid*: Minutes: Oct 18, 1975; *Ibid*: Minutes: Oct 19, 1975.

service agencies regarding staff training and homophobia, delivering speaks to schools, maintaining GO's library, and so forth.⁴⁷ When asked if GO's relationship to the heterosexual community was primarily educational, Roger Galipeau replied "*that [was] basically it, yes*".⁴⁸ Since its inception GO had stressed education as a way to improve the lot of lesbians and gays. Upon opening the GO Centre, GO's press release stated the Centre would foster the "growing consciousness of our individual right[s] and social need to live fully honest lives", which was possible only through education.⁴⁹ *GO Info* said "the real significance of the CENTRE" was its opportunity "to educate ourselves about our position in society".⁵⁰

Prior to the formation of the Education Committee, education efforts were not particularly programmatic, being a mixture of proactive and reactive actions. However, in November 1972 when GO established its four key committees, it did so in part to become proactive, especially in education.⁵¹ In January 1973, president Charlie Hill contacted Ottawa-area high schools to introduce GO, describing its (limited) success with schools talks "about Homosexuality and the Homophile". Hill encouraged schools to use their 'open days', occasions where people to came to speak about "women's liberation, zero population growth, environmental control, etc." to invite GO. Should

⁴⁷ This left the Community Services Committee primarily responsible for operating the Gayline and doing one-on-one peer counselling at GO's drop-ins (Ibid: Minutes: Nov 11, 1975). Although GO decided to form an Education Committee in November 1975, subsequent materials put its founding as January 1976.

⁴⁸ Roger Galipeau; Interviewed on: January 15, 2008.

⁴⁹ CGLA GO File No.:1982-017/02C File Name: Pestalozzi College – 1972-1975-82-017/02 35: Pamphlet: Gays of/d' Ottawa GO Centre 08/09/1972).

⁵⁰ *GO Info* no. 2/3, 1972, p. 1.

⁵¹ CLGA GO File No.:GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972-Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Nov. 12, 1972

schools have no open days GO was willing to present during seminars or after classes.⁵² This emphasis on schools reflected Hill's experience with CHAT. At GO "*education was big with us. We were big on education. And I think that goes back to the Toronto ([CHAT]) experience for me*". At CHAT we "*did a fair bit [of education]. I remember doing the schools*". Marie Robertson too had some relevant experience. In Waterloo we "*started to do educational work in sociology classes, psychology classes, whoever would take us in those days. Homosexuality was studied under deviance. That's how we [(homosexuals)] were studied and so they needed someone to go and speak at these classes and so I went*". However, Marie Robertson remembers that initially, if during a talk she was "*asked to identify as a lesbian....I'd say well now, I might be bisexual. So I came out through the movement,*" doing education.⁵³

Canada's lesbian and gay movement believed education could change the views of a public profoundly ignorant about homosexuality. For example, Gays of Ottawa had regarded public education as a strategy, to counteract the "mass of misinformation that prevailed and still prevails about us" since its inception in 1971. Providing "speakers to schools, universities and any other groups" was essential.⁵⁴ Often such speakers were provided to school-based sex education classes. While the wider North American movement hoped sex education classes could improve the image of same-sex relationships, there was also a concern that such classes not become "a government-

⁵² 'Open days' were seventies-era, events hosted by schools when invited speakers addresses issues of the day (Charlie Hill); CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972- Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Jan. 14, 1973; CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa – 1982-017/03A, File Name: Records of Educationals 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 02 Letter: C. Hill Education Committee to Dear Friends, N/D.

⁵³ Marie Robertson.

⁵⁴ Gays of Ottawa, 'Education Activities at Gays of Ottawa', *Gays of Ottawa*, September 29, 1976 (Paper presented at CGRO's 1976 conference).

sponsored exercise in gay-baiting”.⁵⁵ With media largely ignoring homosexuality save for the sensational, the “only effective tactics, therefore, were visibility, confrontation, and constant education”.⁵⁶ Presentations in schools could reveal the ordinariness of lesbians and gays, so they were a common focus, but this tactic could alarm parents. In the early seventies gay activists in Toronto (and elsewhere) began visiting schools to speak about homosexuality. This soon drew the ire of social conservatives and evangelicals fearing activists were promoting a ‘homosexual lifestyle’. For example, in July 1972, Rev. J. R. Armstrong, Toronto Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, after learning of approximately twenty such speaks petitioned to “prevent homosexuals from addressing students”. Armstrong claimed CHAT was providing boys as young as thirteen, information about homosexuality.⁵⁷ Gays of Ottawa’s school speaks did not elicit the same kind of backlash until 1978 when the Ottawa Board of Education passed a motion making school principals “responsible for visits by controversial groups”. Although never mentioned, insiders informed GO that it was the target of the motion. The motion effectively intimidated principals and teachers such that until the early eighties requests for GO speaks at Ottawa Board schools all but ceased.⁵⁸

The wider lesbian and gay movement was not easily deterred however. At its founding conference in 1975, the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO) demanded the provincial government ensure unbiased education on homosexuality and that

⁵⁵ J Moran, *Teaching Sex: The shaping of adolescence in the 20th century*, Harvard Press, Cambridge, Mass, 2000, p. 198.

⁵⁶ Warner 2002, p. 72.

⁵⁷ Toronto Star, Ban sought in schools on homosexual talks, *Toronto Star*, 24 July, 1972, p. 25. Toronto Board of Education chair, Bill Charlton was unconcerned and responded by saying, “I don’t see what people are getting upset about”.

⁵⁸ J Duggan, ‘Education: Getting the word out’, *GO Info*, no. 2, 1982, p. 7.

movement groups be seen as a resource.⁵⁹ One year later CGRO elevated this demand, making it second only to amending Ontario's human rights code. For the movement and GO, education was a political tool. As Marie Robertson described it, "*education for me is part of political action. It's not just about going in demonstrating. That's very important, absolutely, that is critical. But...you have to create allies as you are moving [forward] or else you're just going to always be a small group of people demonstrating outside the Chateau Laurier*".⁶⁰

For its education presentations GO drew on its cultural capital based on the life experiences of members since none were trained educators. Unfortunately, the archival record has little to say about GO's school speaks. Often references are brief, for example "Fisher Park High School wants talk". After contacting high school guidance counsellors, GO noted Fisher Park was "interested", Rideau High the "most trouble", and Nepean High, "negative". Fisher Park, Colonel By, Ridgemont and Bell high schools were the "most positive".⁶¹ Also missing is anything that speaks to actual content or impact. Marie Robertson recalls "*we were making presentations all the time. I don't remember specifics*".⁶² The GO members who most frequently spoke at schools were Charlie Hill, Marie Robertson, Ian MacLennan, Ron Dayman and Greg Spurgeon. Curiously, Denis LeBlanc, one of GO's most articulate, passionate members was not particularly engaged

⁵⁹ Globe & Mail, Gay rights groups demand statements from parties, Globe & Mail, 23 February, 1975, p. 5. See: CGRO, 1975, *The Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO)*. Toronto: CGRO, 18, January.

⁶⁰ Marie Robertson.

⁶¹ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972- Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Feb, 12, 1973; CLGR File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO Community Services Committee, Minutes 1974-1975: Minutes: Nov 27, 1974.

⁶² Marie Robertson.

with education. He saw education *“was being taken care of. There are other things that seemed to be a priority...I'd always been interested in the political side of things”*.⁶³

Reflecting back on her experience with doing speaks for GO, Marie Robertson recalled it was, *“a very busy time for me because it was really important to us that the face of Gays of Ottawa had a woman and a man. I would be doing [almost all the] public education work”*. Robertson remembers one speak she did with Greg Spurgeon. *“We would usually go and sit with students afterwards. And some young woman said to me, ‘when I first arrived I couldn't figure out what you [(Marie)] were doing here outside of maybe you [were] a supporter or friend.’”* Marie Robertson recalls *“they didn't think [about] lesbians...they thought gay equals male. So it was critical that we always had a gender representation there”*.⁶⁴ Ian MacLennan came to Ottawa to attend University of Ottawa in 1974 and joined GO in 1975. On presenting to high school students Ian recalled *“I did that a number of times with Marie. Because I was a student, I wasn't one of the civil servants, I could go in and talk in schools, and things like that”*.

Being a civil servant, Ian never feared he would lose his job. This also allowed him to run for election on the Ottawa Board of Education in December 1976. *“It was actually done more as a lark than anything else. In some ways I just wanted the experience of running”*. However, *“I didn't try to hide that I was gay. But I didn't want to be the gay candidate. I wanted to be candidate who happened to be gay”*. This was because he was focused on education *“with children who are disabled and handicapped...that's where my experience was with education”*. Ian feared emphasizing

⁶³ Denis LeBlanc.

⁶⁴ Marie Robertson.

his work in this field, fearing that this coupled with his being gay would generate anxiety at a time when people commonly believed gay men sexually preyed on children.⁶⁵ Ultimately, MacLennan did not succeed, losing by 4,000 votes. *“I came in second to last in a field of 11 think. I got over 3000 votes...and I thought ‘my God’ 3000 people voted for me!”*⁶⁶

Generally GO accessed schools via invitations from teachers, not administrators. More often as not administrators rebuffed GO.⁶⁷ By June 1973 GO had been refused enough times that it raised the issue with Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) officer, Anna Whitely. At the meeting GO found her “well aware of the ridiculous contradictions in anti-gay arguments...and she keenly supports the struggle for full equality for gays”. On the issue of school access, Whitely urged GO to report refusals to the OHRC and school boards but there was little to be done. Primarily, GO had met with Whitely as part of an effort to amass information on anti-gay discrimination.⁶⁸ This effort had emerged out of a meeting held in Toronto in April, attended by BP collective members, Toronto’s GATE, and OHRC chair, Dr. Daniel Hill. At that meeting Dr. Hill stated the Commission was “interested” in sexual orientation discrimination even though it was not a protected area. Dr. Hill stressed “the importance of preparing a documented brief” that outlined “instances of discrimination in employment and housing”. Documenting such instances would provide GO and the larger Ontario movement with

⁶⁵ Ian recalls, *“At that point was I was very firm about integration [(of the disabled)] into the schools. I had worked with disadvantaged and handicapped children, teaching... Most of my summers had been spent working at summer camps...some church camps and some disabled camps”*.

⁶⁶ Body Politic, *Gay Candidate Defeated*, Body Politic, no. 30, 1977, p. 6; G Spurgeon, *Gay Candidate Defeated*, *GO Info*, no. 6, 1976, p. 3. See also: D Garmaise, *Gay Person Running for Board of Education*, Body Politic, no. 29, 1977, p. 5.

⁶⁷ Often too, school administrators intervened upon learning a teacher had invited a gay speaker (See: Jackson, 1975. 19, 1975, p.9).

⁶⁸ GO Info, *‘Discrimination: Commission needs documented cases’*, *GO Info*, no. 7, 1973, p. 1.

the capital necessary for lesbian and gay groups needed to make the case for amending the provincial Code.⁶⁹

In 1973, Waterloo's Gay Liberation Movement tried to influence the presentation of homosexuality in schools in a different way, namely by developing materials for schools. Funded with a Federal Opportunities for Youth (OFY) grant, Waterloo produced its Operation Socrates Handbook which addressed questions about homosexuality. Four thousand copies went to Ontario high school guidance counsellors.⁷⁰ However, producing school materials could also encounter resistance, such as parents who wrote to the Kitchener-Waterloo Record.⁷¹

In January 1973, GO also considered applying for an OFY grant to establish a "24 hr. social service telephone line, research and education program" but was ultimately declined. Gays of Ottawa had envisioned using the grant to establish a stand-alone, support and education-oriented charitable organization that would leave GO to focus on political work.⁷² In 1984 it would set up just such an organization, namely Pink Triangle

⁶⁹ Body Politic, 'Editorial: Thirty-nine Words', *Body Politic*, no. 10, 1973, p. 2. *GO Info* (no. 7, 1973, p. 1) reported on the meeting with Whitely, mobilizing readers to tell inform GO about "instances of sexist and anti-gay material in school textbooks". In August, *GO Informed* the Ottawa Board of Education of its OHRC meeting (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972- Nov 1972 - 82-017/01 02 - Minutes: Aug. 9, 1973).

⁷⁰ McLeod 1996, p. 128. The grant \$9290 was to fund Waterloo's gathering information and the polling of local companies for their attitudes re: homosexuality. The application was also supported by Waterloo University's Federation of Students (Body Politic, Waterloo: OFY Grant, *Body Politic*, no. 8, 1973, p. 29). Gays of Ottawa along with other Ontario groups, helped distribute questionnaires that provided Operation Socrates with data (CLGA GO, File No.: G1982-017/01a, File Name: General Mtg Notes & Min - 1972-1973 - 82-017/01 04).

⁷¹ McLeod (1996, p.128) reported that after Handbook was produced several hostile letters-to-the-editor appeared in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record. In January 1974 Liberal Senator Raymond Perreault demanded to know, "what justification is there for such a youth project being financed out of public funds?" (Body Politic, Senator Attacks Waterloo Grant, *Body Politic*, no. 11, 1974, p. 4).

⁷² CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972- Nov 1972 - 82-017/01 02 - Minutes: Jan. 30, 1972; CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 01, File Name: GO Exec Cmte Min - 1971-1972-82-017/-17 - Minutes: Feb. 8 & 14, 1972. In August 1971 CHAT received funds to operate a

Services. As in January 1973, GO again contacted high schools and universities and found them more receptive than they had been in 1972. A majority of the guidance counsellors contacted were favourable, testifying to GO's increasing credibility.⁷³ In the summer of 1974 Winnipeg's Gays for Equality (GFE) received an OFY grant to produce, 'Understanding Homosexuality', meant to "disseminate non-mythological information about homosexuality".⁷⁴ Success in Waterloo and Winnipeg spoke to local conditions in the local political field. Encouraged, GO applied to the Secretary of State department in November 1974, requesting "special funding for civil liberties and human rights projects", namely its Project Community Outreach. Ron Dayman, chair of the Political Action Committee presented GO as an "organization working in the field of civil rights for homosexual men and women".⁷⁵

In Winnipeg, GFE reported no resistance to its funding request but by June it appeared GO's application had met resistance. Having received no word after an approvals deadline passed, GO's Denis LeBlanc wrote local Liberal MP Jean-Robert Gauthier. Noting that Edmonton's GATE also awaited a decision, LeBlanc appealed to

similar service for 9 weeks. This appears to be the first time a Canadian gay organization received federal funding (McLeod 1996, p.70).

⁷³ Four of six counsellors it approached were open to GO's help (CLGA, File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO Community Services, Minutes – 1974-1975 – Minutes: Nov. 27, 1974).

⁷⁴ Body Politic, OFY programme funds two groups, *Body Politic*, no. 14, 1974, p. 4. However a local Winnipeg printer refused to print GFE's booklet. Eugene Derksen, of Derksen Printing refused the job saying, "I don't have to dig in the garbage to make a buck". A high profile picket by GFE did not change Derksen's mind but brought forward another a printer who took the job (BP 14 1974b p.4).

⁷⁵ CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: Gants – 82-017/017/01 23 – Letter: R. Dayman to Secretary of State, Nov. 14, 1974. The Secretary of State's *Citizenship Sector* distributed Opportunities for Youth grants. In the late sixties, Canadian governments began to address issues of community development and participation. This was meant to strengthen a sense of citizenship and nationalism, largely in response to the rise of Québec nationalism and broad social changes. Secretary of State administered Opportunity for Youth (OFY) Grants and the Student Community Service. The OFY grants were a primary source of government funding for early LGF group activities. By 1976 such programs were on the wane but in 1974, the Student Community Service Program alone had funded 197 grants at a cost of \$697,986 (L Pal, *Interests of state: The politics of language, multiculturalism and feminism in Canada*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montréal, PQ, 1993, pp. 101-50).

“our Member of Parliament, to try to obtain some information”. Gauthier’s response indicated delays were due to problems “in tracing the application”.⁷⁶ As GO waited for word, Dayman wrote GATE (Edmonton) commiserating that GO was “quite sure grants are being held up for political reasons”. Dayman stated GO knew this through, “a homosexual of our acquaintance (I wouldn’t call him gay) works in the Ottawa regional office and he says the delay is political”.⁷⁷ Clearly GO had some access to (hidden) political capital.

When asked about GO allies in government, interviewees suggested its relationship to them was indirect. Did GO have allies, moles, in government? Denis LeBlanc answered, “*we didn’t look at it that way. Some of our members happened to be civil servants. It’s possible...There was lots of personal networking going on. You’d say I need this done and then it would get done. Someone would call and it would get done. [But] I wouldn’t know how*”.⁷⁸ According to John Duggan GO, “*liked to think there were but [allies assisted] on their own. I did not know [any allies] in terms of the power structure*”.⁷⁹ Lloyd Plunket believes GO’s relationship with allies is best understood as our, “*just knowing who the right people to contact...to know where the power was and don’t waste your time...if they’re shoving you off*”.⁸⁰ Speaking to the period of the later seventies and early eighties, Judy Girard was emphatic: GO had allies.

⁷⁶ CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: Gants – 82-017/017/01 23 – Letter: Denis LeBlanc to J. R. Gauthier, MP, June 4, 1975; CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: Gants – 82-017/017/01 23 – Letter: J. R. Gauthier, House of Commons to Denis LeBlanc, GO, June 12, 1975.

⁷⁷ CLGA File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes 82-015 / () – Minutes: July 14, 1975; CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: Gants – 82-017/017/01 23 – Letter: R. Dayman, GO to B. Radke, GATE Edmonton, June 4, 1975).

⁷⁸ Denis LeBlanc.

⁷⁹ John Duggan.

⁸⁰ Lloyd Plunkett.

“Yes... I knew we had them all over the place. But did I know any personally, no. They were all people strategically located in key departments that other people used to chat with whatever the issue was...people, as I understand it, in CSIS and the RCMP, in different departments, that sometimes people would call upon if they needed information on certain issues or whatever”. Girard adds “many of them were donors. To be honest you just have to look at the donor base for GO at that point in history and just about everybody was an infiltrator somewhere”.⁸¹

However, when it came to GO’s funding request, it appears the application had no allies behind it. By July 1975, GO had still not heard. An exasperated Charlie Hill wrote to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau on July 9. Four months had passed since GO’s application, repeated calls to both the program office and Minister resulted in GO’s “continually being told that the application is ‘under review.’” Trudeau responded on July 21st saying that GO had been approved. Just days before GO received Trudeau’s response, it received a word from Lise Denault, a Secretary of State Community Service project officer that a grant of \$4,485 had been approved. In the English documentation Denault sent, it stated the approval had been received on May 20th, almost two months prior to Hill’s letter to Trudeau. Yet French documentation stated the approval occurred July 16, suggesting perhaps Trudeau had intervened in a file he believed had been delayed.⁸² The delays GO experienced might have been the result of the era’s well documented homophobia; certainly GO believed this was so. Clearly however, Canadian

⁸¹ Judy Girard; Interviewed on: November 8, 2007.

⁸² CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: Gants – 82-017/017/01 23 – Letter: C. Hill, President of GO to Pierre Elliot Trudeau, July 9, 1975; Ibid – Letter: Pierre Elliot Trudeau to C. Hill, July 21, 1975. CLGA, File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Gays of Ottawa: Student Community Services Grant 2-0, Letter: July 16, 1975.

lesbian and gay groups did not face monolithic, systemic homophobia when it came to government funding. This I suggest was owing to different field conditions, impacting political decisions in different parts of the country. For example, in the same summer that GO received its much delayed funding, Saskatoon's Gay Community Centre and Toronto gay video project also received OFY funding.⁸³

GO Info reported GO's Project Community Outreach would begin on July 21st and employ Ron Dayman, Ian MacLennan, Marie Robertson and Greg Spurgeon until September.⁸⁴ Ian MacLennan recalls the Project was fairly informal but Ron Dayman was the "front person, as I remember". Greg Spurgeon regarded Dayman as the "strategic brains of the project...we saw him as the leader in many ways. He was a person who had a peculiar talent from leading while not looking like he's taken over".⁸⁵ For Spurgeon the Project would be his first real GO work experience. His involvement was "a bit of a surprise...because it was so quick from [my] not being involved to being involved in something...doing this on a daily basis...many presentations a day".⁸⁶ Spurgeon remembers the Project had a leadership role in GO's education effort, but "we didn't know when we started what [the Project's] tack was going to be". Its overall objective was "to educate the community at large in Ottawa about homosexuality...specifically to communicate with local social service agencies that come

⁸³ Saskatoon's Gay Community Centre received a \$7,200 OFY grant for its Community Understanding project. In Toronto four people were given a grant of \$6,610 to produce a video entitled: About Gay People (Body Politic, Two Media Projects Win Government Funding, *Body Politic*, no. 19, 1975, p. 9). In 1974 OFY gave the Montréal Gay Centre \$8000 to provide counselling services (Body Politic, OFY programme funds two groups, *Body Politic*, no. 14, 1974, p. 4).

⁸⁴ G Spurgeon, GO Receives Government Grant, *GO Info*, no. 4, 1975, p. 2.

⁸⁵ Greg Spurgeon noted many believed he and Dayman had a special bond. "We were both men of the same height...stature and weight and both balding at the time. Because we were the same stature and involved in the same activities, people often asked us if we were brothers". In fact while Greg respected Ron, "a great deal...we did not see other much outside of GO...as personal friends".

⁸⁶ Greg Spurgeon.

into contact with gays”. Speaking to agencies, challenging negative views held by “their workers [that] may be excluding gays” was vital.⁸⁷

Initially, Project-staff identified forty-five primary social service agencies with who it sought face-to-face meetings in order to select participants for an educational forum.⁸⁸ Through the cultural capital it held and the relationships (social capital) it had with agencies in the social services field, GO had come to dominate the lesbian and gay field in Ottawa. Denis LeBlanc credits the Gayline as being instrumental in this effort. “*The [Project’s] primary purpose was to [formally] survey community organizations, because we’d been [informally] doing that with the Gayline... [for] several years*”. In order to ensure that the Gayline could make “*proper referrals, we wanted [the Project] to test those organizations. To find out: are we sending people to homophobes?*” Denis LeBlanc likened the Project’s effort to shaking, “*branches in the community*”. While the Project “*discovered lots of nests of homophobia...we also knew where our friends were in the community*”.⁸⁹

As the Project began, Waterloo’s Operation Socrates was a prime resource. Additionally, the Project was influenced by the work of psychologist George Weinberg, whose book *Society and the Healthy Homosexual* (1972) was one of the first to address homophobia. Ian MacLennan said “*of course we read Weinberg’s book which had come*

⁸⁷ Spurgeon, no. 4, 1975, p. 2.

⁸⁸ Project Community Outreach, 1975. Report of Project Community Outreach. (Gays of Ottawa, Ottawa.): Section B: 1-2. Broadly speaking, GO’s Project goals were quite similar to those Vancouver’s Gay Activist’s Alliance had when it received an OFY grant in June 1972, to “investigate how existing social services relate to gays; and to recommend any necessary changes” (Body Politic, OFY Grant, *Body Politic*, no. 5, 1972, p. 18). This suggests when it came to the needs of lesbians and gay, field conditions in different parts of the country were similar.

⁸⁹ Denis LeBlanc.

*out by then. And of course that's where the phrase homophobia comes from".*⁹⁰ Weinberg's book so influenced the Project that when it developed its own resource booklet MacLennan stated "*basically we cribbed from it*".⁹¹ In an interview, Weinberg argued that a 'healthy' homosexual had to develop and manifest the attitude that one is entitled to a good life. "To produce this sense of entitlement to happiness one must seize the belief that one deserves full rights and use it as a motivation for decisions wherever possible".⁹² Above all Weinberg believed it was critical that one's actions accord with "the premise that homosexuality should in no way be considered a detraction". Weinberg urged people resist any notion that anything negative resulted from being homosexual.⁹³

Weinberg's view on homosexuality formed the core philosophy of the Project. Marie Robertson remembers the Project turned typical questions about homosexuality back upon themselves. "*So instead of asking what homosexuality is and what causes homosexuality, we said what homophobia is and what causes homophobia, what are the roots of homophobia. To my knowledge that was quite innovative. And we thought aren't we smart and creative to do that*".⁹⁴ Greg Spurgeon concurred. All Project members agreed, "*we were not going to take an apologetic approach. The 'gee I'm gay but if you get to know me you'll realize I'm okay [approach]*". Such thinking was in keeping with a homophile approach to education. Instead, we "*had this attitude that it should be*

⁹⁰ Ian MacLennan. Weinberg recalls coining the term 'homophobia' while waiting to speak to a homophile group in 1967. For Weinberg 'homophobia' was a phobia, an irrational fear like any other phobia. For him, "the roots of homophobia are fear. Fear and more fear" of being different from everyone else. This analysis was found wanting by feminists (Ayyar, R., 2002). Subsequent feminist scholars came to see homophobia was rooted in sexism (Pharr, *S Homophobia: Weapon of Sexism*, Women's Project, U.S., 1988).

⁹¹ Ian MacLennan.

⁹² R Ayyar 'George Weinberg: Love is conspiratorial, deviant & magical', in PFLAG-Detroit, 2002, viewed on March 2011, http://www.pflagdetroit.org/george_weinberg.htm.

⁹³ H. Weinberg *Society and the Healthy Homosexual*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1972, p. 86.

⁹⁴ Marie Robertson.

about 'I'm fine, [but] you've got a problem". The Project and GO saw homophobia as "equivalent to racism, equivalent to sexism...it wasn't about the people who were being victimized, it was about the people who were victimizing".⁹⁵

For the Marie Robertson, "*The two major thrusts of that project were creating the booklet, 'Understanding Homophobia/Pour bien comprendre l'homophobie' [(1975)], and going out and doing speaks to anyone that would listen to us, in social service agencies*". Recalling one Project speak Marie Robertson said, "*We somehow got into the General [Hospital] and I remember talking to a group of nuns, which was mind blowing, that they would let us in*".⁹⁶ A key rationale for developing 'Understanding Homophobia' was GO's commitment to bilingual services and supplementing local service agencies.⁹⁷ As far as Marie Robertson knew, 'Understanding Homophobia' was the first such Canadian resource, and "*it was used all over the place for years and years. It was the first time we turned the questions around...And so by reversing that, a lot of groups across North America started to use that strategy from many years after that*".⁹⁸ In its final report the Project stated, of 38 agencies worked with, it found one third highly receptive, one third mildly so and one third not at all interested in GO's overtures. Many were simply overwhelmed by work.

The final report was optimistic about resistance, believing it merely reflected the "pervasive prejudice towards homosexuals in this society". Recognizing that even

⁹⁵ Greg Spurgeon.

⁹⁶ Marie Robertson.

⁹⁷ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 13: Document: Project Community Outreach, 1975, Section B, p.1. Additionally, Denis LeBlanc points out that the Project "*established a formal card system, [for] referral services. It was very good because then GO knew...where our friends were in the community*".

⁹⁸ Marie Robertson.

negative reactions were useful (a form of capital), the Project saw them as indicative of “the absolute necessity for more projects of this nature, not only in Ottawa but in other communities across Canada”.⁹⁹ Reflecting back on the Project, Robertson said, *“It was a different time. I had been doing educational work since the seventies so there were people there didn't who want to hear us; there were people who were more progressive. Very different from now. Now you almost have to explain that homophobia and sexism still exist. They're not sure why you people are here...back then; they knew why we were there, for sure”*.¹⁰⁰

The Project was GO's first sustained, programmatic foray into the social service field. It was in part due to Project findings that GO established its Education Committee in the fall of 1975.¹⁰¹ It was to be led by Marie Robertson but Greg Spurgeon took on that role almost immediately in January 1976.¹⁰² The Committee had two goals. Firstly, community outreach and education to the heterosexual community, through: a) maintaining and extending liaisons with social service agencies, b) forming a speakers bureau for anti-homophobia presentations to university, college and high school-level classes, and c) (as emphasized by CGRO) fostering “approaches to fair treatment of homosexuality in school curricula”.

This anti-homophobia emphasis reflected GO's situating homophobia as “the *real* problem faced by gay men and women”. Working in the social service field remained a focus for the Education Committee after the Project had found social workers and those

⁹⁹ Ibid Section B: 2.

¹⁰⁰ Marie Robertson.

¹⁰¹ Ibid Section B: 3.

¹⁰² CLGA, File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO Community Services Committee, Minutes 1974-1975, Nov. 11, 1975, Community Services Minutes.

in the helping professions, as homophobic as the general public. It would provide information, “absent from their professional training”. However, equally important was how this work would highlight GO as a provider of “important services in the community, to whom [agencies] can refer gay clients”.¹⁰³ The Committee’s second goal was to develop and maintain educational materials, augmenting GO’s burgeoning library. Given the dearth of good materials, it strove to get “good written resources on homosexuality and gay lib” into local schools and libraries.¹⁰⁴ Finally, the Education Committee was made responsible for producing and distributing *GO Info*, reflecting how the paper was conceived as an education tool.¹⁰⁵

Gays of Ottawa’s experience in education positioned it as a leader in the LGF. In February 1976, CGRO adopted an education policy stressing that education must be a priority. If public attitudes were to change, education was essential.¹⁰⁶ This was essential to CGRO bringing “about a fair and accurate treatment of homosexuality in the schools of Ontario”. Member groups were to establish education committees. Among its six policy initiatives, CGRO urged members to make presentations to boards of education (“a means of agitating for curricula changes”). Member groups should send speakers into

¹⁰³ G Spurgeon, ‘Education’, *GO Info*, no. 4, 1976, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ As early as August 1975, GO forwarded to CGRO member groups, a bibliography of books it suggests libraries should acquire (CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 14: Notes: CGRO Steering Cmte, Windsor, Aug 31, 1975; CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1976-1977 – 82-017/01 12: Document: Education Activities of Gays of Ottawa – 1976. GO Education Committee, 1976, p.2.

¹⁰⁵ G Spurgeon, ‘Education’, *GO Info*, no. 4, 1976, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ T Warner, Coalition adopts education policy, *Body Politic*, no. 31, 1977, p. 5. The policy was tabled by GATE’s Tom Warner. At the meeting Denis LeBlanc pointed out Warner’s document contained all of the education points GO raised in an education document sent to CGRO’s steering committee in January 1977 (CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 14: Notes: CGRO Steering Committee Meeting, Toronto, Feb. 6, 1978).

schools, “to talk about gay rights and obtain the positions of their respective boards concerning such speaks”.¹⁰⁷

Yet by the time of the next CGRO meeting in July, few groups had acted. Only two had standing education committees, leaving CGRO unable to coordinate educational activities provincially. Of the two existing committees, only GO’s had been operating for some time, and had consistently focused on community outreach and public education. Recognizing GO had “the broadest experience in education”, CGRO asked that it produce a resource document. At this same meeting GO committed to preparing draft of CGRO’s pamphlet on education.¹⁰⁸ When the document was ready for distribution, its accompanying cover letter described GO’s current status and revealed its nomenclature remained in flux. Gays of Ottawa was described as a gay liberation organization that, “works in several important ways to improve the lot of *homosexual* men & women in our community, province and country”. At the time GO had an active membership of approximately 30 “men/women” and served an “out *gay* community” of 1000. This was but a “fraction of Ottawa’s 40,000 probable gay population based on Kinsey’s 1-in-10 statistic”. That GO had contact with so few gay was “indicative of how much remains to be done”.¹⁰⁹

The document, ‘Education Activities of Gays of Ottawa – 1976’, was distributed to CGRO groups in September 1976. In it GO stated that like all “gay liberation groups”

¹⁰⁷ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1976-1977 – 82-017/01 12, Document: Toward a fair and accurate representation of homosexuality in Ontario’s Schools.

¹⁰⁸ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 14: Notes: CGRO Steering Cmte, Ottawa, July 31, 1975. A draft was distributed to the CGRO steering committee in January 1977 (CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 14).

¹⁰⁹ How GO arrives at this 1000 figure is unclear (CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B – 82-017/ 01 19 Letter: GO Education Committee to CGRO Member Groups, Sep.29, 1976.

it had a strong interest in public attitudes; public education could “provide an alternative to counteract the mass of misinformation”. It noted how, over time, structures had formed within GO, namely its Community Services Committee and Political Action Committee. Even though GO gave education pride-of-place, a structure coordinating it emerged last of all. This was because GO considered education integral to *all* its work.

In late 1975, the Education Committee’s focus “became community outreach”, namely, the educating of heterosexuals via social service agencies and schools. It was important however, to move beyond the short-term goal of working with schools in favour of a long-term goal of convincing the Ministry of Education, schools boards, etc., that an “unbiased view [of homosexuality] should be built into all relevant education”. It was essential that CGRO groups have informed and active education committees “in order that we can plan for coordinated provincial actions at the local level in our approaches to school boards”. Clearly any future provincial education strategy was to depend on capital accrued through work in the field of education.¹¹⁰

Flush with the success of its Community Outreach Project; GO applied for a \$950 grant from the Secretary of State’s Group Understanding and Human Rights program to “improve educational resource material”. Meant to fund work in the summer of 1976, it was not until November that GO learned it was rejected. The office of the Secretary of State, John Roberts, had approved the grant but Ottawa Centre MP, Hugh Poulin, had intervened to deny GO, using a little known provision allowing local Liberal MPs discretion over grants to their ridings. John Roberts stated in his letter that Poulin had

¹¹⁰ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1976-1977 – 82-017/01 12: Document: Education Activities of Gays of Ottawa – 1976, p.1-2.

decided GO's "program of community education and information dissemination was not a priority in his riding". What was unusual was an MP rejecting a grant *after* the Secretary of State had approved it.¹¹¹

In December, Denis LeBlanc wrote to Poulin, pointing out GO had met the program's non-riding-specific criteria. Moreover, the grant would benefit the Ottawa-Centre riding, "the heart of the gay community... [where] thousands of gay people live in this riding and pay taxes here". Poulin never replied. In mid-December David Garmaise wrote Sault Ste. Marie MP Cyril Symes asking that he enquire into grant distribution. Symes had previously raised the question of who had received grants in the House of Commons. Garmaise stated, "We happen to know that a member of [Secretary of State] Mr. Roberts' office tried to persuade Mr. Poulin to let us have that the money, but to no avail".¹¹² Ever willing to share its experience (capital) GO's Mike Johnston wrote Winnipeg's GFE which was applying for the same funding. Johnstone stated "sitting MPs (if they are liberals) or a Liberal MP from the area can veto any grant". He advised GFE to get the support of local churches in case "the liberal MP or Senator...in your area is as homophobic as Poulin".¹¹³ In June 1977, Cyril Symes received grant distribution data but no clear patterns were found.¹¹⁴ For his efforts (or lack of them) MP Hugh Poulin received GO's National Oscar Wilde, Homophobe of the Year award in January 1977.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ D Garmaise, Local MP Vetos Grant, *GO Info*, no, 5, 1976, p. 4.

¹¹² CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: Grants – 82-17/017/01 23 Letter: D. Garmaise to G. Steeves, R.A. to C. Symes, MP, Sault Ste Marie, Dec.15, 1976.

¹¹³ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/03B, File Name: Correspondence – Coalition Member 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 16 Letter: M. Johnstone, Coord Office to C. Vogel Gays for Equality, December 15, 1976.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*: Letter: R. Cyril Symes, MP Sault Ste Marie to J. Roberts, MP Secretary of State, June 22, 1977.

¹¹⁵ D Garmaise, *Homophobe-of-the-Year*, *GO Info*, no, 1, 1977, p. 1.

For all of GO's education leadership and acknowledged skill, in 1977 it experienced one of its greatest failures. It was to host CGRO's Third National Conference in April 1977, where the theme was education, and here GO pulled out all the stops. Over two thousand letters of invitation went to teachers, principals, and school board members in Ottawa and Hull, Québec. In the letter, education committee chair Greg Spurgeon described the conference as an opportunity to "initiate discussions between the gay community and those involved in the education system". Given that "ten percent of the population is homosexual" this would include "many thousands of gay students".¹¹⁶ However, attendance was shockingly poor; 75 people attended. Lynch in the BP noted GO's mass invitations to teachers etc. but in the end, even "generous estimates indicated around half a dozen showed up".¹¹⁷ In its activity report to GO's membership the PAC said "very poor participation from community" suggested "perhaps we were premature". The conference was a "good effort" as it was "necessary to lay the groundwork", letting educators see the kinds of change GO and the movement wanted.¹¹⁸ The conference into which GO poured so much capital was a huge failure. In the field of education, GO lacked the same strength of position it held in the social services field.

¹¹⁶ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 14: Letter: Greg Spurgeon, Chair GO Education Committee, Invitation to Various, Mar. 23, 1977).

¹¹⁷ All but one of CGRO's eighteen groups attended. It was at this same conference that a caucus of gay Ontario teachers formed (M Lynch, *Gay teachers to organize, Body Politic*, no. 33, 1977, p. 4).

¹¹⁸ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-17/01B, File Nam: General – 1973-1978 – 82-017/017/01 22: Document: Political Action Workshop – Gays of Ottawa Annual Conference – Nov. 19, 1977. The lesbian and gay movement would regularly utilize 'Kinsey's 10%' figure in making its claims for social change. For example, In August 1977 Gays of Ottawa proposed the City of Ottawa provide to it, on a permanent basis a community centre be made available for its community dances. John Duggan proposed this in a brief to the City arguing that "although lesbians and gay men constitute 10% of the population...publicly-funded community centres offer no program or events oriented to the specific needs of gay people" (D Garmaise, 'Gays want share of community facilities', *Body Politic*, no. 25, 1976, p. 6).

In this chapter GO's forays into the field of social service provision and education were charted. Owing primarily to how the social services field had recognized the value of GO's cultural capital accrued from lesbian and gay experience, its entry into the field was seen as credible. However its actions in the field of education were less welcome. Perhaps owing to the value that field placed on advanced degrees (symbolic capital) GO was not viewed as a credible education player. Whereas social service providers had recognized the value of GO's experiential credentials, the education field did not. In the next chapter we shall see how GO's accrued cultural capital proved invaluable to its move into the field of policing. Here its growing social and political capital gave it strength of position and the necessary capacities for confronting the behavior of Ottawa Police.

Chapter Seven: Policing the Police

The anxious relationship Ottawa's lesbians and gays had with their local police, was not unique. By the sixties, at an individual- and community-level, North American lesbians and gay men had a well-established fear of police.¹ In Ottawa, lesbians and gay men lived an additional anxiety due to the activities of the RCMP whose past efforts to expose homosexual civil servants continued to reverberate well into the seventies. The attempt to purge homosexuals from the civil service, coupled with the scrutiny of municipal police, generated varied levels of fear and loathing. In this chapter I consider GO's engagement with police. In particular, I focus on GO's efforts to react to and challenge the overt policing of gay male sexuality that was characteristic of police-gay community relations of the seventies. Like other lesbian and gay organizations in Canada, GO was often confronting the effects of police arrests of gay men; police who took a dim view of men using parks and washrooms as areas for sexual activity and social contact. I also consider the impact of an Ottawa Police raid on the city's gay bathhouse.

Generally, GO was placed in a reactive position, responding after the fact when it learned about arrests via its Gayline or word of mouth. However, it would ultimately take a more proactive stance towards sexual practices many in the community would have preferred GO had ignored. Responding to police actions GO drew on its cultural capital but also its growing social and political capital emerging out of relationships it had developed with local agencies. Here GO primarily sought to counter a harsh view of male sexuality and the devastating effects of police efforts to stymie it. As was often the case, GO took a pragmatic approach when confronting police. Gays of Ottawa recognized

¹ Warner 2002, p. 38-40; Smith 1999, p. 72.

that homophobic attitudes (in part) drove gay men to sexualize spaces in a manner that brought them into conflict with the law. However, GO argued that these same attitudes meant the impact of police actions, namely arrest and public exposure, were overly punitive. Thus GO preferred to manage or deter gay men's public sexuality instead of making a more revolutionary, sexual claim on spaces such as parks.

Lesbians, gay men, and police recognized gay-identified spaces were easy targets for police surveillance, entrapment activities and ultimately arrests. David Garmaise recalled, "*we were very conscious of the fact that the police were watching us. We used to spot them sitting outside the bar on Laurier*". Yet this attention "*gave us a kind of heady feeling, those of us that weren't afraid to be out. Sort of like, 'holy jeez look at me, they're taking a picture, wow!'*"² Additionally, GO's executive believed GO specifically had drawn the attention of police. In 1975, Denis LeBlanc had shared a house on Cartier Street with other GO executive members. Marie Robertson remembers "*one night we were having a meeting [at Denis] probably a political action committee meeting. And there had been an unmarked cop car sitting outside their house all week...one of his roommates went out and asked if they wanted a coffee. I mean we know you're out here. What they thought we were doing God knows. But it was a time of fear*".³

It was not clear who was watching Denis LeBlanc' house and/or GO but Robertson soon learned the RCMP were aware of the organization. She received a call

² David Garmaise. The 'bar on Laurier' he refers to was likely the 166B which began catering to gay men after the Lord Elgin's bar closed 1975.

³ Marie Robertson. Kinsman and Gentile (2010, p. 382-83) found that GO remained 'of interest' to authorities into the eighties. After *Andrew*, a civilian employed by the military appeared on TV as an openly gay man in 1981, military SIU questioned him. He was asked whether Gays of Ottawa might develop a policy or strategy "against national defence". Additionally, 'if [GO] went on a rampage against' national defence, "what would [Andrew] do?"

from a closeted civil servant who worked *“for Justice or something. And she phoned me one night...she was very upset, she said ‘I was in a meeting at work and the meeting was about Gays of Ottawa’ they were frightened of [GO] because we supposedly had secret files and like some big secret agenda. And she said ‘you cannot use my name but I’m warning you.’”* Robertson informed Denis LeBlanc and Charlie but GO’s executive was not very concerned. Some of them were civil servants but few had a security clearance that would have put their jobs at risk. Also David Garmaise believes that by the mid-seventies the RCMP had become less concerned about gay civil servants, especially those that were out. After all, *“I had a security clearance in 73-74 even though I was out”*. Garmaise believes that in the seventies RCMP attitudes were changing. *“What was it late 50s, middle 60s, they had the fruit machine...so they’d evolved quite a bit in the years after Stonewall and the early seventies”*. For example, in May 1977, Solicitor General Francis Fox had stated *“being an overt or publicly professed homosexual”* was not a barrier to applying or being considered for employment with the government. Less clear however, was the situation for closeted homosexuals seeking a security clearance.⁴

Ian MacLennan agreed that, *“yes, you were safer if you were out because the whole point of the security being against gay men was hiding. Therefore you are easily*

⁴ David Garmaise had a security clearance for his work at Canada Post, acquiring it easily in 1973; Body Politic, ‘Fox suggests security clearances OK for open gays’, *Body Politic*, no. 33, 1977, p. 5. Professor Robert Wake of Ottawa’s Carleton University’s psychology department had aided the RCMP in developing a device for detecting homosexuality in 1962. Of dubious conception and capacity, RCMP staff referred to it as the ‘fruit machine’ and resisted being *“...recruited among the ‘normals’ to be tested on it”* (G Kinsman, ‘Character Weakness’ and ‘Fruit Machines’: Towards an Analysis of the Anti-Homosexual Security Campaign in the Canadian Civil Service’, *Labour / Le Travail*, Spring, vol. 35, 1995. pp. 154; Kinsman and Gentile 2010, pp.168-1).

turned".⁵ Gay civil servants who remained closeted were regarded by the RCMP as a security risk. A fear of being exposed made them susceptible to blackmail. However, if they came out they risked being branded a sexual deviant. Charlie Hill stated, "*as we told [the Government and RCMP] you know if you're worried about people hiding you're creating the situation where people have to hide. So be out and there's nothing to hide. You won't be open to blackmail which was the argument they used...a reason to justify their own prejudice*".⁶

Gays of Ottawa's primary relationship with policing was with the local Ottawa Police. The GO executive did not feel GO experienced a unique level of scrutiny or loathing by their local police. Their ignorance of and hostility to, homosexuals was on par with the rest of the country. When it came to conditions within the field of policing, there appears to have been little variation. Denis LeBlanc said, "*I think [they] were about the same as Toronto, they did all the same things*". However, LeBlanc believed Ottawa police, "*sometimes...would try things [(e.g., strategies)] out here in Ottawa first...before Toronto*".⁷ Speaking of Canadian police in general, David Garmaise said,

⁵ Ian MacLennan. At a GO demonstration MacLennan attended in 1975 police and media had taken photos. Ian was certain his image was captured but this did not affect his acquiring a security clearance for work at Telesat Canada.

⁶ Charlie Hill. After Hill was hired by the National Gallery he acquired a security clearance, this was new for the Gallery which Hill believes stemmed from a (then) recent "*big theft at the Montréal museum [Musée Des Beau-Arts de Montréal]. But I also had criminal record for possession of grass from Toronto*".

⁷ Denis LeBlanc. Here Denis is referring to a raid in 1976 by Ottawa Police on the Ottawa Club Bath. Never previously raided, this dramatic raid was predated by similar raids in Montreal, and subsequent bath raids in Toronto in 1978 and 1981. LeBlanc has no direct evidence that police were in essence testing out and sharing effective techniques. However, prior to their December 1978 raid on the Barracks Bathhouse, Toronto police had tended to police gay baths quietly and only in response to complaints. Kinsman (1987 pp. 39-40) believes the Barracks raid had brought to an end an era of "grudging acceptance of negotiated deals between police and bath owners" in place since the sixties. He links this change to a growing conservative backlash (See: Warner 2002; Smith 1999). It should be noted that most of the baths police dealt with prior to the seventies were traditional men's saunas, at which clandestine sex might give rise to complaints. In the seventies as gay-identified, sexualized baths

"I mean their attitudes were bad and we had to change their attitudes along with everybody else...but the police are a tougher nut to crack".⁸ In seventies Ottawa, as in the rest of Canada, the attitudes of police were confronted mainly over their responses to public manifestations of gay male sexuality, namely through cruising areas and/or sex in public washrooms, theatres or bathhouses.

Cruising Areas

Like a majority of citizens, lesbians and gays could reasonably expect to live an entire life without interaction with police. However, lesbians and gays like other stigmatized populations, felt a far greater sense of (negative) scrutiny, a generalized sense that 'police were watching'. In the seventies gay men in particular experienced the impact of police scrutiny. More so than lesbians, gay men made use of a network of sexual spaces such as bathhouses and public areas claimed for public cruising and sex, manifesting a sexual ethic that alarmed police.⁹ While some might regard frequenting a public park for sex as adding to gay men's social isolation, in fact parks served as spaces for networking, community support *and* sexual contacts.¹⁰

In the summer of 1973, GO received reports of men arrested in Ottawa's Major's Hill and Nepean Point parks.¹¹ Both were havens for muggers who saw gay men as easy

emerged they drew a new level of scrutiny from police. See: T McCaskell, 'The Bath Raids and Gay Politics, In *Social Movements / Social Change: The Politics and Practice of Organizing*, F Cunningham, S Findlay, M Kadar, A Lennon, & E Silva, (eds) *Between the Lines*, Toronto, 1998, pp. 169-88).

⁸ David Garmaise.

⁹ J D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The making of a homosexual minority in the United States, 1940-1970*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 49).

¹⁰ McDiarmid 1999, 54.

¹¹ Both parks were located a few blocks from the busy Rideau Street shopping district. In the seventies and eighties both were popular, if dangerous, cruising areas. At that time Mackenzie Ave. which ran alongside Major's Hill Park was the stroll for the Ottawa's male prostitutes.

marks. Denis LeBlanc said, “*of course, people would phone in...anonymously with information, about what was going on. We’d get news through the Gayline, sometimes it panned out, and sometimes it didn’t*”. Some calls were from men who had been mugged and GO feared that gay men “*were getting beat up... [and] not being treated fairly by the police when they went to complain...being victimized a second time by the police*”¹² Other men called the Gayline to report being victims of police entrapment, namely through plainclothes officers behaving like gay men out cruising. In late 1973 the *Ottawa Journal* asked GO for proof of its claims of police entrapment but it could produce none.¹³

By August 1973, GO was responding by distributing a bilingual leaflet (“Police in Nepean Point”) that addressed the phenomenon of arrests and urged gay men to *not* have sex in public. The emphasis on deterring sexual activities reflected GO’s concern for men’s safety rather than a moral view.¹⁴ In the leaflet GO noted how, after years of gay men’s complaining to police about muggings, police had responded by “arresting the victims”. It warned of plain-clothes officers initiating conversations with men *without* identifying themselves as police.¹⁵ Gays of Ottawa had been able to respond quickly owing to the capital of its members. (At night, photocopiers in government offices were readily, if stealthily used to produce necessary materials.)

¹² Denis LeBlanc.

¹³ (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A > File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972-Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02, Minutes: Oct. 11, 1973).

¹⁴ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/ 01 02; Minutes: Aug. 16 1973; CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982 – 017/04 04 Document: Police in Nepean Point. Later in April 1976, GO issued a press release informing men of the illegal status of public sex and advised arrestees to contact GO for legal advice (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982 – 017/04 04: Press Release: Police Harassment Continues, Apr. 9 1976.)

¹⁵ This was not an approach unique to Ottawa. Gay men in other cities made similar complaints. See: G Hislop, ‘Don’t grope strangers (Introduce yourself first)’, *Body Politic*, no. 3, 1972, p. 18).

One evening Charlie Hill encountered the two Ottawa Police officers that GO believed primarily responsible for parks arrests. These were “[Constable] Gervais and [Sergeant] Methot...they were policing Major Hills park and we were there one night handing out leaflets. I think they were quite startled that we were there”. Hill was not the only one to have a run in with the officers. Late in the summer of 1975 GO executive member Yvon Thieverge witnessed Gervais and Methot making an arrest at Major’s Hill. Thieverge intervened knowing that one arrestee was innocent. One of the officers punched Yvon, charging him with obstruction. Subsequently, Thieverge charged the officers with assault.¹⁶ John Duggan said officers worked, “in what was it called [the] vice squad ...Methot and Gervais”. Policing the parks, “that seemed to be what they did all the time...hang out in the parks and entrapped gay men”.¹⁷

Not willing to respond solely through leaflets, in October 1973 GO members Norman Hay and Paul Wise met with Lt. Longfreis, Ottawa Police Public Relations. Reporting back to GO’s Executive, Hay and Wise informed them that Longfreis had stated police entered the parks in response to a spate of muggings; to protect gays and straights alike. He also acknowledged police were compelled to act if they witnessed laws being broken. Raising the issue of entrapment, Hay and Wise believed it unlikely a gay man would “touch a policeman unless he had reason to believe that person wanted to be touched”, namely clearly cruising. “Longfreis vigorously denied entrapment”. It was true an officer might say ‘hello’, police could hardly be faulted if this was misconstrued. Asked if police were hoping to stop park muggings by ridding the park of gay men,

¹⁶ Charlie Hill. In May 1974, after 4 men were arrested at Nepean Point and 2 more were arrested at Strathcona Park, GO again leafleted Nepean Point and also the LE Bar.

¹⁷ John Duggan. Often referred to as the ‘Vice Squad’, the squad in question was the Morality Squad.

Longfreis observed 'this amounted to the same thing'. Hay and Wise concluded the meeting as, "fairly predictable...friendly but got nowhere".¹⁸

Gays of Ottawa's position on park sex was morally neutral and pragmatic. If reducing arrests meant dissuading public sex, so be it. Charlie Hill recalled, "*I think we were trying to understand [the Police] point of view and other people's point of view but also [we were] watching out for real homophobia*"¹⁹ One of GO's most politically astute and liberation-minded members, Denis LeBlanc did not claim gay men had a *right* to public sex. The real issue was that men "*were being treated unfairly*"?²⁰ A reform-minded organization, GO advanced no claim to public space or advocated a new conception of privacy. Indeed, Denis LeBlanc points out, "*in terms of the definition of privacy, we [Canada] had no constitution; privacy was nowhere to be found in any law*".

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The organization's message lacked the revolutionary outlook on public sex espoused by John Rechy in *The Sexual Outlaw*, wherein any space was a potential site for

¹⁸ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982 – 017/04 04: Document: Hand-written notes; Paul and Norman (GO) with Lt. Longfreis, Public Relations, Ottawa Police. In October 1975, Thieverge asked GO for assistance, namely \$250 towards a \$500 lawyer's retainer. Cash strapped GO contributed \$100 towards an estimated legal bill of \$3,500. At this same meeting, minutes record that Charlie was repaid for personally helping legal costs of one Gerry Levesque (CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015/(), File Name: GO Executive Committee Minutes Aug. 26, 1975; Letter: Y. Thieverge to C. Hill, Oct. 15, 1975; *ibid*, Minutes: Oct. 17 1975).

¹⁹ Charlie Hill.

²⁰ Denis LeBlanc.

²¹ Denis LeBlanc. Not until the 1978 Toronto Barracks bath raid would the issue of privacy and gay male sexuality be articulated. After the raid the Right to Privacy Committee was formed. (See: K. Orr, "The bawdyhouse battle: public vs. private". *BP*, no. 84, 1982, p. 13). In a brief to the Justice and Legal Affairs Committee in April 1982, former RTPC chairman George Smith argued, "privacy is constituted in a whole variety of ways. When people going into the bushes, for example, to have sex, what they are trying to do is, in fact, constitute privacy". When people come across sexual activity and ignored it, Smith contended people assisted in "the constitution of privacy". In addition to dealing with bath raids, RTPC helped gay men deal with a rash of washroom sex and park sex arrests that occurred in Toronto and southern Ontario in the early eighties (See: R. Trow, "The News: Right to Privacy Committee evaluates year at policy meeting". *BP*, no. 64, 1980, p. 16.)

sexual, revolutionary, action.²² For GO, police reactions reflected homophobia-influenced laws. Their neither-condemn-or-condone response bore the mark of Charlie Hill's experiences with assimilationist groups. In a 1971, article Hill had addressed the issue of washroom sex, stating gay men "were forced to do so because of 'society's anti-homosexual prejudices' that made it necessary for people to 'compulsively hide their homosexuality'". Only through increased public visibility and recognition would homosexuals come to "conduct themselves in more acceptable ways".²³ In essence, Hill argued that heteronormative views on sexuality dominated the field of sexual relations. In response to these unfavourable conditions, gay men had taken up a kind of 'keep to the shadows' sexual habitus.

Charlie Hill influenced GO's response but this did not mean GO backed down. John Duggan said that, "*even though Charlie Hill was not politically active in the sense that Denis was...[Charlie] was obviously very political because he challenged the cops and called [the actions] entrapment...[in] letters to editors [and] I think he probably did radio and TV*". The "*problem was police entrapping gay men...so it was very political*". In its response GO did not just act as "*a kind of social service*", supporting those arrested

²² J. Rechy, *The Sexual Outlaw: A Documentary*, Grove Press, New York, 1997. "The promiscuous homosexual is a sexual revolutionary...he confronts repressive laws, repressive 'morality'. Parks, alleys, subway tunnels, garages, streets—these are the battlefields" (p. 28). For Rechy resistance to homophobic regulation of gay male sexuality echoed past social movements. "When a courageous black woman in the South refused to move to the back of the bus that was a revolutionary act— breaking the law in public. When gay people suck and fuck in the streets, that too is a revolutionary act" (p.71).

²³ Nash (2006, pp. 5-6) quotes Hill from an issue of *Gay Okay*, January 1-2, 1971. Considering the emerging movement, Hill added that relegating gays to particular spaces, such as ghettos, bars, parks etc. only isolated them. It was another means of deeming gay conduct "inappropriate", hiding it from view.

by saying, “*here’s a good lawyer*”. GO used its cultural capital to place matters in a larger context.²⁴

As to the lesbian and gay community’s views on GO’s effort to advocate publicly about a largely hidden (from heterosexuals) sexual practice of gay men, reactions were mixed. At an early July 1973, general meeting the pros and cons of publicizing police actions at Major’s Hill Park was discussed. Some feared for the reputation homosexuals should the media become aware of men’s cruising parks.²⁵ Within the larger movement, many lesbians were ambivalent, even hostile to gay male sexuality. The degree to which the movement emphasized defending and protecting it, left many at a loss. Ross reported many women involved in the Lesbian Organization of Toronto (LOOT) described male sexuality as predatory, objectifying etc. A member suggested gay men’s liberation “centered around their right to fuck”.²⁶

In the later seventies a lesbian member of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition believed men’s sexuality impeded lesbians working politically alongside men. “I’m expected to march in support of your *right* to romp in public toilets but my right to walk safely at night is overlooked”.²⁷ Gays of Ottawa did not confront this kind of reaction from lesbians over its park efforts. Possibly this reflected the generally low

²⁴ John Duggan.

²⁵ How the Gayline would respond to callers seeking information about park sex was the main issue at the meeting. At this time in GO’s development, the Gayline and its committee were among the most prominent (John Duggan).

²⁶ Ross 1995, p. 171.

²⁷ Warner 2002, p. 131-2.

participation of lesbians in GO and the movement. Both of the reactions from lesbians noted above, date from after 1976.²⁸

Through GO's public advocacy, Denis LeBlanc believes the community saw GO as assisting it. "*I think [this was] because we were providing services...the community warmed to us. We were providing the Gayline, information services. So we were offering a hand to the community...we were saying you're not alone, we can help*".²⁹ Reporting on activities to delegates at the National Gay Conference, Québec City, October 1973, GO states that its response to park arrests had helped—sort of. After GO leafleted, police withdrew for a time. After a recent knifing, plain clothes police had again entered parks and arrested two men for indecent assault. Having won a partial victory GO stated the "melodrama continues and the muggers are still free".³⁰

GO's Gays and the Law booklet:

In addition to GO's leafleting effort, GO responded to the police by producing its *Gays and the Law* (1972) booklet. Re-printed several times it was mailed to groups throughout Canada and the U.S. In a 1974 letter to CHAT's George Hislop, Charlie Hill reports, "we have been flooded with requests for *Gays and the Law*, mostly from the U.S. as usual".³¹ In Canada homosexuality had been narrowly decriminalized leaving many laws still

²⁸ The Lesbian Organization of Toronto was not formed until 1976.

²⁹ Denis LeBlanc.

³⁰ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: National Gay Conference, Québec 1973 82-017/05 37: Document: GO Report from Gays of Ottawa, Québec Conference, Oct. 6 1973. The conference was referred to as the "2nd Canadian Meeting of Gay Liberation Groups".

³¹ CGLA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: Federal Government – 1971-1977 – 1976 – 82-017 /017/01 02 – Letter: C. Hill, to G. Hislop, CHAT). A month later Hill responds to Susan Siber who requested copies for a Gay-American Law conference in Buffalo, N.Y. Hill can only spare two copies as GO is running out. A second, revised edition was due shortly (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: InterGroup Communications – Gay Groups – 1973-1974 – 82-017/02 27 – Letter: C. Hill, GO to S. Siber).

governing homosexual relations. The situation was made worse by the “deeply homophobic” attitudes of Canadian police in the late sixties and seventies.³² During the parliamentary debate over decriminalization, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police was opposed believing homosexuality, “led to depravity, blackmail, robbery, and murder”.³³

In an era when police commonly raided gay bars, men cruising washrooms and parks was viewed in an even harsher light. Accusations of entrapment were frequent and typically those caught in a park raid (or any raid) were ignorant of the law, their rights or how to behave towards police.³⁴ John Duggan, remembers, “*that was one of the reasons we got out the Gays and the Law in pocket form...and distribute it in the parks...to inform people in the park to know the law. Their only knowledge of the law was what they read in the newspaper*”.

It was police arrests that drove GO’s Law Reform Committee, precursor to GO’s Political Action Committee (PAC), to begin working on the booklet in 1972. This move aligned with GO’s larger political program, namely challenging the status quo and assisting gay men. As John Duggan recalls, “*that’s where political action was at in those days*”. But of course, “*the way I saw it and the way everyone there saw it...anything we were doing, just being out, was political action*”.³⁵ Having little cultural or symbolic capital with regard to legal matters, the committee consulted Ottawa-area lawyer, Hugh Mantha with whom GO already had a relationship. Mantha, a member of the Ottawa-

³² Warner 2002, p. 39.

³³ Kinsman 1987, p. 164.

³⁴ Warner 2002, p. 38.

³⁵ John Duggan.

Carleton Civil Liberties Association had approached GO in August 1972, offering free legal advice. In February 1973, he spoke at a general membership meeting on homosexuality and law. Mantha told the membership that “the attitudes of both Ottawa Police and the RCMP towards homosexuals are very negative”.³⁶ In a follow-up letter Charlie Hill thanked Mantha saying he was, “impressed to at last meet a lawyer who was willing to fight the present oppressive legal system”.³⁷ Hill expressed dissatisfaction with previous experiences with “liberal lawyers” who merely “exploit the system”. This was “basically dishonest and in no way attempts to radically change the system”. In the letter, Hill described gay liberation as an attempt to *be* honest, “in a society which demands dishonesty”.³⁸

During the booklet’s development, GO’s Gaston Charpentier wrote Vancouver’s Self Counsel Press about its publication on Canadian civil rights. Charpentier informed the Press of GO’s efforts, asking if it had considered a publication on “the Homosexual and the Law” to help “those who are confronted by the arm of the law”.³⁹ It is unclear how the Press responded but Charlie Hill remembers, “*at one point we were going to do*

³⁶ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO String Cmte Min June 1972 – August 1972 – 82-017/01 03 – Minutes: Aug. 30, 1972; Mantha was a legal resource. It does not appear he formally represented GO. The Ottawa chapter of Civil Liberties was also a resource (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A > File Name: GO Exec Cmt Min April 1972 – Nov 1972 – 82-017/01 02 – Minutes: Apr. 16, 1973).

³⁷ Notes taken by Charlie Hill during Mantha’s talk note he touched on ‘gay marriage,’ homosexual relations in civil law, divorce, age of consent, custody, anti-gay harassment, arrest etc. Mantha warned members that he believed the decriminalization of homosexuality between ‘two persons’ had a potential downside. Should a police officer intrude (as in a park) they became a ‘third person’ whose presence thus made any homosexual activity illegal. (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982 – 017/04 04 – Document: C. Hill “Mantha’s Talk to GO” Mar. 20, 1973).

³⁸ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982 – 017/04 04 – Letter: C. Hill, GO to H. Mantha, March 1973.

³⁹ Charpentier also corrected an error the Press had made. Its publication incorrectly put Canada’s age of consent at 19 when it was 21 (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02A, File Name: Media General 1972-1977 – 82-017 .017 /02 08 – Letter: G. Charpentier, GO to Self-Counsel Press).

a handbook on gays and lesbians and the law... [with] a publishing house in Vancouver. But in the end I never did it". Charlie Hill was the potential writer because there was, "a certain amount of law stuff I got involved in. My father was a lawyer...so I came from a family of lawyers". Thus Hill had some of the necessary cultural and symbolic capital.⁴⁰ Further, Hill's experiences in Toronto may have been of influence in that UTHA and CHAT had both, "gathered the info for our own information...to give [legal] advice to people".⁴¹ In the end, Jim Finn and Denis LeBlanc were chiefly responsible for authoring it. Denis LeBlanc remembers being "curious. What the hell are the laws? So I did some research and we wrote up the first little pamphlet: *Gays and the Law*". Gays of Ottawa reported the printing of five hundred copies of the Booklet at a Québec City conference in October 1973.⁴²

Gays of Ottawa would continue to respond to park arrests throughout the seventies, garnering greater community recognition and standing by advocating for fair treatment by police. In September 1975, executive members met with an Ottawa Police community relations officer. Said officer saw no need for the community, namely GO, to be involved in the issue. He denied the "morality squad [was] hassling gays" in the parks. Clearly the view of police was that GO lacked the cultural, symbolic and political capital to be involved. They did not belong in the field of policing.⁴³ Therefore, Ottawa police continued policing parks. In April 1976, GO issued a press release after four men

⁴⁰ In October 1975, the BP, stated GO had been "contracted with Self Counsel Press of Vancouver to prepare a booklet about gays and the law" but nothing book was produced (Ottawa gays prepare legal ad booklet, ask for help, *Body Politic*, no. 20, 1975, p. 9) . Charlie Hill.

⁴¹ Charlie Hill.

⁴² Denis LeBlanc; CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/05A File Name: National Gay Conference, Québec, 1973 82-017/05 37, Document: Report From Gays of Ottawa, Québec Conference Oct. 6, 1973).

⁴³ CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File No.: GO General Mtg Min – 1973-1975: Minutes: Sept. 2 1975.

were arrested at Nepean Point stating: “the park is dangerous—the witch-hunt continues—keep out of the park”. While GO self-identified as a gay-liberation organization its cultural capital and habitus was reformist, so GO added, “it is illegal to make love in the park. If you meet, go home, to a private place, a hotel etc., to have sex”.⁴⁴

The Vice Ring Affair

Gays of Ottawa once again found itself confronted by the activities of morality squad officers Sergeant Methot and Constable Gervais in March 1975. On March 4, 1975, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported that after a two month investigation, police had uncovered a “homosexual ring in Centretown”.⁴⁵ Two businesses, the Unique Male Modelling Agency and Teenage Males for Nude Modeling had been a front for a “prostitution ring involving juveniles”. After interviewing “10 boys between 11 and 17”, police had charged Michael Gravel, 21, as the ring’s leader. Ottawa Police Superintendent Tom Flanagan said the case was “the most sordid crime we’ve investigated for some time and we are sure many more are involved”. Records seized revealed agencies recruited street boys, paying them \$10 an hour while customers paid between \$35-60. In the *Ottawa Journal*, McKay reported police had found, “as many as 100 boys—mainly teenagers—were hired through newspaper ads”.⁴⁶ Supt. Flanagan described how “if you’re a poor little kid out on the street and offered 10\$, this is how it starts”. On March 17, the

⁴⁴ CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: Press Release: Gays of Ottawa – GO Police Harassment Continue, April 9 1976.

⁴⁵ *Ottawa Citizen*, ‘Boys used in city vice ring’, *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 March 1975. p. 1; Kinsman & Gentile 2010, pp. 302-10; Warner 2002, p. 104).

⁴⁶ D McKay, ‘Boys in ‘Slavery Ring’, *Ottawa Journal*, 4. March 1975, p. 2.

Ottawa Journal reported 15 men had now been charged for involvement in a “teenage sex ring”.⁴⁷

Throughout March 1975, the *Citizen* and the *Journal* published a heady mix of facts, lurid fiction and false allegations, based according to John Duggan, on “*police giving daily soap opera interviews... where they'd hint there were important people involved*”.⁴⁸ In responding to the Vice Ring Affair GO would make use of cultural and social capital with a community far less sympathetic than it had been regarding men arrested in parks. Of the two papers, Denis LeBlanc described the now defunct, “[*Ottawa*] *Journal* as a bit more conservative. The [*Ottawa*] *Citizen* editorially, was a bit more sceptical [of police]...very liberal... [Stinson] was the editor...He was very Irish Liberal at the time, kind of more open. They were more receptive to [GO]...published our press releases more often, letters to the editors much more often. We had a harder time with the *Journal*”.⁴⁹

The newspapers emphasis on a ‘sex ring’ or ‘vice ring’ reflected the media’s long-term media fascination, stretching back to 1895 trial of Oscar Wilde, about the existence of secret rings, societies etc. where men had sex with other men and/or boys.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Ottawa Journal*, ‘Sex Charges up to 15’. *Ottawa Journal*, 17 March, 1975, p. 1. The language used by the *Journal* was more lurid, including phrases like ‘teenage sex ring’ or ‘teenage vice ring’. In contrast the *Ottawa Citizen* (Mar. 4 1975 p.1) used “male prostitution ring involving juveniles”.

⁴⁸ John Duggan.

⁴⁹ Denis LeBlanc. John Duggan agreed that the *Journal* was more difficult. He recalled an interaction between Charlie Hill and an *Ottawa Journal* reporter. Previously the paper had published an editorial suggesting “everything would be okay if [gays] didn’t use the word ‘gay’...give us back our word”. Speaking with Charlie the reporter “kept harping on this; ‘why do you call yourselves gay’? Charlie shot back, “I don’t hear you objecting to the word ‘queer’”.

⁵⁰ Oscar Wilde’s trial did much to strengthen a belief in secret homosexual networks (J Weeks *Sex, Politics and Society: The regulation of sexuality since 1800*, Longman, New York, 1989, pp. 107-08). In 1995 this belief was again a feature in media accounts of a London, Ontario rent boy sex scandal. Bell and Couture (p. 43) concluded media, “continued to give the impression that police were breaking a child

Media invariably depicted the sexual interactions of gay men based in secretive, organized etc. rings or hidden networks. Charlie Hill doubted a 'ring' existed. "*The ring: yes it was hardly a ring...it was a dating-with-sex service. Hardly much more than that...maybe some money changed hands*".⁵¹ What went unreported by the media was the fact the Ottawa Police never *discovered* the ring. They were informed directly. Michael Gravel, the so-called ring's operator had met with Mayor Lorry Greenberg, telling him all about his operation.

Mayor Greenberg relayed this 'strange but true' story to John Duggan, Lloyd Plunket and Ian MacLennan at a May 1975 meeting.⁵² At the meeting Lloyd Plunket recalled Greenberg saying, "*something to the effect...the person who initiated the thing actually came to him saying, the Montréal mob, is trying to take over my business and basically the mayor realized he had to call the police*".⁵³ Charlie Hill had also heard Gravel had gone to the Mayor and then, "*[Gravel] went to the police for protection from the Mafia*". Hill also noted that Gravel had "*stupidly, kept books about all his clients...*" The Mayor's "*ex-wife lived across the street [from Hill] and I used to talk to her*". This provided Hill with valuable social and political capital. She told Hill, "*Greenberg knew my father and if I'd told [my father] him [about the vice ring]... [Greenberg] have done something quickly. That's how politics is done*".⁵⁴

pornography ring", even after the "ring turned out to be a group of teenage boys who introduced one another to the men...[yet] very few of the men even knew each other" (S Bell and J Couture, 'Justice and Law: Passion, power, prejudice, and so-called pedophilia', in *Gendering Practice*, D Chunn & D Lacombe (eds), Oxford University Press, Don Mills, Ontario, 2000, pp. 41-59).

⁵¹ Charlie Hill.

⁵² CLGA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (): Minutes: May 28 1975.

⁵³ Lloyd Plunkett.

⁵⁴ Charlie Hill.

Gravel's books helped police track down clients, including GO executive member, Paul-François Sylvestre, who was upfront about having answered an escort service advertisement in the *Ottawa Citizen*. "Yes...why would I call a modelling agency? It was more like escorts. I remember asking if these guys were 18 or older but I did not know at that time the law said 21 [was the age of consent]". Gervais and Methot visited Sylvestre. "Those were the two that came to my place... [saying] we are not after you, we are after the big fish". Sylvestre "wrote down what happened...a signed declaration. That I did, call [the agency] and I did meet someone". However, Gervais and Methot "came back a few days later" to charge Sylvestre with gross indecency.

At the time Sylvestre was working for Hugh Faulkner, the Minister for Secretary of State in the bilingualism and education section. In Victoria when the story broke, Sylvestre remembers upon his return, "I was supposed to go the National Arts Centre along with the [Minister's] speech writer...no one said anything [but] they changed the plans". At home his roommate said, "you are on the front page of the Citizen". Fortunately (even amazingly) the Minister and staff had reacted calmly. Subsequently, "someone in the Minister's office told me, 'you're innocent until proven guilty and the Minister is satisfied with your work, it doesn't change anything whether you've been charged or not...we'll see what happens'".⁵⁵

At trial the case, like most vice ring cases fell apart. When the Crown revealed its key witness, "a tall blond young guy who I had never seen," who was clearly of legal age, Sylvestre's lawyer Paul McCann asked Sylvestre, "do you know him?" I said 'no,

⁵⁵ In an interview with Kinsman and Gentile (2010, p.308) Sylvestre adds there might have been an effort to keep him from appearing in "public with the minister. But I would still do the same work in the office and all that".

I've never seen him before.'" Immediately, McCann asked for and received a dismissal of the case. Sylvestre found it all happened so fast he rebounded quickly, writing a book about the experience. He believes his involvement with GO was vital to his coping. *"Yes...I sometimes wonder if I would have written the book if I hadn't been a member of GO and having the support of other people and other friends".*⁵⁶

Initially, GO's primary concern was over sensationalist and incorrect reporting. Charlie Hill wrote *Globe and Mail* editors "to clear up certain distortions". Police claims that that 'slave ring' had involving potentially 'one hundred boys' had proven false. Newspapers revealed arrestees' identities and addresses, thus "people are suffering the penalties of convicted persons before even going to court". Hill was especially angry that in the case of "heterosexual customers of female prostitutes of the same age [they] would never be charged while the prostitute would be". In the vice ring case the reverse was true; no male prostitutes were charged. Therefore Hill saw the arresting of male clients as a "homosexual witch-hunt" in which police were "armed with the discriminatory laws of our country". Reflecting back on the case Hill believed arrests *"originally grew out of Mayor Lorry Greenberg's campaign to 'clean-up' the city and to get rid of body-rub prostitution".*⁵⁷ In the BP, GO's Ron Dayman held the Mayor "responsible for a major local 'morality' campaign and is generally considered to have instigated the

⁵⁶ Sylvestre kept a diary during the case and it was this aspect that primarily interested a publisher (S Paul-François, *Les Homosexuels S'Organisent*, Les Éditions Homeureux Enrg', Montréal, 1979).

⁵⁷ When Hill wrote his letter no charges of indecent assault had been laid and none would be (CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / ()), File No.: Complaint to Ontario Press Council Against *Ottawa Citizen* 1975 – 82-015 / ()): Letter: C. Hill, GO to The Editor, *Globe and Mail*, Mar. 14 1975).

investigations in [the vice ring] case”. Mayor Greenberg would not have been the first city mayor to launch a morality effort.⁵⁸

Given the prevailing stigmatized view of homosexuality, GO feared the media’s effect. On March 17, the *Ottawa Journal* reported Warren Zufelt, a 34 year career civil servant was charged “in connection with the teenage sex ring”. That same day Zufelt jumped off the roof of his thirteen story apartment.⁵⁹ The next day the *Ottawa Journal* reported Zufelt had ‘fallen’ while the *Ottawa Citizen* hinted at suicide, reporting Zufelt “jumped or fell”.⁶⁰ In a press release calling for a March 20 picket, GO described Zufelt’s “crime [was] making love with a person between the ages of 16 and 21”. The reporting of names, addresses etc. “created an atmosphere of hysteria”. Gays of Ottawa held the media “directly responsible for the death of Warren Zufelt”, demanded charges be withdrawn, a uniform age of consent, and an end to biased, sensational reporting.⁶¹ By naming names the papers had undermined the value of the arrestees’ social capital (their social relationships).

Leonard Shore, representing Zufelt and others, told the *Ottawa Journal* that police were responsible, for using language that implied Zufelt and other were clients were also

⁵⁸ Dayman, R ‘Witch-hunt Extends to Court’. *Body Politic*, no. 19, 1975, p. 9. See also: Y. Ng, ‘Ideology, Media, Moral Panics: An analysis of the Jacques’ Murder’, (Masters’ Thesis) York University, Toronto, 1981. Ng charts how in Toronto, throughout the seventies, city officials had attempted to garner public support for a clean-up Yonge Street’s notorious body-rub parlour strip. After the murder of 12 year old Emanuel Jacques in July 1977, city officials and police were able to initiate a ‘moral cleansing’ of Yonge Street.

⁵⁹ Zufelt’s suicide was the subject of a February 1977 play, *Eschaton*, performed by Carleton University’s, Sock ‘n’ Buskin Theatre Group (Duggan no. 30, 1977, p.18).

⁶⁰ *Ottawa Journal*, ‘Man dies in fall from high-rise’, *Ottawa Journal*, 18 March, 1975, p. 1; *Ottawa Citizen*, ‘Vice ring accused dies in fall’. *Ottawa Citizen*, 18 March, 1975, p. 3.

⁶¹ Perhaps GO used the phrase ‘making love’ to counter the sexually charged nature of the media’s narrative (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B, File No.: Prostitution Ring – 1976 – 82-017/02 14: Press Release: The Facts, March 18 1975); See: BP, ‘Editorial: Justice Canadian Style’, *BP*, no. 18, 1975, p. 2 and R. Dayman, ‘Ottawa: Police and press lies end in death’, *BP*, no. 18, 1975, p. 1.

ring operators. Zufelt's charges never "mention of [operating] any sort of vice ring". Shore told the *Globe and Mail* this led to "my client jumping from that building". Ottawa's media had relied heavily on (almost daily) police briefings, promoting the idea that *all* the accused also ran the ring.⁶²

Ottawa Police went on the defensive. On March 20, Deputy Chief Thomas Welsh expressed support for its investigation into "a male vice ring, the likes of which...hasn't been seen in Ottawa for thirty years". Shore's statements were "totally irresponsible". Media had 'confused' police 'morning briefings' with news conferences.⁶³ Welsh's criticisms targeted Leonard Shore and the media but not GO. By not attacking GO, Welch undermined GO's 'right to speak' for community. When a person in a position of power in a field fails to acknowledge a subordinate's *right* to speak, it reinforces that subordinate's position.

For GO, publicly naming arrestees was the issue. Charlie Hill recalled, "*I was really appalled and we said [the media] had effectively pushed [Zufelt] out of the window... [media] were obviously condemning...they knew they could get away with it. They would have gotten away with it had GO not protested*". Once the cases went to trial, television coverage began. Hill was interviewed, "*in front of the Lord Elgin...I had a bowler hat on and pigtails that day*" and recalled, "*police thought they could name people. It was: get the fags*".⁶⁴ On March 19, Ottawa's Social Planning Council

⁶² B Avery, 'City Police blamed for man's death after sex charge', *Ottawa Journal*, March 19, 1975, p. 2; *Globe & Mail*, 'Police Caused Client's Suicide', *Globe & Mail*, 20 March, 1975, p. 8.

⁶³ B Avery, 'Accusations 'irresponsible': Deputy-Chief defends police', *Ottawa Journal*, March 20, 1975, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Charlie Hill. John Duggan believes that Charlie's appearance; Hill was known for his beard and creative dress, could have been a liability during the Vice Ring Affair. However, Hill seemed able to get people to see past this. "*Charlie's public image was the very long hair, the beard and for the civil service in*

announced it was looking into “possible discrimination against homosexuals” arising from the misinformation and inflammatory remarks characterizing the case.⁶⁵

Gays of Ottawa picketed the police station and *Ottawa Journal* offices on March 20, drawing more people to its picket than any held previously.⁶⁶ Charlie Hill recalls, “*when we picketed the police station...after [Zufelt’s death]...I was really angry*”.⁶⁷ Hill was doubly angry because he had warned police that Zufelt was at risk, having called GO saying “*Look I know I’m in that book, it’s only a matter of days*”. Denis LeBlanc recalls that Hill then called police saying, “*you know if you do what you’ve done with others... [Zufelt] knows he’s in the book and has threatened suicide. And then they did it anyway and he jumped*”.⁶⁸ Often a picket like GO’s can be a protest habitus that seeks dialogue, but not in this case. For Marie Robertson, talking to the police was not a priority. “*I certainly didn’t want to [talk]. Now, I would say we were more that generation of you know...police were pigs. No trust. Absolutely not*”.⁶⁹ However, the Vice Ring Affair had provided opportunities for GO to talk to its community, helping to it to highlight its existence, efforts etc. Denis LeBlanc said, “*we told them, the community [Zufelt had] called us...we told the community that we’d warned the police. And that started a whole debate about naming names when people were arrested*”.⁷⁰ Ultimately, GO’s efforts

those days that was not an image. But [the community] supported Charlie because the media was portraying all gay men as being after little boys”, something more outrageous than Hill.

⁶⁵ Campbell, M ‘Breakup of ring spurs calls for study’. *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 March, 1975, N.P.

⁶⁶ Gays of Ottawa did not protest outside the *Ottawa Citizen’s* offices. Located outside the city core, *Ottawa Journal* offices were more accessible.

⁶⁷ Charlie Hill.

⁶⁸ Denis LeBlanc.

⁶⁹ Marie Robertson.

⁷⁰ Denis LeBlanc. In July 1975 GO established the Warren Zufelt Memorial Fund to defray defendants’ court costs. However it is not clear how it worked or how successful it was. For example, in October 1975 GO’s executive discussed giving funds to two accused, Gerry Levesque and Yvon Thieverge, and defence attorney Leonard Shore but the Fund is not mentioned (CGLA, GO, File No.: C. Hill 1982-015

resulted in a change in the media's habitus; in subsequent years the naming of names declined and then ceased.

By the end of July 1975, charges against two vice ring arrestees were dismissed, two had received absolute discharges and one pled guilty.⁷¹ Trials for thirteen more continued into 1976. Police and the Crown would garner little capital from their efforts while GO's actions accrued a great deal. As David Garmaise said, "*obviously we didn't wish for things like [Zufelt's death] to happen but when they did happen it was a way for us to galvanize the community. And to increase the exposure of GO and hopefully get more people involved in the group*". Was it fair to say GO saw strategic value in these awful events? Garmaise answers "yes".⁷² Thus Zufelt's death and the treatment of the accused was cultural capital GO could use. As to the Affair's strategic value John Duggan said, "*I agreed from a strategy point of view to focus on a thing the public could easily understand, like human rights. We would use that, it was valid in itself. But [Zufelt] was such a good vehicle or means to bring out every other aspect of being gay in this society. Why do you need human rights? Well then, you talk about how society oppresses gays*".

The value of GO's Gayline became clear during the Affair. People called the Gayline wanting information and to speak "*their minds about how the media was portraying gay people. [How] we're all monsters, we're all lusting after children and this*

/ (), File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes 82-015 / (): Minutes: Oct. 17, 1975 Exec Mtg Min; See: CGLA, GO, File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes 82-015 / (): Letter: Oct. 15 1975, A: Charles Hill, De: Yvon Thieverge).

⁷¹ *GO Info*, 'Homosexual Witch Hunt', *GO Info*, no. 2, 1975, p. 1.

⁷² David Garmaise.

kind of thing”.⁷³ Denis LeBlanc too remembers police and newspapers “kept saying that there were children as young as 12 involved” in the ring. Yet at the trials, “the only witness they produced was a very old looking ‘child’....looked 25...supposedly only 20”.

⁷⁴ John Duggan believes that as a result of the media’s “portraying all gay men as being after little boys,” GO had an easier time mobilizing community. The media used “stereotypical thinking...a lot of people in the community [felt] under attack”.⁷⁵

Even after it became clear those involved were between 16 and 21 years, media reported otherwise.⁷⁶ The media’s focus on the age of participants and inferences that all gay men prey on children was a long-standing feature of media portrayals of male homosexuals.⁷⁷ In response to this media habitus, John Duggan recalls Charlie Hill in particular saw an opportunity to challenge this. Once vice ring cases gained national prominence Hill questioned, “how the media portrayed gays; how certain institutions like politicians, like police, like churches, how they portrayed gays and ...it leads to wrong assumptions”. This is what made the vice ring “political”. “Charlie was largely the spokesperson...the driving force,” on making these political links.⁷⁸ Yet Hill denies

⁷³ John Duggan.

⁷⁴ Denis LeBlanc.

⁷⁵ John Duggan.

⁷⁶ “Police allege that as many as 10 boys—some as young as 11—were solicited”, (*Globe and Mail*, ‘Homosexual ring suspect sent to trial on 4 charges’, *Globe and Mail*, 14 April, 1975, p. 47. At Michel Gravel’s trial, Judge J. P. Beaulne called him a “compulsive, pedophilic homosexual”, sentencing him to two-years-less-a-day in psychiatric care (Dayman no. 21, 1975 p.3). Beaulne’s remarks reflected North America’s post-war tendency to characterized homosexuals as sexually compulsive, dangerous, sexual psychopaths (E Freedman, ‘Uncontrolled Desires: The Responses to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960’, *Journal of American History*, vol. 74, no. 1, 1987, pp. 83-106).

⁷⁷ See: S Robertson, ‘Separating the Men from the Boys: Masculinity, Psychosexual Development, and Sex Crime in the United States, 1930s-1960’, *Journal of the History of Medicine*, no. 56, 2001, pp. 3-35; see Weeks 1989.

⁷⁸ John Duggan.

having a high profile in the case. After all his involvement with GO peaked in March 1975, as the case broke, then declined as Hill focuses on his career.⁷⁹

As the case drags on into 1976, GO's frustration grew. Its PAC planned a public forum on the case. Notes from a forum planning meeting on April 12 reveal the PAC believed a "meeting would show Gays of Ottawa as a responsible, well-organized, public-spirited organization". This perception was bolstered by the fact since the fall of 1975 media coverage had shifted to focus on stumbles made by police and Crown prosecutors.⁸⁰ The PAC wished to highlight how "perhaps due to our actions, and due to the fact that no one aside from the ring organizers has been fined or ordered to spend a day in jail, media coverage had turned right around...the media now realizes the case was blown totally out of proportion". None of sixteen men charged had been jailed or fined yet many lost jobs, homes and friends.⁸¹ Prior to its May 7 forum, the PAC sent invitations to a host of political and police figures and all the accused. Writing to one accused, George Duthie, David Garmaise acknowledged he probably wished to have no

⁷⁹ Charlie now had full time position with the National Gallery. "By 1975 I wasn't involved much...by 1975 I was very busy with the Canadian Painting in the 30s exhibit". Many believe Hill attended all vice ring trials, but Hill denies this. "No...no I don't think I was at any of the trials". Ian McClellan confirms that, "Mike [Johnstone] and I went to the trials... Charlie couldn't because of work. I'm not sure if we went to every single one of them but we certainly went to a number of them. And basically monitored. I remember most of the cases being thrown out I think".

⁸⁰ CLGRA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: Prostitution Ring – 1976-82-01702 14, Document: Public Meeting on Male Prostitution Case: Notes for the 12 April Meeting at Gays of Ottawa, April 1976.

⁸¹ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: Prostitution Ring – 1976 – 82-017/02 14: Letter: N/D, David Garmaise, Chair GO PAC, Letter # 1, sent to all 16 accused in the vice ring case (except George Duthie). It appears that because Duthie had moved to B.C. before the case was settled his letter was a different version of the letter (Letter # 2).

further involvement. However, Garmaise felt strongly that going public could ensure “others don’t have to suffer as you did”.⁸²

George Duthie *had* suffered directly at the hands of police. While being interrogated by Gervais and Methot, Duthie was called ‘scum’ and ‘an animal’, and they slammed him into a wall injuring his hand. Duthie charged both with assault.⁸³ Subsequently, it became a local myth that Gervais and Methot, furious over Duthie’s charges, raided Ottawa’s Club Bath (discussed shortly) in retaliation.⁸⁴ And it was true after the vice ring cases fell apart John Duggan says Gervais and Methot, “*end up with egg on their face*”. He too suggests “*they wanted revenge on the gay community...we think that was the motivation for the [later] bath raid*”.⁸⁵

David Garmaise told Duthie, the PAC hoped MPP Michael Cassidy, GO past-president Charlie Hill, and Ottawa lawyer Leonard Shore would all attend the vice ring forum. The desire to have Shore in attendance increased after it emerged Crown

⁸² CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: Prostitution Ring – 1976 – 82-017/02 14: Letter: N/D, David Garmaise, Chair GO PAC, to George Duthie.

⁸³ While ultimately dismissing the case because of delays, Judge Baker noted there was insufficient evidence of assault causing bodily harm but there may be evidence of common assault. In his summation, Judge Baker cryptically stated, “I am making no comment on the actions that took place in the interrogation room. The evidence is before the public”. This was taken as his criticizing the officers (D Garmaise, ‘Police acquittal cause public uproar’, *Body Politic*, no. 27, 1976 p. 5).

⁸⁴ In part this grew out of a letter one Adam Livingstone wrote GO in June 1976, informing them the bath raid was “revenge for prosecuting the two morality officers for assaulting George Duthie”. Livingstone also stated that the Club Ottawa “had obtained police approval” prior to opening (CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: Letter: Adam Livingston to Gays of Ottawa, Jun. 6 1976). Yet the fact that Club Ottawa had received police approval was not made public until August 1976 (*Body Politic*, ‘The Police and the Press’, *Body Politic*, no. 25, 1976, p. 17). Thus it is possible Livingstone did have some insider information.

⁸⁵ John Duggan points out the actions of Gervais and Methot made GO question the very existence of a morality squad. He recalls Charlie Hill asking, “Why do you have a morality squad? Why do you need one?”

witnesses may have been tampered with.⁸⁶ Planning notes suggest Leonard Shore was uneasy with PAC's plans. He agreed both the vice ring and bath raid were badly handled but feared that airing criticisms publicly was prejudicial. Shore felt it more important to reason with the assigned judge and not publicly challenge him.⁸⁷ Perhaps GO was naïve to expect Shore and/or any accused to attend. As committed PAC members they seem to have been to the fact some did not wish to play a part in GO's political project.

Gays of Ottawa was concerned for the accused, but wished to use their experiences strategically, as symbolic capital. Reflecting back on PAC's forum, David Garmaise thinks about the huge impact the case had on GO. Zufelt's suicide was tragic but galvanized the community, allowing GO to increase visibility and "*hopefully [we got] more people involved in the group*". At its forum at GO's Elgin Street Centre, GO's strategic use of the vice ring case was clear. It had made "*a deliberate decision*" to conduct the PAC forum as it did all meetings. First the executive spoke of the organization's previous week's work, *then*, it turned to the vice ring. Garmaise said we chose "*to do it that way even though most people were there to talk about that one incident, because we saw it as a platform and I think that was effective*".⁸⁸

Through the case, GO further strengthened its position as the sole, local player when it came to lesbian and gay matters. It also made forays into the field of politics. Drawing on the social capital of its relationship with NDP MPP Michael Cassidy, GO

⁸⁶ During the trials, Crown witnesses would be sent into the court room to see if they could actually identify any accused (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: Prostitution Ring – 1976 – 82-017/02 14: Letter: N/D, David Garmaise, Chair GO PAC, to George Duthie).

⁸⁷ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/04, File Name: General 1976-1977 82-017/04 11: Document: David Garmaise, Notes from meeting with Leonard Shore Jun. 29 1976; Garmaise had met with Shore to discuss the ring cases, and the Club Bath raid.

⁸⁸ David Garmaise.

urged him to write Ontario's Attorney General regarding how police and Crown had handled the case. In early April Cassidy responded to GO and for the first time, expressed a public commitment to advancing sexual orientation protections. "After careful reflection, for whose duration I apologize, I wish to endorse the efforts made by Gays of Ottawa and by other gay organizations to protect Ontario citizens". Media coverage made him see links between media actions and civil rights. Zufelt's suicide was "proof for him of the concrete oppression that gay people must undergo and the need to implement legislation". Cassidy agree to write the Minister of Labour, Solicitor General, Attorney General and the Ontario Human Rights Commission. He was "sorry not to have done so *before* tragic death of Warren Zufelt".⁸⁹

Cassidy had shifted from his past views. In a November 1974, meeting with Charlie Hill, he had expressed his support in private as he was "concerned with his catholic voters"⁹⁰ In his letter to Attorney General John Clement, Cassidy stated an intention to support human rights changes. Zufelt's suicide "traumatically illustrated the pressure suffered by homosexuals" living in fear of discovery. He also questioned a "double standard" wherein clients of heterosexual prostitutes were typically not charged but had been in Ottawa.⁹¹ On May 2, 1975, Clement responded, denying any double standard. The vice ring offences were "not precisely the same as normal prostitution" because "normal prostitution offences do not usually involve juveniles". As to media, Clement saw no reason those "committing homosexual acts with young boys should

⁸⁹ In 1975 Ontario's Rights Code was overseen by Ministry of Labour (CGLA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017 / 02A, File No.: Human Rights – Ontario – 1971-1975 – 82-017/017/02 02: Letter: M. Cassidy, MPP to R. Dayman, GO, Apr. 4 1975).

⁹⁰ CGLA GO File No.: C. C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File No.: GO Executive Committee Minutes: Document: Minutes, Nov. 26 1974.

⁹¹ GO Info, 'Cassidy Out for Gay Rights'. GO Info, no. 2, 1975, p. 5.

enjoy any special immunity from publication”. Clement resisted linkages being made between the media and Zufelt’s suicide. Unsympathetically, he stated that it “might be equally responsible to conclude that [Zufelt’s] suicide was motivated by guilt”.⁹²

Cassidy shared Clement’s letter with GO. It had just received a response to its own letter to W. H. Langdon, Office of the Director of Crown Attorneys. In a press release, GO discussed both letters. It found Langdon’s letter moralistic based on his citing “the very detestable and depraved nature of the alleged operation... [and the] “corruption of children”. Owing to its knowledge of Clement’s letter to Cassidy, GO suggested Langdon’s attitudes “appear to have the approval of the Ontario Government”. It admonished Langdon for “holding up the myth of the corrupting influence of homosexuality” to justify the police actions.⁹³

Shortly after this exchange, it was reported Ottawa Police *had* coached a key witness with their statement.⁹⁴ After Cassidy’s failure to get anywhere, this was a last straw. Gays of Ottawa wrote Attorney General Roy McMurtry and Solicitor General John MacBeth requesting an investigation into, “revelations of further improprieties in the handling of the [vice ring] case by police and the crown attorney’s office”.⁹⁵ Gays of Ottawa was also angry that the Attorney General had refused to make public, the findings of an OPP investigation into the Ottawa Police’s handling of the cases. Editors

⁹² CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Prostitution: Ottawa sex ring, 1975 – 82-015/03, Letter: J. Clement, Attorney General of Ontario to M. Cassidy, MPP, May 2, 1975.

⁹³ CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File No.: Prostitution: Ottawa sex ring, 1975 – 82-015/03: Press Release: May 20 1975.

⁹⁴ Body Politic, ‘Two more ‘sex scandal’ victims absolved’, *Body Politic*, no. 25, 1976, p. 6.

⁹⁵ D Garmaise, ‘Gov’t Says ‘No’, *GO Info*, no. 3, 1976, p. 3. Gays of Ottawa had privately argued for an enquiry for some time but lawyer Leonard Shore was the first to call for one (CGLA GO File No.: File No: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017 / 01B, File Name: General – 1973-1978 - 82-017 / 017 / 01 22: Document: Political Action Committee Report to General Meeting Mar. 30 1976.

of the *Ottawa Citizen*, NDP MPP Michael Cassidy, and Ottawa East, Liberal MPP, Albert Roy, had also requested this.⁹⁶ Mayor Greenberg did not support this but at a June 1975 meeting with GO he suggested GO make a complaint to Ontario Provincial Police.⁹⁷

On September 7, 1975, GO president Denis LeBlanc, NGRC secretary David Garmaise and CGRO coordinator John Argue, met with Solicitor General John MacBeth.⁹⁸ The Solicitor General emphatically denied even the possibility of an inquiry, primarily because MacBeth had not been Solicitor General “when the alleged misconduct occurred”. As to any potential injustices, these simply “didn’t justify the expense of a public inquiry”.⁹⁹ Governments, as strategic actors, rarely call inquires until sufficient pressure is brought to bear, calculations of political capital to be won or lost are made first. When GO met with MacBeth there remained only a single ring case before the court. MacBeth would gain little by exposing the problematic actions of a predecessor. Clearly, GO lacked sufficient political capital to move MacBeth to act. As well, GO lacked the social capital of relationships with actors powerful enough to attain their goals for them. However, with the completion of the final trial, the social and cultural capital of Crown and police had suffered. Of the sixteen charged, nine had been fined, suspended or forced to change jobs. Eight had had to receive psychiatric support to deal

⁹⁶ (BP no. 25, 1976, p. 6). In August, *Citizen* Editors said the public deserved to hear the OPP’s findings. See also: Body Politic, ‘Justice Canadian Style’, *Body Politic*, no. 18, 1975, p. 2; R Dayman, ‘Ottawa: Police and press lies end in death’, *Body Politic*, no. 18, 1975, p. 1. In August, *Citizen* editors said the public deserved to hear the OPP’s findings (see: Body Politic, Editorial: Justice Canadian Style, *Body Politic*, no. 18, 1976, p.2; R Dayman ‘Ottawa: Police and press lies end in death’, *Body Politic*, 1975, no. 18, p. 1).

⁹⁷ Charlie Hill.

⁹⁸ Clement was Solicitor General for one year in 1975, replaced by John MacBeth who served from 1975 to 1978.

⁹⁹ K Popert, ‘Solicitor General evades questions, rejects public inquiry’, *Body Politic*, no. 27, 1976, p. 4. Here Popert is quoting GO’s Denis LeBlanc.

with threatening phone calls and hate mail received after the media identified them. And Warren Zufelt was dead.¹⁰⁰

Bath Raids and the Olympic Clean-up

Prior to the mid-seventies GO's engagement and critique of the policing of male sexuality focused exclusively on the issue of public sex in parks. In 1976, their focus had to dramatically expand. On Friday May 22, 1976, just over a month after four men had been arrested at Nepean Point park, Ottawa Police made the unprecedented move to raid the Club Ottawa bathhouse. Part of Club Bath International chain, Club Ottawa had opened in the late sixties and is the city's oldest gay bath.¹⁰¹ After the raid GO reported to its membership that "one of GO's spies, this one in the Ottawa Police, told us the police were planning a raid on the baths", however it could not know when it would happen.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ McLeod 1996, p. 209. In a letter to the Ontario Press Council, Charlie Hill detailed effect on the accused to-date. Hill did this in support of a complaint GO had lodged over *Ottawa Citizen* Coverage. Municipal councillor Francis DuPont's case was dismissed but ongoing harassment made a political future doubtful. Television cameraman George Duthie, was suspended from work and told to resign by the time of his trial. Commonwealth graves Commissioner Charles Fuller was immediately suspended then reinstated at half-pay. Even after his absolute discharge he was not fully reinstated. Yvon-Henri Giroux lost his job, and was on medication awaiting trial. The only person to plead guilty, Edward Jones, lost his job. Gerard Levesque, a national defence cook, was fired. After Levesque's union complained he was rehired but not as a cook. RCMP corporal, William Rutherford, was fired. Warren Zufelt had killed himself. Remaining arrestees, David Angus, Guy Caron, George Falan, John Colbourne, and John McEvoy had gone underground (CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015/(), File Name: Complaint to Ont Press Council Against *Ottawa Citizen* 1975 – 82-015 / (), Letter: C. Hill, GO to F. MacDougall, OPC, Jul. 28, 1975).

¹⁰¹ The Club chain was founded in the U.S. in 1965 by James Campbell. Unhappy with the dirty, dark environment of era bathhouses Campbell wanted to provide an alternative. Over time 42 baths were opened in the U.S and Canada. With the advent of HIV however, many U.S. baths closed over fears they hastened the pandemic.

¹⁰² Such tips were not thought reliable but GO pressed, unsuccessfully, for a meeting with Mayor Greenberg and Ottawa Police (CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: General – 1973-1978-92-017/01 22: Doc: Political Action Workshop – Gays of Ottawa Annual Conference, Nov, 19 1977).

Beginning at 2:20 am on May 22 1976, Ottawa Police entered the Club to join undercover officers already present. Some accounts say 6-8 uniformed officers entered; others suggest it was closer to 25. Club management offered police passkeys to rooms but police opted to break through doors. All the staff and customers, many clad only in towels, were assembled and made to complete a questionnaire. Highly self-incriminating it asked questions such as, 'Did you know there was sexual activity going on here?' and 'Did you participate in this sexual activity'? Afterwards twenty-two men were charged with gross indecency. Four staff faced charges of 'keeping a common bawdy house'. Before leaving the police confiscated Club financial records, 250+ membership cards, and bed sheets and towels.¹⁰³ In August 1976, in a move many saw as effort to 'get it right' after the vice ring debacle, Ottawa police along with Toronto police, raided the Canadian office of the Club Bath chain. Garmaise in the BP stated, "Ottawa Police are taking no chances in their case against Club Baths".¹⁰⁴

Regarding GO's views on Canada's bawdy house laws, John Duggan said, "*we didn't like the bawdy house laws. We thought they were archaic*".¹⁰⁵ Archaic or not, at a subsequent Club Ottawa trial, Judge Thomas Swabey conclude a "gay steam bath probably constitutes a bawdy house". As a judicial opinion Swabey's views would set

¹⁰³ CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: Notes: Police Arrests at Baths, Ottawa - Situation at noon, Sunday 23, May, 1976.) This document chronicled events including actions GO took in the hours following the raid. It notes the raid happened too late for the Saturday papers but four of Ottawa's radio stations had carried the news but "all broadcast the story factually". At least one radio station, CFRA, adhered to a practice common in this era, namely, "giving out the names and addresses of the three men charged with running a common bawdy house".

¹⁰⁴ D Garmaise, 'Ottawa police raid Toronto bath's Offices', *Body Politic*, no. 27, 1976, p. 7. This was also the view of lawyer Leonard Shore, which he shared with David Garmaise (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/04, File Name: General 1976-1977 82-017/04 11: Document: David Garmaise, Notes from meeting with Leonard Shore Jun. 29 1976).

¹⁰⁵ John Duggan.

an ominous precedent.¹⁰⁶ Because the raid took place on the May 24th, Victoria Day long weekend, it made accessing a lawyer difficult for many. However, owing to GO's past experience (cultural capital) with park sex it could connect arrestees to legal help. Denis LeBlanc notes a "*couple of people ended-up pleading guilty because [GO] could not reach them*", but he believes "*most pleaded not guilty because [GO] intervened individually*".¹⁰⁷

At the time of the Friday raid many GO executive members were at CGRO's 'Women in the Gay Movement' meeting in Kingston, but they reacted at once. By Saturday evening GO was distributing a pamphlet, 'Saturday Morning at the Baths', to Ottawa's bars. The raid was situated as, "not just harassment of the Club Bath, [but] an attack against the entire gay community". It had "become obvious that the police are conducting an all-out campaign against gay people...threatening our lifestyle".¹⁰⁸ The raid was situated as an 'all-out campaign' because as it occurred after number of earlier bar and bath raids in Montréal. Activists seized on this as evidence of a campaign undertaken to "recriminalize and demonize gays to turn public opinion against legislating equality".¹⁰⁹

After issuing a press release, David Garmaise, Denis LeBlanc, Lloyd Plunket and John Duggan headed to Ottawa. In it GO stated homosexuals had few social venues. "If

¹⁰⁶ Body Politic, 'Editorial: Worms in the Apples', *Body Politic*, no. 31, 1977, p. 2. The BP editors interpreted the ruling as rendering Canada's decriminalization of homosexuality "irrelevant". For a further discussion of the effect of Swabey's ruling see: P Trollope, 'Bawdy Politics: Baths and the bawdy house laws', *Body Politic*, no. 32, 1977, p. 9).

¹⁰⁷ Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁰⁸ CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: May 22 1976, Saturday Morning at the Baths;

¹⁰⁹ Warner, p. 107-09.

you take these away from us, where can we go”?¹¹⁰ In a second press release issued two days later, GO chastised police for forcing gays to be invisible; police who now made gays visible by raiding the baths. Gays of Ottawa then made this strange statement: “It seems to us that gays are more likely to remain invisible and out of the public eye if they are allowed their bars and clubs”. For a group championing the political power of increasing their visibility this was startling. Perhaps it reflected the pace of events or that the executive was unsure how to respond.¹¹¹

At a well-attended press conference on Monday May 24, GO stated based on “inside information which it obtained from people with access to confidential information on Olympic security,” GO knew the Club Bath raid was, “part of a concerted national effort aimed at ‘cleaning-up’ Canada for the Olympic Games”. In Montréal, police in the name of the Olympic Games, had been “driving underground...undesirable elements”. Now Ottawa Police did likewise. Interestingly, at this news conference, GO did not advocate on behalf of all those labelled as ‘undesirable elements’. Typically, this was police code for prostitutes, the homeless, etc. Gays of Ottawa only challenged “the categorization of gay people as ‘undesirable elements’”. In its press statements GO for the first time tied the issue of gay male sexuality and police actions to privacy concerns. Club Ottawa was a “private club”, what men “were doing there is their business”.¹¹² David Garmaise states, GO “*thought gay men should be allowed to do what they want in*

¹¹⁰CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: Doc: Saturday Morning at the Baths, May 22 1976”.

¹¹¹CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04 Doc: Statement by Gays of Ottawa, May 24 1976.

¹¹² *ibid.*

*the privacy of their own homes and in place like [a bath] where obviously you go to have sex with another gay man”.*¹¹³

As coordinating office for the National Gay Rights Coalition, GO had to respond at local and national levels.¹¹⁴ A few days later the NGRC publicly situated police actions within a national and larger context. The NGRC’s ‘The Great Olympic Clean-up’ document, established a timeline for police actions in Montréal and Ottawa. Coalition members in Ottawa and Montréal confirm, “an Olympic clean-up is definitely planned...from Québec City through to Toronto” cities that “will play host to some Olympic events”.¹¹⁵ As NGRC coordinator, Garmaise wrote Member of Parliament Stuart Leggatt, NDP, Coquitlam-Moody and NDP Justice Critic about “a situation taking on national proportions”.¹¹⁶ Garmaise said evidence of an Olympic-inspired clean-up had surfaced when Montréal police raided the Club Bath in January 1976 and the Neptune Sauna that May, arresting 115 men in total. During the raids police were overheard saying “they were cleaning things up”.¹¹⁷

However, the first such evidence had come a year earlier during a raid on Montréal’s Aquarius sauna in January 1975. The *Montréal Gay Times* (in the BP) reported a source describing a “carefully formulated plan to reduce the visibility of

¹¹³ David Garmaise.

¹¹⁴ D Garmaise, ‘Gov’t Says ‘No’, *GO Info*, no. 3, 1976, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: Document: May 30 1976 National Gay Rights Coalition: The Great Olympic Clean-Up featuring Thursday night, Friday Night and Saturday Morning at the Baths also featuring The Bar Raids, p.2.

¹¹⁶ Garmaise wrote he had tried to reach Leggatt by telephone but failed. He alerts Leggatt to the fact that ‘Montreal drunks’ were given longer sentences to “make the city look clean for when the Games roll around” (CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: Letter: David Garmaise, Secretary NGRC Coordinating Office to S. Leggatt, NDP MP, Jun. 6 1976.

¹¹⁷ Body Politic, ‘The Police and the Press’, *Body Politic*, no. 25, 1976, p. 17.

Montréal gays before the Olympic Games”.¹¹⁸ In the BP, John Blacklock reported Montréal gay groups had recently faced evictions and the denial of liquor permits or other “classic” police moves.¹¹⁹ To ensure Olympic security, “open season has been declared on any group that is in official disfavour”.¹²⁰ Guy Toupin, Game co-ordinating officer for security, denied all but added “if such action helps us in turning up terrorists, so much the better”.¹²¹ In Toronto, the RCMP visited GATE in March 1976, asking president, Tom Warner, “What plans the gay movement was making in connection with the Olympics”? Warner was told “other gay organizations could expect similar visits in the near future”.¹²² As to why an Olympic clean-up in Montréal should extend outside it, David Garmaise said, “*because there was Olympic soccer games in Ottawa, [adding] the media didn’t quite buy it...that was our line*”.¹²³ For Denis LeBlanc, linking events to the Games was “*our thing...that was our suspicion*”. The actions of Montréal police were

¹¹⁸ Body Politic, ‘Montréal: Police raid clubs; seeking clues to Montréal’s rising murder rate?’ *Body Politic*, no. 22, 1976, p. 4. This is a reprint in of the Body Politic of a Montréal Gay Times report on the Aquarius raid in February 1976, however the raid occurred in February 1975.

¹¹⁹ J Blacklock, ‘Olympics brings more repression’, *Body Politic*, no. 23, 1976, p. 6.

¹²⁰ Ron Dayman (‘Olympic clean-up strikes again’. *Body Politic*, no. 23, 1976, p. 6) wrote many in Montreal seen “an attempt to clean up before this summer’s Olympic Games”.

¹²¹ (BP 1976, no. 25, p. 17) One of the more high profile Olympic-related actions involved Stuart Russell, a gay man who worked the Comité Organisateur des Jeux Olympiques (COJO) organizing body for the Games. Russell was fired after his appearance as the marshal at the Gay Coalition Against Oppression parade. The Coalition formed in response to police raids. Russell’s was one of four “political firings”. Three other employees were branded members of “leftist organizations”. Denying firing Russell because of his activism, COJO later cited “security reasons”, then “incompetence” before offering a buy out his contract (see: Body Politic, ‘COJO fires gay militant’, *Body Politic*, no. 26, 1976, p. 4).

¹²² (Body Politic, ‘RCMP investigates gay movement’, *Body Politic*, no. 24, 1976, p. 7). Warner said, the community had no mobilization plans unless, “police harassment of the Montréal gay community continued”. See also: Body Politic, ‘Olympic Crackdown’, *Body Politic*, no. 25, 1976, p. 1. Ultimately police actions drew national and international criticism (S Russell, ‘Olympic Crackdown Brings World-Wide Protest’. *Body Politic*, no. 27, 1976, p. 17). In Toronto sixteen University of Toronto professors who feared “irreparable damages” had occurred, wrote *Globe and Mail’s* editors (J Lee, et al, ‘Gross Indecency Charges’, *Globe and Mail*, 26 March. 1975, p. 6).

¹²³ David Garmaise; In addition to Montreal, Olympics events took place in Québec City, Joliette, Sherbrooke, L’Acadie, Bromont, Ottawa, Kingston and Toronto.

typical, “old tradition, going back to the 60s. Let’s clean up the city before the big event”.¹²⁴

In Ottawa, in response to the Club Ottawa Raid, GO held its regularly scheduled general meeting but an unprecedented 73 people attended. Clearly police actions had touched a nerve. Gays of Ottawa’s growing status had positioned it at the centre of the organized response. Local media coverage of GO’s raid press conference was substantial.¹²⁵ The BP noted how in reporting on the raid, the *Ottawa Citizen* broke with its past practice, choosing to not publish “names of those charged as found-ins”. Labelling GO “one of the most vigilant gay groups in the country...it is a known force in the community”, the BP credited GO with causing this change. Its “fine work” had given GO “a high profile in the editorial offices of the local dailies”.¹²⁶

While GO and others publicly linked events to a clean-up, privately, GO believed morality squad officers Constable Gervais and Sergeant Methot had played a role. The officers were pivotal figures in past park-sex arrests and the Vice Ring Affair. Charlie

¹²⁴ Here Denis pointed to Charlie Hill’s 1968 arrest in Montréal “when [police] did a clean-up”. Subsequently it has been well documented that prior to events such as an Olympics or papal visits, police and municipal authorities often burnish a host city’s image, *motivating* homeless, street involved etc. to be less visible. See: G. Kinsman and P. Gentile, ‘Resisting Olympic clean-up: Police tried to clean queers up for the 1976 Montreal Games’, in Xtra. December 2009, viewed on March 11, 2011, <http://www.xtra.ca/public/Vancouver/Resisting_the_Olympic_cleanup-7952.aspx>; C. Pablo, ‘Vancouver police plan Downtown Eastside crackdown ahead of Olympics’, in (Georgia) Straight.com. January 2009, viewed on March 11, 2011, <<http://www.straight.com/article-197388/vancouver-police-plan-downtown-eastside-crackdown-ahead-olympics>>.

¹²⁵ See: *Ottawa Citizen*, ‘Gays condemn sauna-club raid’, *Ottawa Citizen*, 25 May, 1976, p. 2; *Ottawa Journal*, ‘City gays say raid was Games cleanup’, *Ottawa Journal*, 25 May, 1976, p. 4; Montréal Star, ‘Bath raid ‘harassed’ gays.’ *Montréal Star*, 26 May, 1976, p. F9; Le Droit, ‘Les homosexuels d’Ottawa se dissent victims de harcèlement’, 1976, p. 5.

¹²⁶ (BP, no, 1976, p. 1) In a comparison press coverage in Montréal and Ottawa, the BP (1976 found Ottawa coverage more accurate, presenting information “from the point of view of the gay group there” (BP, no. 25, 1976, p. 17) However the David Garmaise of the NGRC chided the media for not reporting on GO’s picket of the police station May 28 1976 (CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04, May 30 1976, doc. National Gay Rights Coalition: “The Great Olympic Clean-Up” p. 4).

Hill assessed their role bluntly, “*well, that makes sense, it obviously gave them a hard on*”.¹²⁷ So omnipresent were the officers, I asked if GO believed Gervais and Methot had ‘gone rogue’. Denis LeBlanc said, “*Well the [police] had to be behind them. They were never free agents*”.¹²⁸ John Duggan concurred because “*someone in the Ottawa police decided what the morality squad’s priorities were. Who decided it was worth dedicating two police to this, as opposed to other police work*”?¹²⁹ Many in the community believed officers ‘had it in for gay men’, regarding the bath raid as ‘pay back’ for its criticism of them.

Two days after its press conference Political Action Committee members met Mayor Lorry Greenberg. John Duggan recalled, at the meeting Greenberg “*made a couple of stupid comments*”, causing John Duggan to wonder if he was “*beginning to trivialize things*”. As to the issue of retaliation by Gervais and Methot, Greenberg labelled this, “*paranoid*”. Meeting notes reveal the Mayor doubted an Olympic-inspired ‘morality clean-up’ existed or that Ottawa Police and RCMP worked together, given “*there was jealousy between all police forces*”. Overall GO found the Mayor was “*very sensitive about police*”, and claimed to have no “*knowledge of day-to-day acts...and denies [he] has authority to direct police work*”. Here the notes infer GO believe the Mayor has or should have an influence policing.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Charlie Hill.

¹²⁸ Denis LeBlanc.

¹²⁹ John Duggan.

¹³⁰ CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: Notes: Ian MacLennan, Notes from Meeting with Lorry Greenberg, May 26 1976. CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: Notes: Ian MacLennan, Notes from Meeting with Lorry Greenberg, May 26 1976. The Mayor was a member police commission but was not involved in day-to-day matters. However GO publicly advanced the view that he did, during December 1976 municipal elections. In a press release GO stated the actions of the “so-called morality squad” revealed “City Hall has failed to exercise responsibility for authority over the police” (CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: Election

As part of its response to the raid, GO organized its largest picket to-date, outside of police headquarters on May 28. The picket was a milestone for Lloyd Plunket who was not out to his parents. *"I was nervous that there'd be media there...John [Duggan] and I were lovers and we held hands"*. After they were photographed, Lloyd Plunket *"got a phone call from my parents...As it turned out they had suspected"*.¹³¹ The picket was also new for Ian MacLennan and *"I was front row centre in a CP press photo that went right across Canada"*.¹³² Commenting on GO's picket to CJOH television, Ottawa Police Supt. Tom Flanagan denied the raid was harassment. Picketers were "silly to demonstrate".¹³³ For Flanagan, GO lacked the cultural capital to comment on policing. However, the fact that Flanagan had responded to GO's picket, spoke to its growing political capital. As an organization, GO could not be ignored. The number of people attending GO's protest of the bath raid, dwarfed the number who had attended the vice ring protest, which had been by far, its largest to-date. Denis LeBlanc believes the bath protest drew a greater number of people because the Vice Ring Affair had dealt with touchy issues such as prostitution and age of consent. Those were much *"more difficult legal concepts"*, and they had affected only *"one person [or accused] at a time"*.¹³⁴ John Duggan believes reaction to the bath raid was greater because it impacted an *out* community. In contrast, the vice ring only reinforced *"how the society at large saw*

Campaigns 1974-1976-82-017.017/01 20: Press Release: Ottawa Municipal Elections, Dec. 6 1976). Also at this May 26 meeting, GO asked Greenberg why the findings of an internal investigation into police handling of the vice ring case remained unpublicized. The Mayor stated Ottawa Police Chief Leo Sèguin was willing but the "decision was up to the province".

¹³¹ Lloyd Plunkett.

¹³² As for pickets, *"It was GO that got me to do it...although I hated to do it, it got me marching. I felt I had to do it but hated it"*. Ian MacLennan.

¹³³ At the time Supt. Flanagan was head of the Criminal Investigations Division of Ottawa Police (CLGA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Law – Police – 1972-1978 – 1982-017/04 04: Document: May 30 1976, National Gay Rights Coalition: The Great Olympic Clean-Up featuring Thursday night, Friday Night and Saturday Morning at the Baths also featuring The Bar Raids).

¹³⁴ Denis LeBlanc.

homosexuals and homosexuality in general,” as something secretive, driven to prey on young men etc.¹³⁵

The response to GO’s call for a picket revealed the role bathhouses played for the community. John Duggan explained “*although [Club Ottawa] was a private club it was an institution of the gay community*”. Their sexual nature was a non-issue. Gays of Ottawa would “*rather have people going to the baths than in an isolated place like a park. It’s a lot safer and more dignifying*”.¹³⁶ Denis LeBlanc points out “*a lot of people used the baths...many people knew people who had been arrested. [The Bath] was a big network*”. The picket response “*was huge for us...to have that many people coming and going on TV and giving their names. They were so insulted that the police could do that...we were a much smaller city than TO so that was amazing*”. For Denis LeBlanc the raid was “*a direct attack...not an intellectual thing...going right for the guts; where you lived*”.¹³⁷ John Duggan believes the raid galvanized people because it centred on a “*particular place*”, a physical location recognized as a community institution. Gays of Ottawa used the cultural capital of the baths to strengthen this notion, that “*there was a kind of community [out there] and it had its institutions. So when the police and politicians attack one of them, they’re really attacking the whole*”. For John Duggan the raid was a “*time the community...saw GO defending their territory*”. Through its response to this attack, GO would claim, and through its actions, strengthen its position in the field.

¹³⁵ John Duggan.

¹³⁶ At a meeting with Toronto lawyer, Peter Maloney, founder of the Club Toronto Bath and a part owner in the Barracks bath, John Duggan told him, “*We [at GO] see the baths as one of the institutions of the gay community*”.

¹³⁷ Denis LeBlanc.

Washroom Arrests

Early in October 1976, Nepean Police informed GO it had arrested six to ten men for having sex in a public washroom. *GO Info* reported the arrests occurred after police had “set up cameras a washroom in at the Miracle Mart Shopping Plaza”. Arrestees were advised to call the Gayline for legal referrals.¹³⁸ Yet mainstream media had yet to learn of it and Nepean Police Officer, Lamont Ranagold assured GO police preferred prevention over publicity. Gays of Ottawa agreed this was better and it said it would warn Gayline callers about public sex. In the BP, Garmaise reported police were now “conscious of how the media treated the arrests in the Ottawa male prostitution case just 18 months ago”, choosing not to name names.¹³⁹

On October 26 1976, Ottawa media began reporting charges of gross indecency had been laid.¹⁴⁰ While reaching out to those involved, GO labeled those arrested as ‘closeted’, distinguishing them from out gay men.¹⁴¹ This label had not been applied to those arrested at the Club Ottawa bath. When a city councillor asked John Duggan to warn the community about washroom sex he explained, “*it was not like that. A lot that go there [to washrooms for sex] are closeted and married guys. They are not going to*

¹³⁸ D Garmaise, ‘Washroom Arrests’. *GO Info*, no, 5, 1976, p. 1. CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: General – 1973-1978-92-017/01 22: Minutes: Political Action Committee, Oct. 12 1976. In 1976 the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton was composed of the Cities of Ottawa and Vanier, the Village of Rockcliffe Park and the Townships of Nepean, March, Goulbourn, Osgoode, Rideau, West Carleton, Gloucester and Cumberland. In 1995, the police services that provided policing to municipalities in the Region (Nepean, Gloucester, Ottawa Police Services and the Ontario Provincial Police) were emerged into the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Service.

¹³⁹ D Garmaise, ‘Washroom arrests in Ottawa suburb’, *Body Politic*, no. 29, 1977, p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ In contrast to the coverage of past events GO found media reporting of the Nepean arrests was fair, “if not always accurate” (CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: General – 1973-1978-92-017/01 22: Minutes: Political Action Committee, Oct. 12 1976).

¹⁴¹ The BP would make no such distinctions when it came to washroom sex. In 1972, the BP (no. 3, 1972, p. 2) reported that staff at the (gay) Parkside Tavern had allowed Toronto police to observe its washrooms via vents, like a “human duck-blind”. In response, the BP along with Toronto Gay Action, leafleted the Parkside to protest its facilitating “busting gays in its downstairs washroom”. However, one wonders if the Tavern was in a position to say no.

listen to what we say". Looking back on the arrests Duggan suggests they posed an image problem for GO and the community. "Well, some people have their fetishes. At that time I thought the community was starting to grow and [Ottawa] was offering some resources like bathhouses. So why are you going to the washrooms when you know the danger level? And you know, it's hard to defend this thing to the general public".¹⁴² Duggan's critique of washroom sex reflected his distaste for those who approached same-sex desire as something furtive. David Garmaise too was ambivalent: "Our attitude towards it? We obviously sat around and talked about it because it can be a nuisance if the bathroom is being used for sex then people can't go in there".

Asked if GO faced opposition when it came to the aid of those arrested in sexual situations Ian MacLennan said there were "some people very definitely who would feel that way. [Who asked,] why can't we all just be quiet and live our own little quiet lives and not rock the boat. That way none of us will get in trouble...being tarred with the same brush". Plus GO was regarded as defending men the community thought, "very closeted gay and bisexual men".¹⁴³ As a result, GO walked a fine, pragmatic line when responding to washroom sex, objecting to harsh reactions to it while avoiding a full-on defence. Its main focus was on deterring the activity and placing the behaviour in a larger context, namely a response to a homophobic society that left men few options.

On October 19 1976, GO issued a press release deploring the use of cameras by police and the laying of gross indecency charges, punishable by up to five years in prison. If consenting adults had sex in "the privacy of a washroom cubicle", GO did "not believe

¹⁴² John Duggan.

¹⁴³ Ian MacLennan.

that this should, by any stretch of the imagination, constitute a criminal act”.¹⁴⁴ The issue was how police had reacted. David Garmaise said “*don’t just put the cameras in, say nothing...catch people and then give them a criminal record. We thought the response was totally ridiculous. So weren’t not saying it’s fine to go have sex in the washroom, we’re saying it’s not worthy of criminal record*”.¹⁴⁵

Then in January 1977, GO learned the Rideau Street Hudson’s Bay store had installed cameras in a fourth floor washroom.¹⁴⁶ Early in March, GO’s Paul-François Sylvestre and Mike Johnstone met with Bay internal security manager, J. McKinlay-Key. Mike Johnstone went into the meeting ready to say, “*put up warnings. If what you want is a stop the activity that was the only way to do it. Well you’re not doing yourself any favours by criminalizing people*”.¹⁴⁷ The meeting went very well. In a follow-up letter, GO agreed sexual activity had to cease and urged no charges be laid. For GO “sexual activity in your store’s washrooms is part of the larger social issue of the problems faced by homosexuals”. This activity raised the “question of the limited social outlets presently available to homosexual in the Ottawa area”. In a strategic move, GO copied their letter to Supt. Tom Flanagan, Ottawa Police and W. Zimmerman, Ottawa and District Social Planning Council of Ottawa, raising “with them the broader question of social outlets”. While playing the role of the competent social actor, GO also strategically believed apprising them of the situation “would deter them from making a wave of arrests”.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: Provincial Gay Rights – 1976-1978 82-017/05/06: Press Release: Gays of Ottawa Protests Nepean Arrests, Oct. 19 1976.

¹⁴⁵ David Garmaise.

¹⁴⁶ It is not clear how GO learned this.

¹⁴⁷ Mike Johnstone.

¹⁴⁸ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Code – 1976-1977-017/04 01: Letter: P. Sylvestre, chair GO Community Services Committee and Mike Johnstone, Political Action Committee to J. McKinlay-Key, Manager Internal Security, Hudson Bay, Mar. 4 1977. In a subsequent letter to GO

For its part, *GO Info* informed readers of the Bay's actions, warning them the store would stop activity "by any means possible, including electronic surveillance and arrests". It also stated that although GO opposed "public restrictions on a more public expression of our sexuality...certain sections of Criminal Code...remain in force today".¹⁴⁹ This warning was the extent of GO's publicizing of the Bay case. It chose not to do more, fearing its analysis of why washroom sex occurred would be lost in "homophobic hysteria".¹⁵⁰ Here we can see GO's attempts to balance its approach by working with the Bay, while reaffirming its political position with its members. It did not, however, make any radical claim to washrooms as a sexual venue, regardless of the limited number of gay male venues. The Bay had been emphatic; activity must stop. Gays of Ottawa had concluded, "there was no possibility of arguing that their attitude and actions were sexually repressive".¹⁵¹ David Garmaise recalls, "*so our attitude was if there's something happening there that should not be happening there, put up a sign warning people that the place is under surveillance and it will stop*".¹⁵²

That March, the Bay informed GO it had removed cameras and proceeded with sex-inhibiting renovations. Near the end of March the issue became public when the *Ottawa Citizen* reported the Bay confirmed it had installed albeit briefly, cameras in its

members, John Duggan acknowledged the strategic intent of this letter, namely deterrence (CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Code – 1976-1977-017/04 01: Letter: John Duggan, GO Political Action Committee to Dear People, Apr. 7 1977).

¹⁴⁹ *GO Info*, 'Notice: The Bay', *GO Info*, no. 1, 1977, p. 4.

¹⁵⁰ In June the BP ('Store Frustrates Peepers, Leaves Poppers in Peace', *Body Politic*, no. 34, 1977, p. 8) reported Ottawa Police saying that their "cameras led to several arrests" at the Bay but the BP could find no further details.

¹⁵¹ *GO Info*, no. 1, 1977, p. 4.

¹⁵² David Garmaise adds "*these were tricky issues because you know there were complaints. The police said they were operating based on complaints*".

washroom.¹⁵³ Gays of Ottawa wrote to applaud the Bay for its reasoned actions and its pledge to discuss adopting GO's approach in other stores. Meanwhile to assist other lesbian and gay movement groups facing similar problems, GO distributed its capital in the form of copies of its Bay files.¹⁵⁴ The balanced pragmatic approach had succeeded. In a letter to members, John Duggan stated that while GO had mitigated the Bay's response, it would continue to debate a "strategy of protecting gays from being victimized by gross indecency laws without aiding the forces of sexual and erotic repression".¹⁵⁵ Quoted in the BP David Garmaise said the Bay issue had "put [GO] in a difficult situation when we appear to be suppressing sexual activity...but public sex...is still illegal".¹⁵⁶ Having learned from their past experiences with washroom arrests in Nepean, John Duggan explained, GO wanted to prevent "*gays from being victimized under this law*, and opted to work with the Bay and limit publicity.¹⁵⁷

In confronting the bath raid and washroom arrests GO dealt more directly with police but their relationship was tenuous. Questions as to the value of the resulting social capital remained. Looking back Garmaise recalled how, prior to the Club Ottawa bath raid, he actually believed "*things had improved a bit with the police and [the raid] had set us back*".¹⁵⁸ John Duggan believes that after the bath raid, policing in Ottawa

¹⁵³ R Wilson & N Macdonald, 'Bay Confirms Use of Hidden Camera', *Ottawa Citizen*, 28 March, 1978, p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ Hudson Bay had informed GO of its plan by telephone on March 21 (CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Code-1976-1977 – 1982-017/04 01: Minutes: PAC April 4, 1977); CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Code – 1976-1977-017/04 01: Letter: Mike Johnstone, Political Action Committee to J. McKinlay-Key, Manager Internal Security, Hudson Bay, Apr. 4 1977). In forwarding to other LGF groups the materials it had created and strategic approaches GO demonstrates its willingness to share its experience, namely its capital.

¹⁵⁵ CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Code – 1976-1977-017/04 01: Letter: John Duggan, GO Political Action Committee to Dear People, Apr. 7 1977.

¹⁵⁶ *Body Politic*, no. 34, 1977, p. 8.

¹⁵⁷ John Duggan.

¹⁵⁸ David Garmaise.

improved somewhat. In the aftermath, “*police were being told to leave them [(Club Bath)] alone. So the bath was fine [and] there were never [any] raids on bars in Ottawa*”. Offering no proof of ‘police ‘being told’, John Duggan firmly believes “*there must have been some political involvement from City Hall*”. One clear change was evident with regard to policing park sex: over time, “*the park thing became more of an RCMP patrolling thing. [So] the Ottawa Police entrapment thing ended*”.¹⁵⁹

Gays of Ottawa, Ottawa Police and the birth of community

During the charged events of 1975 and 1976, GO built on its position within the lesbian and gay field, even though its interventions put this at risk. A strategic champion of gay liberation, it was ever conscious of the limits on liberation. Its position offered both opportunity *and* risk which it pragmatically negotiated. By providing useful, reasoned interventions for Ottawa’s lesbians and gays (especially with gay men) it achieved a dominant field position. By *not* advocating a radical position on gay male sexual rights, GO risked losing its *liberationist* cultural capital. However, GO understood the conditions of its field, in which *realpolitik*, not revolution, ruled. As a result, GO’s actions, in particular how it dealt with the Ottawa Police, would give birth to a community.

¹⁵⁹ John Duggan. That park policing became an ‘RCMP thing’ was more likely related to developments in Ottawa’s downtown core. In 1981-82 Ottawa’s Rideau Centre opened. Part of a major urban redevelopment, its opening generally diminished cruising in nearby Major Hill’s Park. Then the 1988 opening of the National Gallery of Canada at Nepean Point effectively eliminated cruising there. In Ottawa throughout the eighties and 1990s gay male cruising shifted to park spaces patrolled by the National Capital Commission (NCC) and RCMP, such as the Rideau Canal, Remic Rapids and Rockcliffe Park. However, RCMP seems to have opted to discourage cruising with patrols as arrests were rare. Conservation officers with the NCC used increased patrols and ‘occurrence reports’ to further discourage park sex (K. Walby, ‘He asked me if I was looking for a fag’, *Ottawa’s National Capital Commission Conservation Officers and the Policing of Public Sex*, *Surveillance and Society*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2009, pp. 367-79).

As a result of events in 1975-1976 GO attained a leadership position from which came to speak for, and of, an *actual* community. Prior to this GO would speak of ‘a *community*’ that it aspired to create, choosing to “act as if ye have faith, and faith shall be given to you”.¹⁶⁰ Act like community exists and one will emerge. Of course this was strategic. As an organization, GO had to assume something larger than itself existed *out there*. John Duggan believes Ottawa’s gay community emerged as a “*result of how [GO] deliberately framed it*”. He personally was a “*strong pusher of the concept of community because it works so well. First of all, I thought it was accurate but also in terms of breaking isolation; the whole thing about being queer... you are the only one. Well, all of sudden if you’re watching the TV news and hearing about a gay community, obviously you’re not the only one*”. Community encompassed “*the idea of variety and plurality. [With] a community you think of many, many people. We used to do that [speak of community] deliberately...to break the stereotypes*”.

To foster the idea of a diverse community, GO strategically employed its spokespeople. There was “*David Garmaise with his afro, Ron with his beard, Denis with his long hair.. So you could not be stereotyped. We had our differences...[so] we rotated*”.¹⁶¹ Callers to the Gayline provided tangible evidence of a recognition that GO had come to the “*aid of the community,*” for example, during the Vice Ring Affair and bath raid etc. As a result, Denis LeBlanc feels “*we became them*”, GO became the community. It was at this point that GO began to feel “*that we were community... we had grown to become a community*”. Prior to the vice ring and bath raid “*gays in the city of*

¹⁶⁰ Spoken by actor John Spencer as Leo McGarry on West Wing (A Sorkin ‘In the Shadow of Two Gun Men’, West Wing, 2000, Season 2, Episode 1). Or “put it another way, fake it ‘til you make”.

¹⁶¹ I asked John Duggan what enabled any one member to speak for GO? It was based, “*in part on who cares the most about the issue and [was] therefore the most informed*”.

*Ottawa had not yet become quote, 'a community'. It was just individual persons at that point". During 1975-1976 "the whole concept of community development arose within Gays of Ottawa. We started talking about it, about community development within our community. How we could expand our community and provide more resources and that sort of thing".*¹⁶² Ian MacLennan said, *"I think that's probably true...I think GO became known as the reputable organization". For Ian, this meant making it apparent, "GO wasn't just about finding somebody to fuck. Which I think a lot of people thought, (although I have no justification for this)...but I wonder...thought you know, gay organization, it's a recruiting organization".*¹⁶³

Previously GO's interventions had not always been welcomed by the community, such as it existed. John Duggan recalls how after GO's intervention with the Lord Elgin, *"the community held GO responsible when the bar closed"*. For Duggan it was during the vice ring case that things changed. It was *"maybe the first one where a lot of the bar-people supported GO"*. However, *"not until the bath house raid, where GO defended and challenged again"* how police behaved, did things change. *"When we went into the bars you could feel that support"*.¹⁶⁴ Denis LeBlanc attributes GO's increased standing to its coming *"to the aid of the community...After that there was no more talk in the bars about those 'fucking GO people'".* The bath raid, *"that was the break-through we had with the quote 'community'. In terms of our ability to assist...we became 'real' to the members of the community"*, namely through its social and cultural capital. Remember,

¹⁶² Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁶³ Ian MacLennan. In Ian's time charges that gays recruited straights (especially young people) into becoming gay, were commonplace. This claim was a cornerstone of Anita Bryant's 1977 anti-gay, Save the Children campaign (See: *Globe and Mail*, 'Anita vows to continue her crusade against gay rights ordinance in Miami', *Globe and Mail*, 6 Feb, 1977. p. 11).

¹⁶⁴ John Duggan.

“a lot of the community used the baths...next day, we were there...putting out press releases condemning police actions...outreaching to those arrested”. After our public meeting and police picket people who *“would have never come to our dances, came. Some of the famous drag queens said, “you guys have done such good work...I’ll always support GO”*. Mobilizing *“the old drag queen network that was a breakthrough”*. After the raid GO was recognized as an *“organization that would stand by you when you were in trouble. That really solidified GO for the community. We never looked back...after that we were always the [community’s] guardians and the protectors”*.¹⁶⁵

Lloyd Plunket described Ottawa was undergoing a *“process”* with *“lesbian and gay people feeling more comfortable and being more open”*. The bath raid was a *“crisis moment, when people realized they needed an organization...they were glad GO was there...all these negative things had a positive reaction in the community...that GO was there to speak for them”*.¹⁶⁶ Ian MacLennan saw *“the community...starting to understand that GO was a point in their favour not a danger to them”*. Gay social networks were evolving beyond *“small gay communities, that sort of ‘circle of friends’ of pre-1968, pre-Stonewall”* years. *GO became politically valid through...work with the vice ring, the baths, marching. [We were] willing to have our faces put out there”*.¹⁶⁷

This community recognition precipitated internal changes. John Duggan believes that owing to this period of adversity GO *“matured...some people said it became more institutionalized”*. The early days at GO *“were like hippie days...long hair. You’d go to these general meetings; people sat cross-legged on the floor. Some people liked that, found it comfortable, warm and embracing”*. However, in the latter seventies *“when we*

¹⁶⁵ Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁶⁶ Lloyd Plunkett.

¹⁶⁷ Ian MacLennan.

had community meetings, they were large, so you had row after row of folding chairs. It became more structured. You know, we'd hand out agendas. Very formal...became very formal". As with "any organization you had to have a very clear way of arriving at decisions...supported by a majority of the members". The organization had evolved from the era when "issues were more [related to] consciousness-raising. They were more...personal". Now "GO was supposed to express a position on behalf of the community" which changed the organization. After "dealing with things like the police raid on the bathhouses, some of the media things, we had to be more formal. We wanted to achieve things".¹⁶⁸

Duggan describes a process of professionalization through which GO acquired, in many ways, capital befitting a *real* organization. To a degree, this greater *realness*, was driven by the community's recognition and perception of GO, rather than any dramatic internal and material change. Prior to this GO had kept excellent records, prepared financial statements, developed relations with other organizations, been federally funded, had a clear governance structure etc. What Duggan alludes to are gradual changes in GO's organizational habitus, in shifting from a habitus characteristic of a sixties grassroots protest group to that of an agency, engaged in sustained political action, the provision of social services organization etc., on acting in a variety of fields.

Police Liaison

Further evidence of GO's new status was illustrated by its attempt to establish a formal liaison relationship with the Ottawa Police. After the Club Bath raid, GO had

¹⁶⁸ John Duggan. Police actions in Montreal in during 1975-1976 also fostered community organizational change elsewhere. In the aftermath of the police actions, l' Association pour les droits gais du Québec (ADGQ) formed and continued to operate until 1988 (Warner, p. 159; Smith, p. 55-6).

pushed to establish one. However, John Duggan stressed action towards this goal occurred only with the “*political involvement*” of MPP Michael Cassidy. “*In those days, for that issue, our big ally was Michael Cassidy*”. Like GO, Cassidy publicly criticized police handling of the vice ring.¹⁶⁹ Charlie Hill wrote Cassidy, describing Gervais and Methot’s involvement in a “campaign of police harassment of gay men in the park at Nepean Point.”¹⁷⁰ Because of this, Denis LeBlanc states, “[Cassidy] intervened and [GO] had a meeting with the head of the vice squad and...Gervais and Methot”...*the faces we saw everyday on the news*”.¹⁷¹ However, John Duggan gives credit for the ultimate success of the January 1977 meeting between GO, Cassidy and Ottawa Police to Supt. Tom Flanagan. He “*was sort of key...he was just coming up the ladder*”. He was open to a liaison, subsequently appointing Staff Sergeant Bill Cathcart to the position.

At the resulting April 1977 general meeting, Supt. Flanagan, police liaison officer Staff Sgt. Cathcart, and Inspector George Zukhow, head of the morality squad, were guests of honour. Attendance was second only to the meeting GO held after the bath raid. In response to questions Flanagan insisted “police do not harass gays”, even suggesting that he audience sympathize with police: “themselves are an unpopular minority group”. Regarding park arrests, when police witnessed “indecent acts they had no choice but to make an arrest”. Laws were enforced, “irrespective of their unpopularity”. Because bath raid cases were before the courts, police would not discuss it but Insp. Zukhow indicated Club Ottawa membership lists had been returned and not

¹⁶⁹ John Duggan.

¹⁷⁰ CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File No.: Prostitution: Ottawa sex ring, 1975 – 82-015/03: Letter: C. Hill, GO to M. Cassidy, Ontario Legislature, Jun. 9 1975. Writing in the BP John Duggan (*Police Appoint Liaison With Gays*, *Body Politic*, no. 31, 1977, p. 6) reported a majority of complaints about policing from Ottawa’s gay community had been “directed toward the so-called morality squad” where Gervais and Methot worked.

¹⁷¹ Denis LeBlanc.

copied.¹⁷² In *GO Info* Paul Wise commented police responses could have been “less vague” but it had “opened a dialogue between gays and the police”.¹⁷³

After this meeting John Duggan recalls GO faced criticism from some gay organizations and activists. “*We were ‘sleeping with the enemy’; ‘this was not the way to go’; and [GO] becoming part of the society [police] are serving is not going to work’*”.¹⁷⁴ And in fact the liaison initiative quickly floundered. John Duggan remembers it “*stalled because it was a gesture on the part of Flanagan...Sergeant Cathcart was not really interested in it. He came to a few meetings because he was told to and he basically just sat there*”. Denis LeBlanc believes GO’s police liaison initiative was a first for Canada, “*never been done in Canada*”.

Its failure was typical of the era. While the actions and attitudes of police pushed activists to demand better, Warner found these efforts “largely unsuccessful due to distrust of the police, homophobia on the part of the cops themselves, and continued harassment”.¹⁷⁵ *Body Politic* editors in November 1978, stated the community would work with police but on its own terms. The BP was in “no hurry to develop polite liaisons with those forces that would have pressured individuals in the gay community to testify against us in court”.¹⁷⁶ The editorial was one of a number BP published in 1978, addressing rising anxieties about policing in lesbian and gay communities. It expressed a

¹⁷² Later that year GO learned police withheld a number of Club membership cards (D Garmaise, ‘Ottawa police raid Toronto bath’s Offices’, *Body Politic*, no. 27, 1976, p. 7).

¹⁷³ P Wise, ‘Police Meeting’, *GO Info*, no. 1, 1977, p. 2. During the meeting newly appointed liaison officers Staff Sergeant Cathcart said little except to state he was trying “to resolve problems raised by the gay community” (p.2).

¹⁷⁴ Flanagan became Ottawa police chief in 1989. See: Duggan, no. 31, 1977, p.6.

¹⁷⁵ In fact, Vancouver’s Society for Education, Action Research and Counselling on Homosexuality established the first “gay-Police Committee to formally communicate with police” in 1974 (Warner 2002, p. 106).

¹⁷⁶ *Body Politic*, ‘Editorial: Cops, Co-operation and Closetry’, *Body Politic*, no. 48, 1978, p. 7.

general fear that civil rights were broadly under attack from anti-gay crusaders like Anita Bryant, the RCMP and police forces in Vancouver, Montréal, Ottawa and Toronto. In December 1977, the BP experienced this directly when its offices were raided.¹⁷⁷ However, this protracted period of police harassment in the late seventies and early eighties, galvanized the community, fuelling rather than dampening its establishing a field of lesbian and gay groups and amassing cultural and symbolic capital.¹⁷⁸

After 1976, the profile of officers Gervais and Methot diminished but GO gave them a last chance in the spotlight. In January 1977, GO handed out its first 'Homophobe of the Year' Oscar Wilde Awards with winners in national, provincial and municipal categories for those having made "the greatest contribution to homophobia". Winners received a certificate and a Florida Orange. Cont. Robert Gervais and Sgt. Alain Methot of the morality squad were the local winners for "single-mindedness and persistence beyond the calls of duty in conducting a witch hunt of homosexuals in Ottawa". Provincially, Charles McNaughton, Chairman of the Ontario Racing Commission was the winner for having fired gay jockey and horse trainer, John Damien. Asked why he had done so McNaughton replied, "What do you expect? He was a faggot". Nationally, Liberal M.P. Hugh Poulin won for his veto of GO's "Secretary of State recommended, educational grant".¹⁷⁹ Winners of the award received a Florida Orange in honour of anti-

¹⁷⁷ See: *Body Politic*, 'Crisis: In the midst of danger, a chance to unite', *Body Politic*, no. 40, 1978, p. 1; 'Police Crime'. *Body Politic*, no. 43, 1978, p. 2; 'Circuses, courts and columns'. *Body Politic*, no. 43, 1978, p. 2; 'Editorial: Cops, Co-operation and Closetry', *Body Politic*, no. 48, 1978, p. 7; 'Platitude'. *Body Politic*, no. 50, 1979, p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ Smith (1999, 72) notes that it was after this period of police repression, lesbian and gay groups "deluged" the Mulroney government with "submissions on equality rights" during hearings on the charter of rights. Clearly police actions had mobilized the community to respond.

¹⁷⁹ D Garmaise, 'Homophobe-of-the-Year', *GO Info*, no. 1, 1977, p. 1; Toronto Star, 1977. "North York to Honour Crusader Anita Bryant", 30 December, p.A4. Ultimately, North York city councillors prevented Lastman from doing so (see also: Fetner, 2001. "Working Anita Bryant: The impact of the Christian anti-gay activism on lesbian and gay movements". *Social Problems*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp.411-28).

gay rights crusader Anita Bryant. As she began her crusade Bryant had been the spokesperson for the Florida Orange Juice Growers. When in early in 1978 Bryant brought her crusade to Toronto, North York Mayor Mel Lastman announced he was giving her the Mayor's Medal for all her efforts.

Gays of Ottawa's efforts to hold the Ottawa Police responsible for their actions and apprise them of the effect of their actions marked its foray into a new field. Although GO's critique was not unique as many other movement organizations were similarly critical, GO was able to effectively use its cultural and social capital. If unable to bring about complete, long-term change in policing, GO's credibility and position were strengthened by the attempt. And policing in Ottawa did seem to change after their actions. Yet GO's expansion of its own field position, further accumulation of capital and entry into other fields took place just as the lesbian and gay movement's organizational field was having to confront a generalized right-wing turn in Canadian and American public sentiment. As a means of addressing this and other issues of a provincial and national scope, GO joined with other organizations. Thus in this next chapter I consider GO's participation in three key lesbian and gay coalitions which worked at provincial and federal levels in Canada.

Chapter Eight: GO, the NGECC, CGRO and the NGRC/CLGRC

Much of GO's work as an Ottawa-based member of Canada's evolving lesbian and gay organizational field centred on its addressing the social, social support and political needs of the local lesbian and gay community. Within Ottawa GO was an organizational field unto itself while simultaneously working to achieve a position within other local fields such as social services. In this chapter I explore GO's contribution as a player in the larger LGF, through its participating in, and sometimes leading, joint initiatives that spanned the country as a whole. Here GO mobilized its considerable cultural, social and symbolic capital in its efforts to foster political change at provincial- and federal-levels. From the early seventies onward, GO participated in nation-wide efforts by "pan-Canadian organizations" such as the National Gay Election Coalition (NGEC) formed in 1972 and the National Gay Rights Coalition (NGRC) formed in 1974.¹ These coalitions were formed in response to conditions within the Canadian political field, created to address the weak position of lesbians and gays owing to their precarious social, legal and political position, one which the LGF would change.

Born out of conditions within the political field, each coalition because of the nature of fields, would adapt to its shifting conditions. For example, in 1978 the NGRC was renamed the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition. Denis LeBlanc indicates this change was taken because "*we had to drop the word 'national' because of a demand from the Québec movement. National meant something else to them*".² While the LGF mobilized to alter conditions in the political field it was not immune to forces affecting it.

¹ Smith 1999, p. 49.

² Denis LeBlanc.

The LGF had to respond to the emergence of linguistic, nationalist and regional demands for changes to the Canadian status quo.

At the provincial level, for almost ten years, GO was a key player in the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO) which it helped found early in 1975. The activities of the NGECC, NGRC/CLGRC and CGRO are discussed in-depth in the work of Smith (1999) and Warner (2002). In this chapter, I focus on the forms of capital GO contributed and developed to an emerging, national-in-scope LGF, by highlighting GO's work with a particular emphasis on NGECC and especially the NGRC. While GO mobilized varied forms of capital to the effort, one of its most valuable forms of capital was geographic. As in business—location is everything—and GO had it. Denis LeBlanc says because GO was in Ottawa, *“we had the knowledge; we had inside knowledge of how government worked. We didn't have to research that: we knew. We had people involved in actual politics, party politics...working with Ministers...people doing all kinds of work in all kinds of departments”*. Asked if other cities had similar resources, Denis LeBlanc was adamant. *“No, they weren't in Ottawa. They didn't have such easy access, as where we were located. We have government phonebooks, by the dozens”*.³ Even mundane items such as government phone books were valuable cultural capital. While knowing how, when and whom to call revealed one's cultural capital, having that call accepted or returned, reflected one's social capital.

National Gay Election Coalition

The NGECC was a collective, nation-wide effort by Canadian lesbian and gay organizations. The brain-child of Maurice Flood of GATE (Vancouver) the NGECC

³ Denis LeBlanc.

formed to facilitate the highlighting of lesbian and gay issues during federal elections in 1972 and 1974. The emergence of the NGEC marked the “first time in history, homosexuals have forced upon the Canadian electorate an awareness that gays are no longer willing to acquiesce to majoritarian [sic] oppressions of the ‘immoral’”.⁴ This first effort at a nation-wide effort also drew the attentions of the RCMP. While not subjected to intensive surveillance, NGEC activities were monitored by the RCMP.⁵

Founded originally by sixteen groups, the NGEC had members raise gay issues with candidates through questionnaires, attendance at their rallies and all candidate meetings and the like; work which was coordinated by Toronto Gay Action.⁶ In a document outlining Coalition priorities, GATE (Vancouver) made it clear getting sexual orientations protections added to the Canadian Bill of Rights (passed in 1977) was the overarching goal. This was thought the best way to heighten awareness of gay rights and “to get people to see us as a ‘valid’ minority group”.⁷ In a similar vein, upon its inception the BP described the Coalition effort as significant because through it, “our presence as organized gays will become known within the political arena” namely the *field* of politics.⁸

Within the literature, precisely when a ‘formal NGEC’ organization emerged, is open to interpretation. For example, Smith describes 1973 election-related work done at the urging of GATE (Vancouver) and initiated in 1972, as activities predating the

⁴ B Wallace, ‘National Gay Election Coalition’, BP, no. 7, 1973, p. 5

⁵ Kinsman and Gentile 2010, p. 317.

⁶ Smith 1999, p. 58; Warner 2002, p. 76.

⁷ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGEC Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Document: Priorities for the N.G.E.C. Position of G.A.T.E. (Vancouver). (No Date

⁸ BP, ‘National Gay Election Coalition’, BP, no. 6, 1972, p. 11.

NGEC's creation at meeting in Québec City in October 1973, called to facilitate efforts during the 1974 federal election.⁹ Their 1974-era activities rested on the "efforts of activists from gay liberation groups in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver and, to a lesser extent, Halifax".¹⁰ Warner states that "two National Gay Election Coalitions [NGEC] were formed, for the 1972 and 1974 federal elections". Because of the success of the first NGEC "activists reconstituted NGEC at a 1973 'quasi-national' conference".

What is not clear is the role GO actually played in reconstituting the second NGEC, namely its hosting of a meeting in Ottawa on May 19-20, 1973. It was at this meeting that Denis LeBlanc states "*we knew there was an election so we organized the first national group: the NGEC*". Perhaps because GO had not been heavily involved in the 1972 NGEC, Denis LeBlanc describes this second coalition as 'first national group: the NGEC'. LeBlanc continues, the NGEC was "*one of the very first political strategies...[created] when we came together in Ottawa. I [(GO)] invited all the groups in Canada to come to Ottawa.*" He adds "*not all the groups [came] but lots...all the GATES...30-40 people for politics that was a lot*".¹¹ Under a headline reading "Gays found election coalition" *GO Info* stated the conference's first day was taken up with

⁹ Ibid. Charlie Hill attended this October 1973 meeting. In report back to the executive he makes no mention of any NGEC-related work (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Executive Committee Minutes April 1972 – November 1972 – 82-017/01 02 Minutes: Executive Meeting Minutes, October 11, 1973). See also CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: National Gay Conference, Quebec 1973 82-017/05 37: Minutes: Oct 6, 1973 and GO 'Report from Gays of Ottawa, Quebec Conference, Oct 6, 1973'.

¹⁰ Smith 1999, p. 58.

¹¹ In attendance were GATE (Halifax), CHAL (Quebec), Gay McGill, Gay Carleton (Ottawa), GO, Toronto Anik Charitable Foundation (Toronto), CHAT, the BP, GATE (Toronto), Gay Liberation Movement (University of Waterloo), Gay Liberation Movement (Hamilton), Saskatoon Gay Action and GATE (Vancouver) (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGEC Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Press Release: GO 'National Gay Election Coalition Formed' May 21, 1973). The Anik Charitable Foundation, founded in February 1973 was the first gay organization in Ontario to receive a charter as a non-profit (Body Politic, 'News of the Gay: Anik', *Body Politic*, no. 8, 1973, p. 21).

group's activity reports.¹² The second day was devoted to a presentation by GATE (Toronto) "outlining the proposed strategy for the next federal election" and then discussions to define the roll of the BP in the movement. Upon the ratification of GATE (Toronto's) strategy "the National Gay Election Committee (sic) was officially formed". At this meeting it was also decided that participating groups would assist in the writing a booklet outlining the "objectives (legal change) and rationale of the NGEC," namely its, *Homosexuals: Minority Without Rights*. Gays of Ottawa president Charlie Hill regarded the NGEC as a "united effort of gay people from across Canada to organize toward changing anti-gay legislation and negative social attitudes".¹³

During the 1972 federal election, the NGEC employed two tactics. First, questionnaires were distributed to NDP, PC, Liberal and Communist Parties to assess candidate's views on "the major problems facing homosexuals". Second, individuals from "major gay organizations" publicly questioned candidates about their positions regarding "gay rights".¹⁴ Given the homophobic timbre of the times, publicly questioning candidates often elicited negative reactions from audience members. At a city hall meeting in Toronto, questions by GATE members were met with calls to "Get the queers out of here!"¹⁵ Reporting on the questionnaire's results, Wallace in the BP noted most responses had come from large urban centers in BC and Ontario, areas where "gay liberation is strongest". For Wallace, this was clear evidence that (gay liberation)

¹² *GO Info*, 'Gays found election coalition', *GO Info*, no. 7, 1973, p. 3; CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Executive Committee Minutes April 1972 – November 1972 – 82-017/01 02 Minutes: Executive Meeting Minutes, October 11, 1973.

¹³ *Ibid.* In *GO Info*'s report it notes Quebec was chosen as a site for an October meeting in order to increase participation by "regions where the movement is newest: Quebec and Maritimes".

¹⁴ B, Wallace 'National Gay Election Coalition'. *Body Politic*, no. 7, 1973, p. 5.

¹⁵ *Body Politic*, 'National Gay Election Coalition: What's it all about?', *Body Politic*, no. 14, 1974, p.

“inroads are being made” and politicians were realizing the “gay vote cannot be easily ignored”.¹⁶ However, the fact that only 30 of 600 questionnaires were completed revealed candidates saw little political value in responding to a community with such little social and political capital.

Activities undertaken for the 1974 federal election were more substantial.¹⁷ The NGEC was now coordinated by GATE (Toronto) and was comprised of twenty groups. Along with two thousand questionnaires, Coalition groups also distributed to candidates, the NGEC’s *Homosexuals: A Minority Without Rights*. The booklet laid out a programme of demands made by lesbian and gay activists.¹⁸ The booklet was probably the Coalition’s most substantial contribution, becoming a staple document for the movement. Primarily educational, it apprised candidates of relevant pieces of federal legislation “used to discriminate against homosexuals” and NGEC proposals for “achieving full civil rights for Canadian gays”.¹⁹ The NGEC’s emphasis on rights reflected a belief that a focus on antidiscrimination would help unite “diverse” lesbian and gay communities in Canada.²⁰

As a member of the (1973) NGEC, GO provided country-wide lists of nominated candidates and copies of electoral maps. Strategically, GO suggested that the NGEC’s questionnaire and booklet first be sent to sitting members of Parliament, a trial run of

¹⁶ Wallace no. 7, 19723, p. 5. Of the thirty questionnaires, the NDP completed twenty-three, the PCs six and one by the Liberals. Wallace concluded that because the NDP had shown the strongest and most positive response this “implies that the only hope for protective legislation lies with the New Democrats” (p. 5).

¹⁷ For an extended analysis of the two iterations (1972, 1973) of the NGEC see T Warner, ‘NGEC: Model for a national movement’, *Body Politic*, no. 15, 1974, pp. 16-17.

¹⁸ Smith 1999, pg. 58; Warner 2002, p. 76.

¹⁹ *Body Politic*, ‘NGEC Booklet Completed’. *Body Politic*, no. 13, 1974, p. 4.

²⁰ Smith 1999, p. 58.

sorts.²¹ The NGECC's activities were coordinated by GATE (Toronto) but Denis LeBlanc downplays how much NGECC work needed coordinating. "*The NGECC...it was just a temporary alliance resulting from a weekend meeting [GO] had at Pestalozzi College*". As to its coordination, "*Well, there wasn't really anything to coordinate. We just all agreed to do the same thing. The only thing the NGECC did...we would all ask questions at all candidates meetings and do press releases. The [NGECC] letters may have come out of Toronto [because] they had more money for stamps or something like that*".²² LeBlanc's views serve to remind us that Canada's lesbian and gay movement was not an initiative solely of groups in Canada's three largest urban centers.

Data gathered from candidate NGECC questionnaires provide cultural capital with which groups mobilized to identify supporters and enemies publicly. For example, after the questionnaire campaign was complete, GO independently contacts Ottawa-area MPs who had responded positively with follow up questions.²³ In response to this, Ottawa West MP Lloyd Francis wrote GO stating he believed homosexuality was not sufficient cause for barring entry to Canada and should be removed from the Immigration Act. Always eager to exploit any political capital, GO issued a press release on December 30 1974, pointing out Francis' immigration position was the same that the Minister of

²¹ It is not clear this was done but it was to be a joint GO/GATE (Toronto) efforts (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05B, File Name: National Gay Conference, Winnipeg 1974 82-017/05 38, Minutes: May 17, 1974. In the letter Warner thanks GO for its initial offer to distribute electoral materials (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGECC Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Letter: T. Warner, GATE (Toronto) to GO c/o D. LeBlanc, Jan. 28 1974.)

²² Denis LeBlanc. According to Denis, the NGECC focused on all-candidate meetings because, "at the time [they] were still quite popular as a venue". In a letter Tom Warner informs NGECC participating groups to prepare their own NGECC letterhead and cover letter. In part this may be why Denis questions how much work GATE was responsible for (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGECC Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Letter: T. Warner, GATE (Toronto), Federal Affairs to NGECC, Dear Friends).

²³ Body Politic, 'What Green Paper says (or doesn't say) about gays', *Body Politic*, no. 17, 1975, p. 5.

Manpower and Immigration, Robert Andras publicly adopted. Yet Francis quickly sent a letter to the *Ottawa Citizen's* editors denying this was his position. Francis claimed no knowledge of GO's letter, suggesting it must have been handled by his staff.²⁴

A final contribution GO made to the NGECE was its attempts to diffuse tensions over the Coalition's position on age of consent legislation. In the Coalition's original 1972 priorities, written by GATE (Vancouver), *abolishing* all age of consent laws had come second only to adding sexual orientation protections to the Canadian Human Rights statute.²⁵ Yet the second NGECE's 1973 promotional pamphlet announced that one of its demands was the establishment of a *uniform* age of consent for sexual activities.²⁶ In 1972, the Coalition had come together at the urging of GATE (Vancouver)'s Maurice Flood who was strongly liberationist and greatly influenced its demands. In its second version in 1973, the NGECE had opted for a more pragmatic and less liberationist position, which it developed through consultation with its members.

Upon seeing this change in NGECE demands, Maurice Flood was furious. His anger illustrated the diversity of views and political positions encompassed within the lesbian and gay organizational field. Flood and GATE (Vancouver) held a solid position on the left, espousing a strong critique of any who took a more centrist position or any

²⁴ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGECE Follow-up – 1974 82-017/05 02: Press Release, GO "Ottawa Liberal Supports Gay Rights"; CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGECE Follow-up – 1974 82-017/05 02: Letter: Lloyd Francis to Editors, *Ottawa Citizen*, January 4, 1973.

²⁵ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGECE Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Pamphlet: National Gay Election Coalition; CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGECE Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Document: Priorities for the N.G.E.C. Position of GATE (Vancouver), (No Date). It was demanded that "the Criminal Code recognize every individual's rights of sexual consent regardless of age, by the deletion of all references to age in legislation dealing with consensual sexual relations"(3).

²⁶ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGECE Follow-up – 1974 82-017/05 02: Document: National Gay Election Coalition.

kind of 'watered down' or conciliatory approach. In a letter to GATE (Toronto) Flood stated the age of consent issue "represents a dividing line in the gay movement...a fundamental principle...lightly sacrificed in search for a 'compromise' of 'universally acceptable document'". He accused the Coalition of undemocratically tailoring positions "to the point of view of CHAT". It was unacceptable that the NGEC be influenced by CHAT or "any other group which holds a non-liberationist perspective". Flood urged the Coalition demand the government "drop all age of consent laws".²⁷ In his letter Flood singled out CHAT due to recent events in Toronto. In his September 1973 letter, Flood references an August 1972 column by *Globe and Mail* columnist Kenneth Bagnell.²⁸ In it Bagnell applauded a provincial government decision to fund CHAT's operation of a distress line. Then he added that presumably funding would not be used to "foster the acceptability...of confirmed homosexuals seducing youngsters."

Here Bagnell's real target was Gerald Hannon whose 1972 *Body Politic* essay, 'Of Men and Little Boys', Bagnell believed demonstrated that "seducing children is a highly desirable activity for homosexuals".²⁹ *Toronto Star* editors had also attacked Hannon's article, publishing an August editorial entitled, 'No Open Season on Children.'³⁰ Gays of Ottawa responded to press reactions by writing letters to the

²⁷ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGEC Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Letter: M. Flood Chair GATE (Vancouver) Executive to GATE (Toronto), 23 September, 1973; Under the subtitle: 'Volatile Issue,' see *Body Politic*, 'Third national conference launches gay rights coalition', *Body Politic*, no. 20, 1975, p. 3.

²⁸ B, Bagnell 'Gay Liberation', *Globe and Mai*, August 23, 1972, p. 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.* See: G. Hannon 'Of Men and Little Boys', *BP*, no. 5, 1972, p. 5. Many in the lesbian and gay community were also disturbed by Hannon's piece. Social services staff at CHAT included copies of the *BP* in mailings to people seeking information on homosexuality. When one such mailing included the issue containing Hannon's essay, it triggered a crisis between reformist-inclined staff and liberationist-inclined staff (Churchill p. 313).

³⁰ *Toronto Star*, 'No Open Season on Children', *Toronto Star*, 24 August, 1972, p. 6. See also: *Globe & Mail*, 'Within the Law?' *Globe & Mail*, 24 August, 1972, p. 6. Outraged by Hannon's article, *Globe*

Toronto Star and *Globe and Mail* to complain that the “press used the issue to place a slur on Gay Liberation [sic] and homosexuals in general”.³¹ However, the *Toronto Star* in July had already drawn CHAT into the public eye by reporting on a local Baptist minister’s opposition to visits by CHAT activists to area high schools. Reverend Armstrong of Mount Pleasant Road Baptist church wished to bar CHAT from visiting schools where they spoke about homosexuality and gay liberation and according to him, “provided information on homosexuality to boys as young as thirteen”.³² All of which had the effect of alerting Maurice Flood and the larger movement to the fact that Toronto newspapers had reinvigorated age of consent fears about the homosexual predation of children by focusing on CHAT and the BP.

In its defence, CHAT President George Hislop wrote to the NGEC about the age of consent issue to state “the law should only concern itself with the forcing of a person (assault) to do something”.³³ For its part GATE (Toronto) said it was “totally in favour of abolition [of age of consent laws] but cannot impose this position on the NGEC as it a coalition of gay groups from varying philosophies”. Moreover, Flood’s demand that those disagreeing with a liberationist viewpoint should “not actively participate in the campaign [or] not be given consideration, is unacceptable”.³⁴ The approach taken by GATE (Toronto) coordinator of the NGEC was a clearly a response to the conditions

Editors had alerted Toronto Police to see if action “would be taken against the newspaper or the author”. Toronto Police declined because Hannon had not been specific about the ages of the boys he spoke about.

³¹ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: GO Steering Committee June 1972 – August 1972 – 82-017/01 03, Minutes: Steering Committee, August 30, 1972.

³² *Toronto Star*, ‘Ban sought in schools on homosexual talks’, *Toronto Star*, 24 July, 1972, p. 25.

³³ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Letter: G. Hislop CHAT President to GATE (Toronto) NGEC, September 26, 1973. Hislop was writing to suggest changes to NGEC materials.

³⁴ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGEC Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Letter: T. Warner, K. Popert and B. Trow GATE (Toronto) to GATE Vancouver, 26 September, 1973.

within the LGF, namely that abolishing age of consent laws was not acceptable to all. In Vancouver, GATE adamantly restated that the NGEC coordinating body had acted undemocratically in adopting its age of consent position. For GATE (Vancouver) the fact that the NGEC had no forum for making authoritative decisions was a key weakness.³⁵

The affair also revealed the differing positions Coalition groups occupied in the LGF. For example, Marie Robertson recalled “*where GATE [Toronto] was very political...CHAT was seen as more the social services organization*”. A similar observation is made by Smith. Speaking of the groups that subsequently comprise the NGRC, she noted that “urban gay liberation groups such as GO, GATE (Toronto), GATE (Vancouver), and CGRO” advocated both gay liberation and civil rights thereby aligning their rights-seeking agenda to gay liberation. Yet “groups from other areas of Canada were more concerned with the provision of basic social services” to lesbian and gay communities, for example CHAT.³⁶ Whatever their geographic location each lesbian and gay group had to respond to local field conditions, particularizing its application of cultural and social capital to ensure each maintain a strong position in their (local) field.

Ever the pragmatic organization, GO offered an alternative. In a letter to the NGEC it stressed the importance of unanimity. It feared disagreements over the content of NGEC materials would go public. Regarding age of consent, GO suggested NGEC’s questionnaires would ask candidates if they favoured a uniform age of consent *or* revoking “all laws regarding consensual acts regardless of age, gender or marital status”. Gays of Ottawa proposed this solution due to the difficulties GATE faced if forced to poll

³⁵ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGEC Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Letter: R. Cook, Secretary, GATE (Vancouver) to All Gay Organizations, October 22, 1973.

³⁶ Smith 1999, p. 60.

all Coalition members for their views on the matter. Ultimately, the NGECC incorporated GO's suggestion into its 1974 election questionnaire.³⁷ After the federal election Doug Hellquist, Gay Community Center, Saskatoon and Maurice Flood, GATE (Vancouver), criticized this approach.³⁸

Gays of Ottawa's intervention demonstrated its pragmatic approach to logistics and politics. This pragmatism was a point of pride for Barry Deepprose. "*There's a purity of political analysis in the [GO] PAC which I liked...[the] idea of pragmatism and compromise was not well known*" to other groups.³⁹ The intervention by GO prefigured clashes it would face as the coordinator of the NGRC owing to the NGECC's failure to settle how age of consent should be addressed.⁴⁰ Both Smith and Warner noted the stress the NGRC faced when confronted by the issue. However, these stresses emerged first in the NGECC.⁴¹ Age of consent debates revealed the starkly contrasting views held by gay, sexual liberationists and (those we might call) gay political pragmatists about the depth and pace of change the LGF should strive for. For Gays of Ottawa, their NGECC experience demonstrated the thankless task of trying to satisfy all Coalition actors. A hard lesson it would soon learn again.

³⁷ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05A, File Name: NGECC Correspondence - 1973-1974 82-017/05 01: Letter: D. LeBlanc, P. Wise and James Finn to Dear Friends, November 22, 1973.

³⁸ Flood believed it created confusion over the NGECC's actual demand (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Letter: M. Flood GATE (Vancouver) to GO Political Action Committee, January 6, 1975). Hellquist suggested in future the NGECC settle one question because "MPs are simple creatures and having to make a choice would undoubtedly confuse many of them" (Ibid, Letter: D. Hellquist, Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon to Dear Friends, December 18, 1974).

³⁹ Barry Deepprose.

⁴⁰ Toronto's GATE appears to have explored the idea of having some aspect of the NGECC continue. In January 1974 GO's executive discussed a GATE proposal to form liaisons with local riding associations in Ontario who would then push for sexual orientation protections in the provincial human rights code (CLGA, GO, File No.: GO Files, File Name: 1982-017/01A > 82-017/01 02, Executive Meeting December 17, 1973, Minutes: January 20, 1974).

⁴¹ Smith 1999, p. 60-61; Warner 2002, p. 154-55.

National Gay Rights Coalition

With the completion of the 1974 federal election, the goals of the NGEC remained, having been brought into greater clarity. Subsequently, the BP described the Coalition's 1974 initiative as "the most ambitious important campaign in" in the Canadian gay movement's history. It had demonstrated the possibility of "various Canadian gay organizations to put aside their differences and work for a common concern."⁴² For the first time, politicians were confronted by a highly organised homosexual lobby". In the next BP issue, Tom Warner's analysis of overall NGEC concluded the experience demonstrated the "need for establishing a more specifically defined, permanent National Gay Rights Coalition".⁴³ Indeed, the development of this second nation-wide initiative was already well underway. In it GO would play a much enhanced role owing to its cultural and social capital.

In GO's archival record there was a document entitled a 'Proposal for National Gay Rights Coalition' written by "GATE" but it is not clear which GATE wrote it.⁴⁴ The proposal emphasizes the Coalition's structure must be democratic and poll organizations democratically regarding policies. This was essential because the NGEC had no "mechanism for determining national polices". The proposal advised that any coalition focus on one or two issues. The choice of issues should be informed by positive

⁴² Body Politic, 'Editorial: No small accomplishment', *Body Politic*, no. 14, 1974, p. 2.

⁴³ T Warner, 'NGEC: Model for a national movement,' *Body Politic*, no. 15, 1974, p. 16. Warner's tone was less effusive than the BP collective as to the effectiveness of the NGEC. He concluded his analysis suggesting that in the end the NGEC might prove to have been "a necessary, if not particularly noteworthy, occurrence in the evolution of the gay rights movement in Canada".

⁴⁴ Due to this emphasis on 'democratic' process one could assume the proposal was written by GATE (Vancouver) but I suspect it was penned by Tom Warner (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Document: GATE Proposal for National Gay Rights Coalition" ND).

responses seen in NGECC questionnaires. “For several reasons the areas of Immigration and Employment in the Civil Service (sic) seem to be the most obvious choices”. As to the location of a coalition office, “Ottawa is the logical location”.

Speaking to the actual formation of the Coalition, Denis LeBlanc recalls “*everybody was on side, nobody opposed the creation of a national organization.*” At the outset the coalition would have 27 member groups which Denis LeBlanc saw as “*fairly impressive already...to have that many groups willing to work on a common strategy; to figure out what to do with the federal government*”.⁴⁵ For John Duggan the real value of a coalition was the credibility it afforded representatives: “*you could go and present something to a committee and you were speaking of potentially 10% of the population across the country as opposed to a local Ottawa group.* For example, you might encounter “*some of the members on the committee who were from elsewhere, might say well, ‘we don’t give two hoots what gays in Ottawa think’*”.⁴⁶

This undated proposal was probably written in the fall of 1974 in response to a general call for proposals made at the 2nd annual National Gay Liberation Conference, held over the Labour Day weekend in Winnipeg. Here delegates resolved to form the NGRC and its national office. Coalition resolutions stressed operating principles be established for participation and that national projects take into account the “existence of the French language and French fact in Canada”. At the Winnipeg conference a motion was passed that addressed sexism, namely ending sexism in all gay organizations. That this occurred especially in gay male organizations was “a major priority of the Gay

⁴⁵ Denis LeBlanc.

⁴⁶ John Duggan.

Liberation Movement". A related resolution defined gay liberation as recognizing "men don't have a place in determining the overall priorities of women...because of the double oppression of gay women".⁴⁷ I highlight these resolutions for two reasons. First, GO jointly proposed the resolution on sexism along with LOON. Second, within a few years, issues of sexism and how to integrate the differing perspectives of lesbians would sharply divide the Coalition.

Before the end of September 1974, GO's PAC volunteered to coordinate the soliciting of coalition proposals and to establish a national office. Formal ratification of the latter would not occur until the NGRC's founding conference in June 1975.⁴⁸ As the only lesbian and gay movement organization in Ottawa however, it is hard to see who else would form an office. The NGRC did not have the economic capital to have done otherwise. Therefore, GO comes to act as the coordinating office almost by default. Certainly it was willing and NGRC capital was greatly enhanced by a location in Ottawa. Could a credible, national organization have been located elsewhere? Early in 1975 David Garmaise was appointed NGRC secretary by GO's PAC after the departure of Ron Dayman. Garmaise recalls GO took the coordinating job in part because "*there was nobody else to do it, there was not money or staff...no [NGRC] board of directors*".⁴⁹ Denis LeBlanc suggests GO's being chosen was largely driven by the depth of its involvement in the Canadian movement in addition to location. As he says, "*we were a member organization that happened to be in the nation's capital. In other words, we*

⁴⁷ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05B, File Name: National Gay Conference, Winnipeg, 1974 82-017 / 05 38: Document: 'Major Resolutions adopted by 2nd National Gay Conference,' September 1974.

⁴⁸ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05B, File Name: National Gay Conference, Ottawa 1975, 82-017/05 04: Document: NGRC Statement of Principles, June 30, 1975; A comparison of this document with GO's position paper reveals few substantive changes, ergo GO's influence is clear.

⁴⁹ David Garmaise.

*happened to be doing most of the work. Because we happened to be in Ottawa, we had access to the Hill".*⁵⁰

In November 1974, GO's PAC wrote a letter to all movement groups. On the issue of the Coalition's national office, GO stated "since no objections have been voiced in the intervening period, we shall assume that there is general acceptance of our undertaking that function".⁵¹ The influential GATE (Toronto) supported GO's taking this on. In a letter it agreed GO's PAC would act as the national coordinating office, urging it be "left up to Gays of Ottawa as to how the office is run".⁵² At the end of November, GO distributed its NGRC proposal. It envisioned a coalition of organizations "united in common struggle to obtain full civil and human rights for homosexual men and women". As to the still controversial issue of age of consent GO suggested a vote on the issue. For pragmatic reasons GO had long supported a uniform age of consent. Here GO proposed coalition members be asked to vote for abolishing age of consent laws or adopting a uniform age of consent.⁵³ Instead of this GATE (Toronto)'s proposed the NGRC simply demand and work towards a uniform age of consent.⁵⁴

By January 4, 1975, GO had received counter proposals from the Homophile Association of London (HALO), Gay Community Center (Saskatoon), Windsor, Halifax, Women's Place (Waterloo), Winnipeg and 'verbal messages' from GATE (Toronto) and

⁵⁰ Denis LeBlanc.

⁵¹ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Letter: Letter: R. Dayman PAC Secretary to Brothers and Sisters, November 7, 1974.

⁵² CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Letter: GATE (Toronto) Comments on GO's Proposal, December 29, 1974.

⁵³ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Document: GO Political Action Committee, 'National Gay Rights Coalition,' proposal, November 27, 1974;

⁵⁴ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Document: GATE (Toronto) Comments on GO's Proposal, December 29, 1974.

GATE (Vancouver). Near the end of January, GO's Ron Dayman writes that GO's proposal had received letters of support and suggestions for amendments. In the end GO's coalition proposal appears to have quickly become the basis on which the final document would be based.⁵⁵ At the subsequent National Gay Conference in June 1975 in Ottawa, a revised version of GO's proposal dated June, 11 1975, was the basis for discussions. Based on input GO received, it reaffirmed the Canadian lesbian and gay movement's commitment to public actions which were essential "since it is primarily through the effective use of public action that meaningful changes will occur". On the issue of age of consent, the NGRC opposed in principle age of consent laws as they were "essentially discriminatory". At a minimum the NGRC demanded "equality via uniform age of consent".⁵⁶

At first, GO resisted the idea of a national conference to establish the NGRC suggesting a decision made through the mail. A recent conference to set up CGRO had been successful but GO was opposed to a NGRC conference unless a majority of groups could attend. I believe GO wished to ensure that as the coordinating office it had the support of a majority of groups before a public meeting. Gays of Ottawa also thought it critical that conference delegates be empowered to cast votes for groups *without*

⁵⁵ Ibid: Letter: R. Dayman to Doug Hellquist, Gay Community Centre, Saskatoon], January 4, 1975; Ibid Letter: R. Dayman, National Office to Brothers and Sisters, January 27, 1975.

⁵⁶ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Document: GO Proposal for the National Gay Rights Coalition for discussion at third National Gay Rights Conference, June 11, 1975. Also clear was that public action(s) were thought as important as actions of a "strictly lobbying nature".

consultation with their organizations.⁵⁷ In an era before cell phones and when long distance was costly, checking back with the 'home office' was not a simple matter.

At the June meeting in Ottawa the NGRC was founded. Minutes reveal GO's revised proposal was its foundational document. Gays of Ottawa would act as the national coordinating office and select a NGRC secretary. *GO Info* reported on the conference noting that a "highlight of the conference was a Gay Rights March on Parliament by 200 men and women". Ever cognisant of the need for publicity *GO Info* notes media coverage "brought much needed attention to the struggle for equal rights for gays".⁵⁸ In its coverage the BP highlighted the march and the meeting's general "militancy" having been "the most militant gathering of the gay movement to date". However, the BP's coverage led with the age of consent issue. The paper was pleased that "significant inroads were made in the forces that opposed [the] abolition "of age of consent laws; even CHAT "was won over to the abolitionist view". In this same issue the BP carried an editorial in support of abolishing age of consent.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Letter: 'Position of Gays of Ottawa Concerning a National NGRC Conference, January 28, 1975. The document reveals the results of a poll taken to establish if a conference should be held. Six groups had been in favour, four opposed; Ibid Letter: R. Dayman Secretary Political Action Committee to Dear Sisters and Brothers, April 3, 1975. Dayman is announcing a conference would be held with a goal towards setting up the NGRC. This would be a continuation of the 'Setting a National Direction' session held at the Winnipeg Conference held in 1974.

⁵⁸ *GO Info*, 'National Conference Nationale', *GO Info*, no. 4, 1975, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Body Politic, 'Third national conference launches gay rights coalition'. *Body Politic*, no. 20, 1975, p. 3; Body Politic, 'One Struggle', *Body Politic*, no. 20, 1975, p. 1. The BP suggested militants been able to champion abolishing age of consent laws because "conservative delegates chose to attend other workshops" rather than the consent workshop. Thus abolitionists "enjoyed a stronger position in the workshop than they did in the conference as a whole".

For a coordinating office with a staff of one and no budget the amount of work expected from GO far surpassed a realistic program of work.⁶⁰ The national office was to: 1) coordinate implementation of the NGRC's program; 2) publish annual NGRC progress reports; 3) publicize aims, goals and action of the NGRC nationally and speak for it; 4) publish (at least) a quarterly newsletter; 5) make provisions for NGRC representation in international bodies; and, 6) ensure all statements and actions of the office be consistent with the NGRC.⁶¹ Initially, GO's Ron Dayman was NGRC secretary. He swiftly got to work, asking on August 1, 1975, that members provide input regarding a presentation to a parliamentary committee on changes to Canada's Human Rights Act.⁶² On August 21, 1975, he issued a press release announcing the Coalition's formation; one formed to "work for the repeal of all anti-gay legislation and instituting laws to protect gay men and women in Canada", for example, legislation barring homosexuals from entry to Canada found in the Immigration Act which was currently undergoing review.⁶³

Substantive work on behalf of the NGRC had begun months earlier.⁶⁴ In a letter dated April 24, 1975 Dayman stated that GO, endorsed by various groups, and had a presentation to Parliament's Special Joint Committee on Immigration Policy. Dayman

⁶⁰ The NGRC did not come into the world penniless. A dance held during its founding conference raised \$900 (*GO Info*, no. 4, 1975 4:1).

⁶¹ Smith, 1999, p. 59.

⁶² CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05B, File Name: National Gay Conference, Ottawa 1975, 82-017/05 04, Letter: Dayman, Coordinating Office to Sisters and Brothers, August 1, 1975;

⁶³ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05B, File Name: National Gay Conference, Ottawa 1975, 82-017/05 04, Press Release: NGRC Press Release, August 21, 1975.

⁶⁴ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Letter: R. Dayman, National Office to Brothers and Sisters, January 27, 1975. In the letter Dayman announces since there had been no objection to GO's offer coordinate a future NGRC office, he has begun responding to letters "as the national office".

did so knowing full well immigration would be a key NGRC issue.⁶⁵ While already working in areas of interest to the (future) NGRC and sometimes on its behalf, Dayman told Winnipeg's Gays for Equality that he hoped the Coalition would be established soon as "we don't feel we have the right to do anything in the name of the NGRC".⁶⁶ When submitted on May 12, GO's brief to the Parliamentary Committee listed endorsements from sixteen lesbian and gay groups from across the country. It also contained letters of support from non-gay actors with whom GO had relationships, such as the Canadian Psychiatric Association, Ottawa lawyer Hugh Mantha, Ottawa's Family Services Association, Ontario Human Rights Commission staffer, Anna Whitely, etc.⁶⁷

For all of GO's efforts its coordination of the NGRC is largely unrecognized in the literature. References are made to the NGRC coordinating office in Ottawa that rarely identify GO as its office or its having a role. For example, Warner in *Never Going Back*, states that when it came National Gay Rights *Coalition* "the word 'coalition' is misnomer. It was really an Ottawa lobbying office for gay rights issues". Here Warner is

⁶⁵ CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/02A, File Name: Immigration 1974-1977 – 82-017/017/02 06, Letter: R. Dayman, GO to Special Joint Committee on Immigration Policy, May 12, 1975). A year earlier GO's Charlie Hill signalled its interest in immigration, writing to the chairman of the Canadian Immigration and Population Study with suggested changes to the Act (CLGA, GO, File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: Law Reform Cmte C. Hill Gays of Ottawa, Letter: C. Hill GO to R.M. Tait, chairman, Canadian Immigration and Population Study, April 24, 1974.).

⁶⁶ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: History 1974-1975 82-017/04 12: Letter: R. Dayman Political Action Committee to H. Hamburg, Gays for Equality, Winnipeg, April 24, 1975.

⁶⁷ Owing to the breadth of endorsements for GO's brief Dayman told the Committee "we [(GO)] speak for the more than two million homosexual men and women in this country". Although not officially the NGRC's coordinator, GO felt it possessed sufficient capital to presented itself as a national-level actor (CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/02A, File Name: Immigration 1974-1977 – 82-017/017/02 06, Letter: R. Dayman, GO to Special Joint Committee on Immigration Policy, May 12, 1975; CLGA, GO, File No.: GO Files, File Name: 1982-017/01A > 82-017/01 02, Executive Meeting December 17, 1973, Minutes: Executive Meeting Minutes, March 28, 1974. The rapidity with which GO prepared its brief was startling. Just 2 weeks earlier on April 11, 1975 Dayman wrote an 'urgent' letter to Canadian groups informing them that a Special Joint Committee on Immigration Policy was accepting submissions. He urged all groups make presentations to the Committee in various cities, "valuable as a publicity tool for our campaign" (CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/02A, File Name: Immigration 1974-1977 – 82-017/017/02 06, Letter: R. Dayman, GO Political Action Committee to Dear Friends, April 11, 1975).

quoting David Garmaise “a key figure in the NGRC”.⁶⁸ Warner’s description elevates GO’s role (‘lobbying office’) and downplays the contributions of other ‘Coalition’ members, yet does so without mentioning Gays of Ottawa. In an interview Gary Kinsman offered a rare acknowledgement of this fact. Speaking of the NGRC, Kinsman stated that “unlike many other movements, a cross-country organization existed [namely the NGRC]. It was based in Ottawa and Gays of Ottawa was clearly the major group involved in running”.⁶⁹ Upon beginning my research it was not clear what GO’s relationship to the NGRC coordinating office was. Did GO house it? Provide it an office? Or was GO the coordinating office? If so why were NGRC-related matters given so little prominence in GO executive meeting minutes?

Additionally, the archival record that I drew on does not clearly identify who, GO or the NGRC, was behind a particular initiative. Mike Johnstone reveals a strategic approach was taken to attribution or the taking of credit. *“I think at different times [attribution] may have been simply a matter of convenience”*. For example, sometimes a GO-identified action *“would go farther. Certainly with the federal government, if we could go farther with something on behalf of the NGRC, that [attribution] made sense”*.⁷⁰ Some such decisions favoured GO’s view of the best way to proceed. As Denis LeBlanc put it, *“so when GO didn’t get its way [within the NGRC] we did [the work] anyway, as*

⁶⁸ Warner 2002, p. 155.

⁶⁹ D Brock, ‘Workers of the World Caress: An interview with Gary Kinsman on gay and lesbian organizing in the seventies’. In Left history online, N.D. viewed on March 2011, <http://www.yorku.ca/lefthist/online/brock_kinsman.html>.

⁷⁰ Mike Johnstone.

GO. Sometimes we're working on federal issues for GO, sometimes we're working on federal issues for the NGRC".⁷¹

Within GO NGRC-related work was the purview of GO's PAC. Denis LeBlanc is adamant however, that GO did not simply *house* a NGRC office. The two entities were thoroughly integrated. *"We were the NGRC. We were the [coordinating office], that's different. And it was administered by the PAC, as structured within GO."* Denis LeBlanc adds that while the NGRC was more formal than the NGEC, *"the structure never really changed, not in its core. It was an organization composed of organizations...GO was part of the as the coordinating office, within the Coalition."* Situating NGRC coordination within the PAC was obvious given its political focus. Indeed, Denis LeBlanc recalls *"there were years when we, the PAC, didn't want to deal with the [larger] GO and the whole bureaucracy of GO to deal with. We would just focus on politics and do a lot more work"*. LeBlanc then outlined how the PAC would respond to shifts in the governance needs of GO, using PAC cultural capital to the advantage of the organization to ensure stability. For example, *"the president of GO...pretty well if you look at who was president, it would almost always alternate. One year it was a member of PAC, the next year somebody else, then it was another member of PAC...maybe for two years it was someone from PAC if something really hot was going on"*. As a result GO *"would be stable and we wouldn't have to worry too much about structural things and exploding [political] issues"*.⁷²

⁷¹ Denis LeBlanc.

⁷² Denis LeBlanc.

Details as to the coordination of the NGRC by the PAC are found in its meeting minutes, not in separate NGRC documents. In PAC minutes the NGRC is given no pride-of-place, activities are one among many PAC efforts. Asked if NGRC-related work was just another thing the PAC did, John Duggan agreed. As to why Coalition work did not stand out John Duggan said, *“I don’t know, perhaps because we were in Ottawa...a lot of the people involved with GO, they just accepted that [GO’s PAC would] be lobbying the feds because they were up the street”*.⁷³ It was self-evident GO’s PAC would do the heavy lifting in all political work. There was no need to itemize NGRC-related work as it all answered the same goal. David Garmaise concurred when asked if coordinating the NGRC was just another GO task: *“I would agree with that”*.⁷⁴ So clearly did Coalition work blend into GO’s larger project, that Ian MacLennan said, *“I don’t remember [the NGRC] being a primary task for GO. It was there in the back...David [Garmaise] was working on it by himself”*.⁷⁵

Therefore would it be fair to say the NGRC was in essence GO’s PAC working at a national scale, David Garmaise answered “yes.” Was GO the real engine behind the NGRC? “Yes.” Certainly member groups participated but Garmaise view is informed by a grasp of who did the bulk of NGRC’s work. Unlike other Coalitions, GO’s coordination involved a great deal of material production. The completion of this work fell almost exclusively to Garmaise as NGRC secretary during its first few years. It was he who produced much of its documentation. As to why this fell to Garmaise, he states: *“I was a writer at the Canada Post Office. I was in the Public Relations branch of the*

⁷³ John Duggan.

⁷⁴ David Garmaise.

⁷⁵ Ian MacLennan.

Post Office and writing was my thing. I was in journalism. I worked for the McGill University Daily. I was involved in journalism in college for three years.” Additionally, he “*developed skills in political action, in Parliament and media along the way...all this stuff served me enormously*”.⁷⁶ Simply put, Garmaise had the necessary cultural capital.

John Duggan remembers David Garmaise was “*so good with the law and with briefs, he would write briefs. It must be because his father was a judge and he grew up hearing about the law...he liked the federal legislation, the whole set-up of committee hearings and appearing before committee, the whole procedure*”. Whereas Ron Dayman, another of GO’s strategic actors was “*very powerful...within two years [of arriving in Ottawa] he’d moved to Montréal.*” David Garmaise “*knew more about the issues at the federal level because he was so familiar with the structure and procedures.*”⁷⁷ As far as Paul Françoise Sylvestre was concerned, “*the NGRC and then the CLGRC, to me...in my opinion...I know it’s not politically correct but all that was David Garmaise. I know he was not alone, Tom Warner, and someone in Halifax and Vancouver but to me, David was the core*”.⁷⁸ David Garmaise was so instrumental to the NGRC that he was profiled in the *Body Politic*. The piece’s author, Merv Walker, noted that the “BP depends for its survival on a constant flow of up-to-date information”. And the BP had “come to rely on David Garmaise” for packets of information and documents.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ David Garmaise.

⁷⁷ John Duggan.

⁷⁸ Paul Françoise Sylvestre.

⁷⁹ M Walker, ‘David Garmaise and the NGRC’, *Body Politic*, no. 28, 1976, p.9.

The specific authorship of NGRC parliamentary briefs is often impossible to determine. As John Duggan explains writing them *“was a collective effort to a certain extent. I mean we’d have meetings...David would largely organize the meeting to get the input.”*⁸⁰ Garmaise could not recall which documents he authored but John Duggan and Denis LeBlanc state Ron Dayman and Garmaise wrote GO’s April 1975 immigration brief. And it was Garmaise who wrote the majority of the NGRC’s Dangerous (Sexual) Offender (DSO) brief to parliament’s Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in May 1976.⁸¹

Lobbying for changes to the Immigration Act which barred homosexuals and those exhibiting homosexuality from entry to Canada was the NGRC’s first substantive action. Working towards such changes had been a goal of Canada’s gay liberation movement since its earliest days. Among the demands made of Parliament at the August 1971 We Demand rally, number four called for: *“The Immigration Act be amended so as to omit all references to homosexuals or homosexuality”*.⁸² It was a key issue for the NGRC which found changes to immigration had won the most support from candidates. In 1973, Gays of Ottawa had capitalized on its relationship with Ottawa MPP Michael

⁸⁰ John Duggan.

⁸¹ Denis LeBlanc and John Duggan. See: Gays of Ottawa, 1975b. Brief for Presentation To the Special Joint Committee on Immigration Policy; NGRC 1976. The Dangerous (Sexual) Offender Legislation: A Call for Abolition.

⁸² B Waite & C Denovo, ‘We Demand’, *Body Politic*, no. 1, 1971 p. 4. The piece reproduces the full text of the brief submitted by the August 28th Gay Day Committee which was behind the We Demand rally. On immigration and the We Demand rally, Denis LeBlanc remembers, immigration, *“it started with a petition, coming out of the first demo on the Hill before the founding of GO”*.

Cassidy, having him write to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration about potential changes.⁸³

I was puzzled by the movement's early and sustained emphasis on immigration. Was it perhaps a 'safer issue', less sexual than other movement issues? Charlie Hill said, *"I don't think we sought safe issues...Anything that dealt with homosexuality dealt with sex at that point."* Hill continued [immigration] *"was in the air, there were issues around it. And a fear of deportation by Canadians. The Americans were dealing with immigration at that time too"*.⁸⁴ Here I was reminded that in early seventies Americans immigrating to escape the draft here were commonplace. David Garmaise suggests quick action on immigration by the NGRC was driven by circumstances. Generally actions *"for some of the big ones like immigration work and the Canadian Human Rights Act, we were reactive. Things happened and we thought we've got to address this Bill, something is wrong with it or it's an opportunity...we were reacting to the Bill"*.⁸⁵ Denis LeBlanc does acknowledge immigration *"was an easier issue."* However, Denis LeBlanc added *"it didn't matter...didn't matter what Bill. We wanted a federal victory"*.⁸⁶

The stress on a 'victory' and seeking something to label a victory was an element of 'rights talk'. Smith concluded rights talk was characteristic of the Canadian gay rights movement in the 1970 to 1990s, reflecting how the movement regarded the "law" and legal victories as a "privileged form of politics". As a result, the movement framed

⁸³ Body Politic, 'Candidates polled favour immigration law change', *Body Politic*, no. 15, 1974, p. 8. Responding to Cassidy's letter, Minister Robert Andras was cautious. Suggesting a decision to allow or disallow homosexuals "cannot and will not be taken lightly" (CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: Federal Government - 1971 - 82-017/01 21, Letter: R. Andras, Minister of Manpower and Immigration to M. Cassidy, April 13, 1973.

⁸⁴ Charlie Hill.

⁸⁵ David Garmaise.

⁸⁶ Denis LeBlanc.

efforts to secure legal changes as “‘victories’ or ‘defeats’ [over] given policies”. As the political arm of a gay liberation movement the NGRC considered the assertion of “rights before the courts” as a “route to social change” and its legal victories were taken as “political victories”.⁸⁷ For the NGRC legal victories were few in number. Regardless, in retrospect the sheer pace of change Denis LeBlanc witnessed in the seventies was startling. As he said, “*if you went back in time and if you’d told us in the seventies, ‘look before 20 years [have passed] you’ll be able to marry your partner and you’ll be in the constitution of Canada’...We’d have laughed. It will never happen, not in my lifetime*”.⁸⁸ Changes to Immigration Act in 1977 were a victory for the NGRC, perhaps its only significant one.⁸⁹ The BP noted that with the adoption of a new Act “the National Gay Rights Coalition (NGRC) celebrate its first victory on a federal level”.⁹⁰

In order to achieve the movement’s first win at the federal level, the NGRC had mobilized member groups to make presentations before the immigration committee as it travelled the country hearing submissions. Presentations by gay groups became so ubiquitous that the chair of hearings in Vancouver showed “impatience with the fact that

⁸⁷ Smith 1999, p. 18. Here Smith speaks of the two ‘meaning frames’ the movement utilized from the seventies to the 1990s, distinguishing between two different views of *rights*. On one hand, rights as an element of rights-talk interpreted legal victories to secure them, as political victories. On the other hand, rights could be understood as political resources in themselves.

⁸⁸ Denis LeBlanc. Here LeBlanc made an observation regarding how CLGRO chose what issue to address once its long-sought goal of adding sexual orientation to Ontario’s human rights code was achieved. “*Because we knew that once Ontario went with its Code, all the other provincial codes would go*”. As a next step, “*we picked couples benefits, not marriage, at first. To bring couples into the movement...committed couples into the movement because they had time and money and resources. Those of us in the movement who’d been working up to that point, well, we were tired. We needed fresh blood*”.

⁸⁹ Smith 1999, p. 59; Warner 2002, p. 158; 172.

⁹⁰ Body Politic, ‘New Immigration Act drops gay exclusion’, *Boyd Politic*, no. 36, 1977, p.4. See: D Garmaise, ‘Immigration’, *GO Info*, no. 5, 1977, pg. 2.

yet another organization of gays was scheduled” to present.⁹¹ Presentations by movement groups demonstrated how they could collectively mobilize cultural, social and political capital. In Ottawa Denis LeBlanc and Charlie Hill appeared on behalf of GO marking the organization’s first formal appearance before a parliamentary committee. In a follow-up letter to NGRC members Ron Dayman wrote that while some Committee members strongly believed homosexuals should continue to be barred, “the majority agrees it should be removed”.⁹² The making of such presentations was done to raise an issue’s profile but it was also in keeping with the habitus of legislative change. However, GO as the NGRC’s coordinator resisted member’s calls for a major picket on Parliament Hill to draw further attention. This would stretch Coalition resources. And GO feared that a NGRC picket, coming shortly after a very large September 1976 Labour Day of Protest rally on the Hill, would appear insignificant, diminishing Coalition credibility.⁹³

This first push-back over regarding NGRC member expectations marked a series of efforts by GO to have Coalition members accept that they asked for too much. Gays of Ottawa was not opposed to public actions, pragmatically however, they had be effective. For example, like GO’s protest before Immigration Department offices which the BP concluded had forced Minister Robert Andras respond to the movement. At a subsequent meeting GO learned Andras “personally favours the repeal” of the sections of the Act “entry of gay people into Canada”. Moreover, Andras was recommending cabinet

⁹¹ B Mossop, ‘Gay Community Effects Concerted Effort to Protest Failures of Immigration Paper’, *BP*, no. 19, 1975, p. 5. See: BP, ‘What Green Paper says (or doesn’t say) about gays’, *BP*, no. 17, 1975, p. 5.

⁹² CLGA, GO, File No: 1982-017/04B, File Name: Immigration 1973-1978 82-017/04 15, Letter: R. Dayman, Secretary to Dear Friends, November 13, 1975.

⁹³ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: National Gay Rights Coalition – General 1976-1978 – 82-017/02 10, Letter: D. LeBlanc, GO President to NGRC Members, October 1st, 1976.

remove all mentions of sexuality in the Act.⁹⁴ Gays of Ottawa had been moved to protest after Andras failed to respond to a GO letter on immigration and the case of John Kyper. A U.S. citizen, Kyper had been crossing into Canada on August 26, 1974 when he told officials he was gay. He was deported and barred from entry. The 'Kyper Caper' became the NGRC's immigration 'cause celeb', exposing the precarious position of lesbian and gays.⁹⁵

Writing to the *Globe and Mail* in September 1974, Charlie Hill pointed out the movement had received information from Immigration officials that the Act was under review. Moreover, they indicated the Act's offending sections were not really enforced. Then as Kyper crossed the border, "zap, another homosexual is denied entry for being honest".⁹⁶ Throughout the fall the NGRC mobilized around Kyper who received special permission to enter the country in January 1975.⁹⁷ Kyper was a frequent openly gay visitor. When stopped at the border the BP reported, "Kyper...was carrying copies *Fag Rag* and *Gay Community News*". Subsequently Kyper was only too happy to help "help dramatize the injustice and absurdity of...the Act which discriminate against homosexuals".⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Body Politic, 'Government may end ban on immigrants', *Body Politic*, no. 16, 1974, p. 5. See also: Body Politic, 'Andreas reaffirms supports for immigration law change', *Body Politic*, no. 15, 1974, p. 6.

⁹⁵ Body Politic, 'Liberationist defies immigration act', *Body Politic*, no. 15, 1974, p. 5; Warner 2000, p. 77. Warner 2002, p. 77.

⁹⁶ CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/02A, File Name: Immigration 1974-1977 – 82-017/017/02 06, Letter: C. Hill, President of GO to Editors, *Globe and Mail*, September 10, 1974.

⁹⁷ CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/02A, File Name: Immigration 1974-1977 – 82-017/017/02 06, Press Release: GO: American Gay Granted Special Permission to Enter Canada, January 23, 1975.

⁹⁸ Body Politic, 'Liberationist defies Immigration Act', *Body Politic*, no. 1, 1974, p. 15.

Shortly after GO's protest and meeting with immigration officials, Ron Dayman wrote a commentary, pointing out how after ignoring GO and the movement, only "under the threat of public action, [did] the immigration department *contacted us* (sic) to offer a meeting with senior officials". In his piece in the BP, Dayman critiqued conservative elements in the movement who resisted public actions like GO's picket of Minister Andras' office, action Dayman clearly thought effective.⁹⁹ Subsequently the Kyper case led to another public action. Denis LeBlanc recalls the NGRC successfully orchestrated a high profile border crossing by Kyper, "taunting" officials to react. Gays of Ottawa "*called the media...we had the media at the border*". Even before Kyper crossed, "*we [already] had a Canada AM invitation. We called the RCMP. We told them an illegal immigrant is going to appear on TV in Canada and he's homosexual. Aren't you going to deport him?*" Denis LeBlanc recalls, "*we gave [(officials)] three or four chances to arrest him. The press loved it...they followed Kyper around*".¹⁰⁰

'Publicness' however, could have a down side. And it was possible fallout with the public over a key NGRC demand that threatened to undermine the whole Coalition. The NGRC's desire to abolish age of consent laws had been a long simmering issue. As the NGRC lobbied for revisions to Dangerous Sexual Offender (DSO) legislation the issue came to the fore. As Coalition coordinator, David Garmaise, and GO as an organization resisted implementing this demand. Greg Surgeon recalls Garmaise

⁹⁹ R Dayman, 'Comment: A more militant movement', *Body Politic*, no. 16, 1974, p. 9. Dayman discusses the use of public actions by the gay and aboriginal rights movements. Two weeks prior to GO's October 15 picket an aboriginal People's Caravan had marched on Parliament Hill. Police responded by mobilizing the riot squad. Nonetheless, cabinet-level meetings with aboriginal leaders were quickly arranged. Dayman believe both movements had to face down conservatives elements that resisted public actions.

¹⁰⁰ Denis LeBlanc. Prior to this organized crossing, Kyper had easily crossed the border even after being barred. As to how, Denis points out, "remember, there were no computers at the border".

preferred the pragmatic goal of seeking a uniform age of consent. *“That was a position I and many of the people I work with [at GO] would have supported”*.¹⁰¹ Speaking to the NGRC’s demand for abolition Denis LeBlanc said, *“Yes GO voted for it. As an intellectual demand I could perfectly understand...in a perfect world everybody could have sex with everybody else as long as there was love. But...the world is not made up of hippies. We live in the real world”*.¹⁰²

As gay liberationists GO agreed with the demand; as political pragmatists GO believed it unachievable and damaging to the movement. So uncomfortable was David Garmaise with the issue that he asked the BP’s Herb Spiers to write the age of consent section for the NGRC DSO brief. Garmaise asked Spiers because, *“Both the *Body Politic* and GATE (Vancouver) are much more familiar with this issue than is Gays of Ottawa”*.¹⁰³ A week later Garmaise and Ron Dayman met NDP Justice Critic, MP Stuart Leggatt and the problematic nature of abolition became evident. Minutes from the meeting note Leggatt was sympathetic to NGRC demands but had *“serious reservations with the one demanding abolition of age of consent laws”* which confirmed Garmaise’s misgivings.¹⁰⁴ On May 12, 1976, the NGRC submitted a brief calling for the abolition of DSO legislation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. In its brief NGRC attacked the breadth of the actions covered by the term ‘gross indecency’ which

¹⁰¹ Greg Spurgeon.

¹⁰² Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁰³ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Code – 1976-1977 – 1982-017/04 01, Letter: D. Garmaise, NGRC Secretary to H. Spiers, BP, March 12, 1976.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid: Document: Minutes of meeting with R. Dayman, D. Garmaise and Stuart Leggatt MP, Justice Critic for NDP re: DSO legislation and work on it, March 19, 1976. In June Leggatt wrote Garmaise at the NGRC saying it was unlikely the NDP would introduce the kinds of amendments to the DSO it envisioned (Ibid, Letter: S. Leggatt, MP to D. Garmaise, Secretary, NGRC, June 10, 1976.

“refer to all sexual acts, outside of heterosexual coitus, performed by two persons not married to each other”.¹⁰⁵

May 12, 1976, was the same day the NGRC appeared before the Committee and it received a less than warm welcome.¹⁰⁶ The Committee spent little time on the NGRC brief. Its call for abolishing the DSO was labeled “totally impractical and not likely to find any support”. Primarily the Committee focused on the unrelated issue of the Coalition’s age of consent demand. The emotional reaction by Social Credit member Rene Matte was sufficient to have the Committee chair to apologize for Matte on the Committee’s behalf. Matte had suggested society “must be very sick indeed if the government gave you permission to appear before us”.¹⁰⁷

After the presentation on May 17, 1976, Garmaise wrote to Committee members, trying to refocus their attention on the NGRC’s DSO Brief. As to the age of consent issue, Garmaise stated the NGRC was realistic and understood a “massive public education campaign [was] required” before any real consideration could be given to it.¹⁰⁸ In a separate letter to GATE (Vancouver), Garmaise described the presentation as “as quite a circus.” After the outburst by the Social Credit member who said, “we were

¹⁰⁵ CLGA, GO, File No.: C. Hill 1982-015 / (), File Name: NGRC 3-4, Press Release: NGRC, The Dangerous (Sexual Offender) Legislation: A Call for Abolition, May, 12, 1976.

¹⁰⁶ The day NGRC’s appearance before the Committee, in the House of Commons, Social Credit MP, Armand Caouette, introduced a motion making it illegal to reveal or advertise one’s homosexuality. Caouette believed gays wanted “the right to attack children” based on their demand to “abolition all legislation on age of consent” (*Body Politic*, ‘MP moves to Silence Gays’, *Body Politic*, no. 25, 1976, p. 5). Largely because motions of this type require unanimous consent, Caouette’s motion failed to pass.

¹⁰⁷ D Garmaise, ‘DSO Laws: A call for Abolition’, *Body Politic*, no. 25, 1976, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04A, File Name: Criminal Code – 1976-1977 – 1982-017/04 01, Letter: D. Garmaise, NGRC to All Members of Justice Committee (letters to be personalized), May 17, 1976. This letter angered some NGRC members who felt Garmaise was watering down the Coalition’s age of consent letter. In July Garmaise responded to a letter from GATE (Vancouver’s) R. Rand to explain his post-presentation letter to the Committee was an attempt to salvage things. He conceded he have allowed “my own thoughts on the age of consent issue to affect the phraseology” (*Ibid*: Letter, D. Garmaise, Coordinator, to D. Rand, GATE, July 1, 1976).

degrading Parliament by being there to speak”, Garmaise stated NGRC presenters never recovered. McMaster University’s Professor Greenland presented to the committee immediately after the NGRC. In a letter to MP Stuart Leggatt, Garmaise noted Greenland’s points were very close to the NGRC’s. Yet Greenland’s appearance generated discussion not confrontation. Subsequently, GATE (Vancouver) told Garmaise “It is not surprising that the Committee is more impressed by academics than homosexuals”.¹⁰⁹ Such was the power of the symbolic and cultural capital Greenland mobilized as an academic.

On September 28 1976, David Garmaise announced that after December 1976 he would no longer coordinate the NGRC. Uncomfortable with some Coalition positions he believed strongly in the need to “compromise some of our positions—particularly age of consent—in order to achieve the broadest possible support for our overall program within the gay community and in society generally”. The Coalition would do well to adopt a more moderate program, for example, like those of the NDP, Canadian Labour Congress, National Union of Students and the Women’s Liberation Movement. No longer feeling “personally committed”, Garmaise said it was “not fair I continue as coordinator”.¹¹⁰ In fact, Garmaise continued to work on NGRC files in areas such as immigration, writing to U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and on the case of John Damien.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Ibid: Letter: D. Garmaise, Secretary, to D. Rand, GATE (Vancouver), May 18, 1976; Ibid, Letter, D. Garmaise, Secretary, Coordinating Office, to S. Leggatt, MP, NDP, June 7, 1976; Ibid, letter: D. Rand, GATE (Vancouver) to D. Garmaise, NGRC, June 18, 1976.

¹¹⁰ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/03B, File Name: Correspondence – Coalition Members 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 16, Letter: D. Garmaise, to Dear Groups, September 28, 1976.

¹¹¹ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/04B, File Name: Immigration 1973-1098 – 82-017/04 15, Letter, D. Garmaise, Coordinator to H. Kissinger, Secretary of State, August 2, 1976. Garmaise was protesting the U.S. barring homosexuals from other countries from entry; CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/03B, File Name: Correspondence – Coalition Members 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 16, Letter: D. Garmaise coordinator to G.

While David Garmaise had long held reservations about the issue, his resignation appears to have been precipitated by age of consent debates that took place at the 4th NGRC conference earlier in September 1976. Reporting on the conference, Ken Popert reported on Garmaise's summary of the NGRC's first year. Effective work had been done on human rights but most Coalition goals went unmet because of a lack of funds, an overly ambitious program and a lack of communication and cooperation from member groups. In conclusion Garmaise stated that the NGRC "we are much better at developing strategy than we are at carrying it out". At the conference there was an attempt to delegate some Coalition work to lighten the load on GO but this does not appear to have amounted to much.¹¹² Early in January 1977, GO's Mike Johnstone explained in a letter that the Coalition survived without any funding (economic capital). "Since most of the members of GO are employed in the civil service, the Coalition had, had access to, and has used, the vast printing and photocopying resources of the federal government".¹¹³

However, Popert's account of the NGRC September conference did not mention the conference's protracted debate over age of consent, a debate which Smith described as having set "radical gay liberationists, who privileged the goal of sexual liberation and freedom", against those fearing age of consent demands "would alienate potential

Kinsman, RMG, October 15, 1976. Here Garmaise was replied to Kinsman as the coordinator of 'Operation 6,000 Dollars,' an effort to raise money for John Damien's legal fight over his dismissal by the Ontario Racing Commission for being gay. As coordinator, Garmaise had established dollar quotas for each member group. Kinsman wrote to state the RMG was struggling to meet its quota. See: D Garmaise, 'NGRC to \$6,000 for Damien', *Body Politic*, no. 28, 1976, p. 3; 'NGRC raises over \$6,000 for Damien', *Body Politic*, no. 30, 1977, p. 5.

¹¹² K Popert, 'Lack of funds hamper national coalition', *Body Politic*, no. 28, 1976, p. 3. Recalling the conference John Duggan said, "there were people at the conference who never did anything and had no intention of doing anything but they wanted to sway the votes".

¹¹³ These "freebies" were critical for GO's success generally (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/03B, File Name: Correspondence – Non-Coalition Members 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 18, Letter: M. Johnstone, Coordinator, to B. Crimp, Gay Publishing Collective, January 5, 1977).

supporters”.¹¹⁴ While ultimately the Coalition opted for an “equality-seeking agenda and not [a] liberationist” agenda, the age of consent issue was “fuel for bitter dissent”.¹¹⁵ At the conference John Duggan recalled some pushed for a “*pragmatic approach if you want to abolish age of consent they’re not going to listen to anything else...it ‘aint gonna happen*”. However, the BP’s “*JeraldMouldenhauer and others...[were] saying let’s take on the world, it needs changing*” and pushed hard for abolishing age of consent. Going into the meeting it appeared that GO had lobbied successfully for the demand to be toned down, perhaps even in favour of a uniform age of consent. However, at the meeting delegates’ positions changed. John Duggan agreed this happened. “*Yes, because of the rallying kind of thing. That idealistic, liberating kind of thing. There was some revolutionary talk,*” that people got caught up in.¹¹⁶

Garmaise’s resignation meant the Coalition would lose its greatest asset. Yet following his resignation in December, Garmaise largely continued in the coordinator role because no other member group stepped-up. His heart no longer in it, he takes to signing Coalition letters not as its secretary but as its ‘coordinating office’. That Garmaise continued doing the work may explain why he does not recall resigning. Reminded of his quite forceful comments and resignation letters he said, “*All I remember, [age of consent] was a contentious issue in 75 when the platform was adopted. But I don’t remember resigning*”. I suggested he was strategically pragmatic, believing in abolishing age of consent laws as a long-term goal but impossible at the time

¹¹⁴ Smith 1999, p. 60-1. To a degree GO precipitated this debate, introducing a conference motion that the NGRDC seek instead, a uniform age of consent.

¹¹⁵ Warner 2002, p. 155.

¹¹⁶ John Duggan. It was members from groups in Vancouver and Toronto who pushed most strongly for abolition.

and he agree “*Yes, that makes sense, I would be like that*”.¹¹⁷ Recalling Garmaise’s resignation Denis LeBlanc said, “[*David*] was of such high moral fiber, he resigned on a point of principle”. As to the NGRC’s work Denis LeBlanc said, “*GO continued [to coordinate it]. I took over the job and John Duggan took it over and Mike Johnstone for a while.*”¹¹⁸

Having resigned, Gays of Ottawa continued in its coordinating role with the same pragmatism that characterized their response to approach to the age of consent while simultaneously lowering member expectations.¹¹⁹ Immediately after Garmaise announced his resignation, Denis LeBlanc wrote NGRC members to point out no group had come forward to take over, so “[GO] cannot promise to do everything that was decided at the national conference”. This was partly due to a lack of funds and “a lack of commitment to some of the strategies which were adopted in Toronto” in September 1976. In Toronto support for abolishing age of consent laws had been reiterated.¹²⁰ Denis LeBlanc recalls the real issue was GO’s opposition to age of consent demands. As a result, “[GO, as the coordinating office] didn’t include the list of demands with all our letters... [We] pretty well kept it an internal debate”. When GO dealt with Parliament

¹¹⁷ David Garmaise.

¹¹⁸ Denis LeBlanc.

¹¹⁹ In July 1977 Garmaise urged member groups to set up committees to deal with the work. “Gays of Ottawa would like to find a group or a collective of groups, who might be interested...We at GO really have taken on too much already”. This produced little concrete results (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/03B, File Name: Correspondence – Non-Coalition Members 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 18, Letter: D. Garmaise, Coordinating Office to H. Hamburg, Toronto Area Gays, July N/D 1977.

¹²⁰ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: National Gay Rights Coalition – General 1976-1978 – 82-017/02 10, Letter: D. LeBlanc GO President to NGRC Members, October 1, 1976.

Hill *“people would bring it up. As far as we were concerned it became a liability...we managed to work around that”*.¹²¹

In a January 1977 letter, Mike Johnstone writes that, “We have accordingly, tended to become a little pragmatic in certain areas”, namely age of consent because it tends to “incite a rabid reaction whenever our program is presented”. As a result the NGRC office has “turned our focus to particular issues”.¹²² In July 1977, David Garmaise wrote to Winnipeg’s GFE saying “we’re crazy in my opinion to demand total abolition. Gays of Ottawa will not act on this demand”. He acknowledged it would be better if the coordinating office was 100% supportive but, “we figure we can do a better job at 80% or 90% support than any other group could”.¹²³

Soon other voices would join those who disagreed with the Coalition’s age of consent demand. At the Coalition’s 5th conference held in Saskatoon in 1977, a now less than enthusiastic GO was tasked with a daunting set of tasks such as coordinating a national petition drive to collect 50,000 signatures.¹²⁴ The petition was part of a lobbying effort towards adding sexual orientation protections to the federal Canadian Human

¹²¹ Denis LeBlanc.

¹²² CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/03B, File Name: Correspondence – Non-Coalition Members 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 18, Letter: M. Johnstone, Coordinator, to B. Crimp, Gay Publishing Collective, January 5, 1977.

¹²³ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/03B, File Name: Correspondence –Coalition Members 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 16, Letter: D. Garmaise, Coordinating Office to C. Vogel, Gays for Equality (Winnipeg), July 24, 1977.

¹²⁴ CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/01B, File Name: General – 1973-1978 – 82-017/017/01 02, Notes: GO Annual Conference – Political Action Workshop, November 19, 1977. Reporting on NGRC expectations at a PAC workshop held during a GO AGM, the PAC noted it had always been staffed by a single member but more help is needed. However, all GO committees faced difficulty securing participation. This was unfortunate as the PAC believed, “we have come very close to a major breakthrough, [yet] the work is being ignored”.

Rights Act.¹²⁵ (Subsequently all these petitions would be lost in a February 1979 fire.) Reporting on the conference John Duggan noted “one of its more positive aspects “was that lesbians had participated in greater numbers than ever before.¹²⁶ However, lesbian delegates seized upon the issue of age of consent. In their view, current age of consent laws “provided some protection against the sexual exploitation of young women”.¹²⁷ For lesbians the emphasis on abolishing age of consent was emblematic of a Coalition and movement that was too male-oriented. It was clear gay men had never considered how abolishing age of consent might affect women. At the conference lesbians used the issue as part of a general critique of the NGRC and the movement. Lesbian delegates demanded more input, autonomy and a greater role.

Smith and Warner discuss how the conference demonstrated a male-dominated, sexual liberation movement was ill prepared to deal with the concerns of lesbians. Issues that were relevant to lesbians differed from those of gay men; for example, child custody and sexual violence were important to lesbians and one could assume, to gay men.¹²⁸ To address the desire for greater input the conference fought over, but passed, a resolution allowing lesbians 50% control in NGRC votes.¹²⁹ Although a subsequent 1978 attempt to repeal this failed, it acted to further convince lesbians that gay men were not serious. That ultimately the NGRC failed to find a method to implement the 50% voting regime made matters worse.¹³⁰ In August 1978, GO’s Coalition coordinators wrote NGRC members

¹²⁵ *GO Info*, ‘50,000 Signatures’, *GO Info*, no. 6, 1977, p. 2; *Body Politic*, ‘NGRC launches petition 50,000’, *Body Politic*, no. 38, 1977, p. 21.

¹²⁶ J Duggan, ‘5th Conference’, *GO Info*, no. 7, 1977, p. 3

¹²⁷ K Popert, ‘Lesbian group supports age of consent law’, *Body Politic*, no. 23, 1976, p. 1.

¹²⁸ Smith 1999, p.61-4, Warner 2002, p. 156-57. See: *Body Politic*, ‘High spirits & hard work’, *Body Politic*, no. 26, 1977, p. 6.

¹²⁹ M MacDonald, ‘Saskatoon: the lesbian workshops’, *Body Politic*, no. 37, 1977, p. 8.

¹³⁰ Smith, p. 63.

expressing confusion about it. Delegates at a 1978 Halifax meeting expressed supported for the “principle of 50% lesbian control itself” but provided no method to see it realized.¹³¹

I mentioned to Marie Robertson that at NGRC conferences in 1976, GO, and in 1978, GO along with Lesbians of Ottawa Now, sponsored anti-sexism motions which delegates defeated. She said, *“I think that had a lot to do with the guys in Toronto.”* Demands for greater lesbian input and also autonomy that emerged in 1976 had been fueled by lesbians *“wanting the sexism to be dealt with but it wasn’t and so we figured we needed our own banner”* rather than *“be invisible in the men’s movement”*. Robertson also highlighted the damaging impact Gerald Hannon’s 1977 BP article, *Men Loving Boys Loving Men* had had on lesbians in the movement. *“I remember sitting at one of the conferences and...disgusting...you know that issue of the Body Politic that came out with Men Loving Boys... very controversial. And [the movement] did not get the support from women on that, absolutely not”*.¹³² Reaction within the movement to Hannon’s article on men who had sex with younger boys and men was fiercely divisive. It was exacerbated by its publication coming just months after the horrific sexual assault and murder of 12 year old Emanuel Jacques in Toronto. Many lesbians believed Hannon’s views illustrated exactly the kind of thinking that had led them to oppose NGEC and NGRC demands that age of consent laws be abolished. For some it

¹³¹ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: National Gay Rights Coalition – General 1976-1978 – 82-017/02 10, Letter: J. Duggan and M. Johnstone, GO/Coordinating Office to All Member Groups, August 4, 1978.

¹³² Marie Robertson. In 1978, Denis LeBlanc wrote to BC’s Feminist Lesbian Action Group (FLAG) addressing their concerns about the age of consent issue. Eager for more lesbian participation in the NGRC he downplays how much work is done on the demand because FLAG believes it will “block passage of other demands” (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/03B, File Name: Correspondence – Non-Coalition Members 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 18, Letter: D. LeBlanc, Coordinating Office, to FLAG, August 25, 1978.

reinforced their belief that gay men's issues were simply too focused on sexual liberation, perhaps at any cost. Other lesbians such as Chris Bearchell took a broader view. As she pointed out to Miriam Smith, in the seventies and eighties there was only one movement that worked towards meeting the needs of lesbians and gays. And "much of the time it was numerically dominated by gay men". However, Bearchell did not "think it was ever ideologically dominated by an anti-female agenda".¹³³ Kinsman (1996) and Brock (1998) each discuss these events surrounding Hannon's article, situating them in the context of an emerging conservative backlash against Toronto's expanding gay community and gains by the larger movement. Here they consider the emergence of a powerful evangelical, anti-gay, conservative movement within in North America.¹³⁴

The 1976, NGRC conference was something of a watershed for both lesbians and GO. There seemed no way to please everyone and indeed, no way GO could ever do all that was expected. As John Duggan recalls, "*you'd put together briefs, people would go, take time off work at their expense, to appear before Parliament...and as nerve wracking as that is...all this and you go to annual conferences and get trashed*".¹³⁵ After 1976 and particularly after 1977, based on the archival record, GO's NGRC-related out-put drops off. The work to add sexual orientation added to the Canadian Human Rights statute marked its last real effort.¹³⁶ In June 1978, GO presented a position paper on the role of

¹³³ Smith 1999, p. 35. See also: C Bearchell, 'I was fifteen, she was forty-three...', *Body Politic*, no. 43, 1978, p. 14; J Rule, 'Teaching Sexuality', *Body Politic*, no. 53, 1979, p. 29.

¹³⁴ Kinsman, 1987; D Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble: Prostitution as a Social Problem*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1998. For a sustained consideration of how Toronto politicians, media, and police utilized the Jacques murder as a means of building public support for a long-delayed clean-up of Yonge Street body-rub parlours and sex businesses See: Yvonne Ng's 1981 criminology thesis, 'Ideology, Media, Moral Panics: An analysis of the Jaques Murder. Toronto: York University.

¹³⁵ John Duggan.

¹³⁶ *Body Politic*, 'NGRC launches petition 50,000', *Body Politic*, no. 38, 1977, p. 21. A 'Canadian Bill of Rights' was subsequently realized through the subsequent Canadian Human Rights ACT, passed by

the NGRC coordinating office. Its tone reveals GO was frustrated. As an organization which had volunteered for the job, it was trying to do its best. While an organization with a small number of people working on politics, as the NGRC coordinator, GO had “provided stability and continuity rarely seen in any gay group in the country”. Implementing Coalition initiatives had been hampered by its members not responding to requests for input. Pulling the coordinating office out of Ottawa was clearly impractical but GO expresses “no objections to other groups taking over”. In the longer term, GO believed the NGRC must set up an office separate from GO.¹³⁷

An editorial in the BP written before the 1976 conference suggested the NGRC and the movement were “ripe for disunity”. This was due in part because delegates faced “troublesome questions,” that had been “generated or not handled, by delegates to the conference in Saskatoon last year” in 1977. *Body Politic* editors listed the issues that delegates at the NGRC’s 1978 Halifax conference had to deal with. The list reveals how out of touch the BP was with what ailed the Coalition. While noting “lesbians are fired from armed forces [and] are losing their children”, editors seem unaware of the depth of growing rift between lesbians and gay men. Perhaps as a nod to GO’s unhappiness or the BP’s unhappiness with GO, editors asked: “Should the National Gay Rights Coalition be decentralized—more of the work, and decision making, spread around the country?”¹³⁸ After the Halifax conference John Duggan wrote to Chris Vogel, GFE Winnipeg, thanking them for their support of GO’s position paper on the NGRC. Duggan is tired of

Parliament in 1977, *without* including sexual orientation protections (D Garmaise, ‘No protections for gays in Human rights act’, *Body Politic*, no. 29, 1977, p. 7).

¹³⁷ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/02B, File Name: National Gay Rights Coalition – Steering Committee 1977 – 82-017/02 11, Document: Gays of Ottawa, Political Action Committee ‘Position Paper on the National Coordinating Office,’ June 1978.

¹³⁸ *Body Politic*, ‘Conference ’78: making it strong’, *Body Politic*, no. 44, 1978, p. 2.

criticisms “which always come to us through the grapevine rather than directly”. He noted conference delegates were clearly confused about the NGRC’s office and its resources. The Coalition office was a “main resource not a head office”. This was a reference to those who criticized the office for failing to organize protests on the prairies in response to anti-gay crusader Anita Bryant. This was surely better done by local people while the NGRC provided input on strategy, message, etc.

Organizing the 1979 conference of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition (NGRC was renamed in 1978) in Ottawa was David Garmaise’s last act on its behalf. David Garmaise recalled, “*I organized the 1979 conference, I put a lot of work into that and that’s when I really burnt out. I left GO shortly after that. I don’t remember if the Coalition was dead by then or died after I left or because I left*”.¹³⁹ Ultimately, what would be CLGRC’s last conference was ‘Celebration ’79’ a conference, celebrating the movement’s 10 year anniversary.’ At the conference Denis LeBlanc told delegates GO would no longer engage in any coordination efforts. Gays of Ottawa had “been focused on national issues for many years now” and has decided “now it’s time to focus on our community”. Remembering this address Denis LeBlanc stated that GO’s “*intellectual capital had been invested in the NGRC to a great degree...we were the group that spearheaded ideas, we were the idea factory but now we had to work on our community for a while*”.¹⁴⁰

Events in Ottawa pushed GO to the breaking point. “*First of all we had a fire that destroyed our community center, so we had a lot of work to do locally. And [the*

¹³⁹ David Garmaise.

¹⁴⁰ GO Info, ‘Celebration ’79’, GO Info, June, 1979, p. 3. Denis LeBlanc.

Coalition] expected us to carry on regardless". Second, the Coalition was increasingly exhibiting strains (changes in the conditions of the political field) that the entire country was experiencing such as, *"the rise of separatism, Québec nationalism, and Western alienation."* Coalition members were expressing *"they felt they were being dominated by Ottawa"*. Denis LeBlanc found this maddening: *"I mean we weren't government, we were part of the fabric of community...we just gave up"*.¹⁴¹ John Duggan concurs. *"We had the fire and then the theme of the conference was celebration. A lot of things were going on. Part of the feedback we got from other groups was that what [GO] was doing really wasn't important to them"*.¹⁴² Overall the NGRC work was *"always kind of thankless"*. Here Duggan points out that the movement in Canada *"was not the kind of thing that got large numbers of people involved so when they left [as GO was doing] there was nobody to take it on."*¹⁴³ Not until March 1980 did GO's board formally resign from CLGRC duties. It did so owing to the *"many [competing] expectations of the gay movement as to what the Coalition is"* in addition to an administrative load that was proving too much.¹⁴⁴

In considering the CLGRC collapse, Warner noted it faced *"problems that were intractable"*. Smith found the CLGRC's demise was symptomatic of the *"many of the problems faced by social movements attempting organize and mobilize across the diversity of Canada"*.¹⁴⁵ Given Canada's size, Coalition members had to travel great distances to attend meetings and regional concerns took a toll. It lacked a formal or

¹⁴¹ Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁴² Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁴³ John Duggan.

¹⁴⁴ D LeBlanc, 'New Directions', *GO Info*, no 1, 1980, p. 14.

¹⁴⁵ Warner 2002, p. 155; Smith 1999, p. 59.

stable resource base. It faced linguistic matters and the special desires of Québec. And it wrestled with the differing perspective and goals of lesbians; all of which acted to undermine it. However, what had gone unacknowledged was the role Gays of Ottawa played in keeping the Coalition going for so long in spite of all this. Had GO walked away from the Coalition at any time I am convinced that it would have collapsed soon after, perhaps immediately. Only Gays of Ottawa possessed the necessary capital, field-position, geographic and willingness to proceed.

Divesting itself of CLGRC duties freed GO to focus on matters closer to home. *GO Info* reported that GO's Political Action Collective had decided although national work was important it was "important to get more active at the local level".¹⁴⁶ After the fire, GO faced an uphill battle that the PAC recognized. Yet resources remained limited. John Duggan points out, "*I was committed to making GO a community organization...and Denis was still focused provincially...there was nobody else.*" This reliance on too few people with too much to do was not unique to GO. "*Tom Warner was seen as being a key person at GATE (Toronto) and then when he went to CLGRO...who was left [at GATE] to take it up? Where's the new blood?*"¹⁴⁷ For Denis LeBlanc the ending of the Coalition was greatly liberating. "*I'm not going to be modest and say we weren't happy. We were movers and shakers in changing the social fabric. We had a big job ahead of us...we had to work on our community for a while. Then we started Pink Triangle Services around that time. We founded a new community center on*

¹⁴⁶ LeBlanc, no. 1, 1980, p. 14. Moves to change the name of PA Committee to Political Action Collective began early in 1979 (Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 10, June 19, 1979).

¹⁴⁷ John Duggan.

Lisgar Street. We founded Abiwin Housing Co-op".¹⁴⁸ Although GO diminished its role on the federal scene, it continued to make contributions for some years. For example, in September 1985 Barb MacIntosh and Blair Johnston made a presentation to the Subcommittee on Equality Rights of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Issues. The committee had been established in March to consider constitutional equality issues raised by implementation of section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.¹⁴⁹

Coalition for Gays Rights in Ontario

Gays of Ottawa was first informed that an Ontario, provincial lesbian and gay rights coalition might be formed through a letter sent by GO's Ron Dayman (now living in Toronto) to Denis LeBlanc in March 1974. In it Dayman noted that rights campaigning had been ongoing in Ontario for years, now "time had come to formalize the coalition". The rationale for what would become the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO) was a belief that a greater political impact was possible if "we could act in the name of gays across Ontario" ergo a coalition was necessary. Dayman stated, "since Gays of / d'Ottawa is one of the more politically active groups in the province, I feel that you people could play a particularly active role as you have done in the NGRC".¹⁵⁰ Here Dayman acknowledges GO's accumulated capital and position within the lesbian and gay movement field, prefiguring the vital role GO would play in CGRO. Recalling GO's work with CGRO, David Garmaise noted GO was "*very active in the sense that...we*

¹⁴⁸ Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁴⁹ B MacIntosh, 'GO and Integrity Brief Equality Committee', *GO Info*, no. 80, 1985, p. 3. See also: J Tataryn, 'Charter section may aid gay rights', *Body Politic*, no. 114, 1985, p. 9.

¹⁵⁰ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01, File Name: CGRO – General 1975 – 1978 – 82-017/01 13, Letter: R Dayman to D. LeBlanc, 12 March 1974. Although in Toronto Dayman appears to have continued to act as a GO member for some time.

were always there. We went to all the provincial meetings...we took our role seriously”.¹⁵¹

Subsequently, at the Waterloo Regional Gay Liberation Conference held in mid-May 1974, a consensus was reached over the need for CGRO, an organization capable of presenting a united front to the provincial government.¹⁵² At this same meeting Gays of Ottawa presented its activity report. Its Gayline was staffed six days a week; GO was meeting various Ottawa social service agencies; and its programming at local high schools and universities had been “well received for the most part”. The report emphasized that “as a community oriented group GO is constantly working to build contacts with both gays and straights in the Ottawa area”.¹⁵³

While GO was enthused about CGRO’s potential, concrete steps towards establishing it would take time. In June 1974, GO endorsed its formation but cautioned that it would be busy with NGEC-related work until after the federal election. In August GATE (Toronto) wrote saying that with the exception of GO, there had been little response from groups regarding the idea of CGRO. Because many groups reduced activities in the summer, GATE suspected “we won’t get CGRO really off the ground until sometime in that fall”. Yet concerned by an apparent lack of interest from Ontario

¹⁵¹ David Garmaise. For Garmaise, GO was an important player in CGRO but he added, “*I don’t remember us spearheading things*”. This may well be the case. It could also be that due to his keen focus on the NGRC Garmaise was not that aware of CGRO-related work done in the Coalition’s early years.

¹⁵² CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01 A, File Name: CGRO – General 1976-82-017/01 12, Document: Working Paper for Provincial Affairs Workshop: Presented by CGRO, 1975 (probably after February). This 1975 document contains information on the May 1974 meeting in Waterloo. The meetings theme was to foster interaction between gay liberation and that era’s human growth movement (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05B, File Name: Gay Liberation and Human Growth, Waterloo 82-017/05 39). It seems likely that the ‘human growth movement’ is a reference to an offshoot of the sixties’ era human potential movement.

¹⁵³ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05B, File Name: National Gay Conference, Winnipeg 1974 82-017/05 38, Documents: Gays of/d’Ottawa (report to Waterloo Conference), 1 September, 1974.

groups, records suggest GO was asked to write potential member groups to champion the need for such an organization.¹⁵⁴

A slow start notwithstanding, in January 1975, CGRO held its founding conference. In an opening address to delegates, GO's Ron Dayman emphasized that because Ontario was home to numerous groups a coordinated effort was "essential if we are ever to become an effective movement".¹⁵⁵ The timing of CGRO's birth was both inauspicious and timely. As Warner noted, at the time Ontario was ruled by a "belligerently anti-gay Progressive Conservative government". Quickly, however, the necessity for a CGRO-type organization became self-evident. Horse racing steward and trainer John Damien had been fired specifically for being homosexual. Damien's firing would become the era's most high profile incidence of anti-gay discrimination and a tool for community mobilization within for CGRO and especially the NGRC. As Miriam Smith describes it, the case "was the *cause célèbre* of gay political community in the mid to late seventies...from the beginning, gay liberation activists saw the potential of the case to mobilize its own constituency".¹⁵⁶ Two other timely developments; the Ontario Human Rights Commission's establishing of a committee to review the code; and a minority Progressive Conservative provincial government being elected.¹⁵⁷ With the Commission reviewing the Code, CGRO would have a forum at which to make

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, Letter: R. Dayman GO Political Action Committee to All Ontario Groups, 16, December 1974.

¹⁵⁵ *BP*, News: Ontario gay rights coalition formed, *Body Politic*, no. 17, 1975, p. 6. Dayman provided a historical overview of the issue of gay rights in Ontario. See also: *GO Info* Gay Coalitions Form, *GO Info*, no. 2, 1975, p. 6. The NGRC was the other coalition to which *GO Info* referred.

¹⁵⁶ Smith 1999, p. 50. For a further discussion of the Damien case see the NGRC section in this chapter.

¹⁵⁷ Warner 2002, pp.149-50.

submissions and publicize its demands. And the provincial government's clear hostility to lesbian and gays provided CGRO members with a common enemy.

For CGRO seeing Ontario's human rights code amended was the primary goal although it was also strongly interested in issues of education, adoption and custody rights. Such rights were a chief concern to lesbians for whom leaving a heterosexual marriage because of their orientation, carried the real risk of losing custody their children. However, for CGRO, rights protection was an "immediate and personal relevance to the vast majority of gays" in that many remained closeted due to "the fear of job discrimination". The Coalition was also pragmatic, recognizing that changes in public attitudes could not be legislated. It understood the Ontario's Human Rights Commission was weak in terms of its enforcement capacity. Yet success in amending the Code would compel the "government to recognize that we are entitled to the same rights...theoretically accorded other minorities".¹⁵⁸

At its founding conference, CGRO held its first steering committee meeting. Here GO, a committee member from the outset, presented a position paper. Gays of Ottawa's proposals related to strategy, Coalition demands and how GATE (Toronto) would act as the coordinating body were adopted. These proposals were then combined with elements of GATE's own proposal, forming CGRO's primary position paper. With its founding, the Coalition committed to seeking public support and public education; hosting public pickets; seeking support from unions, citizen groups, etc.; documenting discrimination; meeting MPPs; and coordinating actions during provincial elections.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Smith 1999, pp.50-1.

¹⁵⁹ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01, File Name: CGRO – General 1975 – 1978 – 82-017/01 14, Document: 1st Meeting minutes CGRO Steering Cmte, Toronto, Jan 18 1975; *Ibid*, Document: Position Paper on the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO) – Jan 18 1975.

The Coalition's emphasis on public actions and garnering public support aligned it with other lesbian and gay liberation groups.¹⁶⁰ As to the need to document discrimination, GO's Blair Johnston explained why this was so necessary. "*One of the problems we recognized was its good to be angry and to say this and that...but you have no influence in society just by screaming and marching. You have to take the approach that any bureaucrat takes. Which is show me the paper, show me what I have to do and I'll do it*". However, for too long, "*there was nothing tangible you could point to and say, 'well yes we are discriminated against, and here's how'. When you reach a pivot point you got to have the society educated to change it. So that was this (documents) was all about*".¹⁶¹ In essence, Johnston described a bureaucratic habitus ('show me the paper') and a form of cultural capital highly valued in bureaucratic, governmental fields, namely tangible documentation.

Future GO member Marie Robertson also attended CGRO's founding meeting. While Ron Dayman emphasized the need to mobilize Ontario's many lesbian and gay groups, Robertson added a caveat. In that era, she said "*there were not very many players in the province... [they're] weren't too many in the country*". Conferences would be attended by people from all over but "*it was usually Toronto people... [and] people all knew other. So Chris Bearchell, myself, Denis [LeBlanc], Charlie Hill, Ken Popert...we were such a small group of people trying to change things*".¹⁶² At the CGRO meeting Robertson acted as reporter for a quickly formed women's caucus. She relayed that lesbian delegates were pleased by an evident "change in the consciousness of men involved in the gay movement". However, attempts by a "male-dominated

¹⁶⁰ Smith 1999, p. 51.

¹⁶¹ Blair Johnston.

¹⁶² Marie Robertson.

movement” to communicate with “political lesbians” via women’s centres had proven ineffective because “information was sometimes not transmitted to gay women as intended”. To address this Robertson and friend Candice Graham offered to write all Ontario groups. In their subsequent letter they acknowledged how the movement’s male orientation had made it a “breeding ground for male chauvinism”. However, in light of the “level of consciousness of men” they witnessed at the CGRO meeting, they urged all groups to consider Coalition membership. As a demonstration of their commitment to lesbians and gays working together, Robertson and Graham established a lesbian collective in Kitchener/Waterloo to “participate in CGRO”.¹⁶³

The question of whether non-gay but supportive groups could participate in CGRO was discussed at the founding meeting.¹⁶⁴ Gays of Ottawa’s role in this is not clear but owing to its cultural capital and past positions we can conclude GO believed the more groups that participated, the broader the movement’s support. For example, in 1974, Charlie Hill had exchanged a number of letters with Winnipeg’s Gays for Equality. Having agreed to host a national conference in September, GFE’s Bob Wallace informed Hill that the GFE believed social groups should not be afforded the same conference voting rights as politically-oriented groups. Wallace feared “some social clubs such as that in Winnipeg, may use obstructionist tactics if allowed to send voting delegations”, namely to impeded public political actions. Hoping to host a politically focused conference, the GFE proposed that only groups with political objectives be accredited. Charlie Hill responded that all groups should be accredited as “no group has the right to define participation or policies of another”. Gays for Equality relented but the exchange

¹⁶³ BP, News: Ontario gay rights coalition formed, *Body Politic*, no. 17, 1975, p. 6

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* The issue arose over the participation in CGRO of the Revolutionary Marxist Group and the League for Socialist Action.

illustrates the kind of divergent views a coalition like CGRO would have to manage. It had to acknowledge that each member group was embedded in a local field, each having unique conditions. For example, GFE's accreditation position reflected conditions in Western Canada wherein most gay groups had a social focus. Thus they were not interested in the political dynamics of the movement.¹⁶⁵

At the founding meeting, Gays of Ottawa further raised its profile within CGRO by its passionate defense (along with GATE (Toronto)) of the utility of public actions. With its substantial cultural capital and field experience, GO argued that without a "public approach...there will continue to be little public understanding of the need for legislated gay rights". Thus a "majority of gays would remain ignorant of the existence of the gay movement". Tensions over this public strategy had surfaced due to the concerns of less politically-focused member groups. While GO simultaneously worked in political and social fields, some CGRO members provided social opportunities and services and resisted engaging in public political actions. Often located in smaller centres they believed "tactics which are feasible in a large city like Toronto are not necessarily workable". According to the BP, delegates tried to assuage these fears, stressing not every CGRO group need be "engaged in every kind of activity". However, GO and GATE "argued again and again that public protest is the key to gay civil rights". In the

¹⁶⁵ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/05B, File Name: National Gay Conference, Winnipeg, 1974 82-017/05 38, Letter: Bob Wallace, GFE Winnipeg to GO, June 1974; *Ibid*, Letter: Charlie Hill, GO to Bob Wallace, GFE, 30 July, 1974; *Ibid*, Letter: Bob Wallace, GFE to GO 8 August, 1974. Overall GFE was keen to host the meeting as it gave Western groups would not have to travel as far. Wallace also believed that in Winnipeg the "possibilities for obtaining extensive and positive coverage, are, perhaps greater there than elsewhere in Canada" which would benefit the movement. Why this was so Wallace does not say (*Ibid*, Letter: Bob Wallace, GFE to Charlie Hill, GO, 15 February, 1974).

end CGRO's public stance was provisionally accepted and the steering committee was to find a permanent solution.¹⁶⁶

The debate revealed the differing visions of the path-to-change CGRO had to accommodate. As Miriam Smith notes, "the main political impetus for [CGRO's] establishment came from the politically active urban gay rights groups, GATE (Toronto) and Gays of Ottawa, both of which had a strong gay liberation and civil rights orientation" one predicated on public action.¹⁶⁷ A coalition—CGRO had to consider both its urban roots and its need for province-wide support. For example, in 1980, CGRO would hire Robin Hardy to coordinate a rural outreach program to address a lack of activity outside of urban centres. As Robin Hardy put it "politics is getting people off their asses". Two years later in a report on organizing in smaller centres, the BP acknowledged that the "difficulties of organizing community and political action with no visible gay subculture or ghetto are enormous". When in 1981, CGRO implemented a strategy of employing regional coordinators who would heighten its presence outside Toronto, GO immediately offered to do so in eastern Ontario.¹⁶⁸

From the outset it is clear that GO was a key CGRO member. Take for example, CGRO's request that GO prepare the Coalition's education pamphlet, share its education expertise (capital) with the full membership, and GO's hosting of CGRO's third annual conference in 1977, which focused on education.¹⁶⁹ Between 1975 and 1985 owing to its

¹⁶⁶ BP, News: Ontario gay rights coalition formed, *Body Politic*, no. 17, 1975, p. 6.

¹⁶⁷ Smith 1999, p.50

¹⁶⁸ P Fotheringham Rural Outreach: 'What? Gay people here?' *Body Politic*, no. 82, 1982, p.11.

¹⁶⁹ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01, File Name: CGRO – General 1975 – 1978 – 82-017/01 14, Document: Meeting Minutes, 9th CGRO Steering Committee meeting, Ottawa, 31 July, 1976. At a steering committee meeting in February 1977, Denis LeBlanc noted that GATE (Toronto's) proposal for a Gays and Education pamphlet on how public schools dealt with homosexuality, contained all of GO's main education approaches. Thus Denis urged CGRO to use GO's education pamphlet as a base document

substantial capital and position in the lesbian and gay movement field, GO took on CGRO tasks, and became a constant presence at meetings. The constancy of GO's participation was raised by Ron Dayman during a presentation made at the second annual CGRO Conference in February 1976. Here Dayman assessed the Coalition's first year. Critical of those members who voted to add to CGRO's work but failed to 'share the load' Dayman said, "it is unjust that Gays of Ottawa must travel half-way across the province, making every meeting, whereas groups in the immediate vicinity do not...mere attendance is not enough".¹⁷⁰

At CGRO meetings, Denis LeBlanc was GO's primary representative because "*I was provincial [affairs], my specialty...and John [Duggan] was local*". Often CGRO meetings were in or near Toronto and Denis LeBlanc recalls, "*I didn't mind going to Toronto a lot....the odd time I got the trip paid for because I had to go to NDP things. We'd arrange meetings so you could piggy back on a CGRO meeting*".¹⁷¹ Greg Spurgeon too recalls attending CGRO meetings. "*Well, my involvement was mostly the meetings and conferences which were very mature...given that this was all fairly new to people. We were all fairly young...it was a kind of self-proclaimed United Nations. Some people felt some strategies were absolutely wrong and debates could get quite heated. In the process...there was a whole level of conscious; people were getting smarter and more*

(CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01, File Name: CGRO – General 1975 – 1978 – 82-017/01 14, Document: Meeting Minutes, 10th CGRO Steering Committee meeting, Toronto, 6 February, 1977).

¹⁷⁰ CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01, File Name: CGRO – General 1975 – 1978 – 82-017/01 14, Document: CGRO: Success or Failure, An attempt at a realistic appraisal; presented at 2nd annual CGRO conference, February 21, 1976, Guelph. The issue of members not pulling their weight had been raised by Denis LeBlanc the previous fall. At the fifth meeting of CGRO's steering committee his proposal that any group which missed three meetings become a non-voting member was accepted (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/01, File Name: CGRO – General 1975 – 1978 – 82-017/01 14, Document: Meeting minutes, 5th Meeting CGRO Steering Committee Windsor, 31 August, 1975).

¹⁷¹ Denis LeBlanc.

articulate about their issues and more able to take on other people by learning to take on each other”.¹⁷²

In November 1976, as CGRO members, GO and the Queen’s (university) Homophile Association made a joint presentation to the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s provincial review committee in Kingston. Gays of Ottawa and Queen’s emphasized that the OHRC distinguished gay people, “as tax paying citizens electors” from others, by denying them the legal recourse afforded others. In their presentation they argued against a human rights code amendment employing the term ‘homosexual’; this was “a mistake”. ‘Sexual orientation’ defined specifically “to mean heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality” was preferred as it prevented the Code from legalizing bestiality and necrophilia.¹⁷³ Often gay rights opponents would claim legal changes on behalf of gay, opened the way to protecting ‘other sexual deviates’, thus it was critical to counter such claims.

The need for specificity regarding the meaning of sexual orientation had been a concern within CGRO. In a letter to the OHRC review committee in May 1977, John Duggan writing on behalf of the NGRC, stated “I understand from correspondent with CGRO, that there was apprehension expressed some months ago that the term ‘sexual orientation’ would include a number of sexual acts and tastes beyond the question of a person’s sexual orientation”. Duggan added that such acts were already covered by

¹⁷² Greg Spurgeon.

¹⁷³ CLGA, GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO – General 1976-1977-82-017/01 11, Document: Brief Presented to OHRC Review Committee; Joint Presentation by Gays of Ottawa & Queen’s Homophile Association, November 1976. Gays of Ottawa had wished to appear before the Committee in Ottawa but because it had been responding to a “police raid on one of our clubs in this city” namely the Club Bath raid it had been unable to. So the review committee allowed it to appear in Kingston (CLGA, GO, File No.: 1982-017/02A, File Name: Human Rights Ontario – 1975-1977-82-017/02 01, Letter: I. MacLennan, Provincial Affairs Coordinator GO to Review Committee, OHRC, 27, May 1976. On behalf of the NGRC John Duggan would express a similar position on ‘sexual orientation’ to the OHRC review committee in May 1977.

sexual offenses sections of the criminal code. For the NGRC 'sexual orientation' was the preferred term as "any specific term such as 'homosexuality' refuses to place people on equal basis with heterosexuals".¹⁷⁴

What Duggan's letter and GO's joint presentation with Queen's made clear was that while a key CGRO member GO retained its own outlook and positions. For example, early in 1977, GO urged changes be made to CGRO's draft pamphlet on sexual orientation. David Garmaise felt it was not "punchy" enough, "reading more like a literary work". Stressing that it was primarily part of a human rights strategy, "we should include other human rights demands" in it also.¹⁷⁵ In a position paper presented on July 27 1977, to the CGRO steering committee, GO addressed the issue of public anxiety over the issue of gays and children. The campaign for legalized gay rights had acted to reinvigorate age of old fears, often with the assistance of spurious and alarmist declarations by social conservatives. With public anxiety running high, GO feared the government would limit human rights protections "so that we can be legally kept out of teaching and similar positions". In response, "we must fight for gay teachers". In fact, GO believed there was "a chance that the 'children' issue might keep us out of the Code entirely".¹⁷⁶ Gays of Ottawa believed CGRO and the wider movement had to acknowledge these fears, address them head on. This was the kind of pragmatic thinking

¹⁷⁴ CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/02A, File Name: Human Rights – Ontario – 1975-1977-82-017/017/02 01, Letter: J. Duggan GO (on behalf of NGRC) to Dr. B. McLeod, Chairman Review Committee, OHRC, 31 May, 1977.

¹⁷⁵ CLGA, GO, File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/02A, File Name: Human Rights – Ontario – 1975-1977-82-017/017/02 01, Letter: D. Garmaise, GO president to T. Warner, Coordinator, CGRO. Here Garmaise was critical of its emphasis on the Damien case to the exclusion of others.

¹⁷⁶ CLGO, GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/02A, File Name: Human Rights – Ontario – 1975-1977-82-017/017/02 01, Document: GO Position Paper presented at CGRO Labour Day Steering Committee Meeting, 27 July, 1977.

GO displayed as coordinator of the NGRC, opposing demands that age of consent laws be abolished.

However, GO's specific mention of gay teachers might have reflected recent events. Just days earlier on July 21, 1977, the Ontario Human Rights Commission had tabled *Life Together: A Report on Human Rights in Ontario*, which for the first time recommended adding sexual orientation to the Code. The next day *Toronto Star* editors expressed qualified support while acknowledging that some parents still feared "homosexuals and especially public crusaders of homosexuality might be influential role models for their children". Thus the Code should not protect homosexual teachers.¹⁷⁷ On July 26, *Globe and Mail* editors said it was "unacceptable" that previous governments had not protected homosexuals. However, "to ease a particular public concern," editors wondered if there should not be a "reciprocal right of minors to be free from efforts at conversion"? They too feared protecting homosexual teachers.¹⁷⁸ In the fall of 1977, a divided Liberal caucus demanded the "exclusion of teachers and child care workers from the provisions of any amendment" to the human rights code; a demand CGRO flatly rejected.¹⁷⁹

The position paper that GO presented to CGRO in July 1977, also revealed the influence of changes within the political field, namely a growing conservative backlash against gay rights and Anita Bryant's anti-gay rights Save the Children Crusade. For example, in 1976 when the Ontario provincial legislature debated a pro-gay rights Liberal private member's resolution and a subsequent NDP private member bill, Progressive Conservative members were openly homophobic and hostile. In response CGRO

¹⁷⁷ Toronto Star Editors Homosexual Rights Should be Limited, *Toronto Star*, 22 July, 1977, p. B4.

¹⁷⁸ Globe and Mail Editors Security for Homosexuals, *Globe and Mail*, 26 July, 1977, p. 6.

¹⁷⁹ Warner 2002, 150.

promoted its 1977 election strategy through the slogan, 'Vote for Gay Rights, Vote against the Tories'. Warner concluded that as a result of the ensuing media attention over the slogan, gay rights became an election issue, contributing to an increase in homophobia and a majority government for the anti-gay conservatives.¹⁸⁰

Gays of Ottawa, a pragmatic and savvy actor within the lesbian and gay movement field, was clearly influential within CGRO. For Linda Wilson CGRO “*was very much a Toronto kind of connection. Because of the political action that was occurring in Toronto and Ottawa, people that were politically aware were plugged into it. [Toronto]...that’s where I made connections to CLGRO, Chris Bearchell. There was a lot of exchange between us and Toronto*”.¹⁸¹ Roger Galipeau suggests at times GO’s role in CGRO was greater than is commonly known. Gays of Ottawa, “*we were almost a coordinating committee for CGRO. We often did a lot of coordinating for CGRO. It was not really official but it turned out [GO] had the job often*”. Asked why GO was called on, Galipeau stated “*because we had a very strong political group. We were very strong politically; we had good people, with experience and expertise in a political environment*”. Here Galipeau alludes to GO’s social, political and cultural capital and field position. He adds GO “*took it upon ourselves... pushing CGRO to do more...more of what they were supposed to be doing*”.¹⁸² Barb MacIntosh paints a similar picture of GO’s relationship with CGRO. As Barb recalls, “*GO is doing everything. They only people by that time that are running CGRO and sticking in there were Tom Warner and Christine...I think they were burnt out by then*”. Attending CGRO meetings with Bob

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Linda Wilson; Interviewed on: December 12, 2007. Here Wilson refers to CLGRO or the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario which CGRO was renamed in 1986. However her work was with CGRO era.

¹⁸² Roger Galipeau.

Read, Barb remembers *“Tom and Christine saying well you know we have the whole agenda. We need to do this and this and what are you guys gonna do? And like they weren’t really doing much”*. As a result *“the GO Board, we dealt with a lot of CGRO work...we weren’t really CGRO but we did a lot of the work”*.¹⁸³

Both MacIntosh and Galipeau were addressing the last years of the seventies and the early eighties. These were years of high drama in Toronto as the community had to confront an anti-gay backlash worsened by homophobic reactions to the sexual assault and murder of Emanuel Jaques in 1977 and bathhouse raids by Toronto Police in 1978 and 1981, resulting in hundreds of arrests. As well the HIV pandemic was getting underway. Galipeau and MacIntosh clearly acknowledge that CGRO had its hands full.

One of the factors that perhaps gave GO a degree of resiliency or freed it from some distractions, may have been its size relative to Toronto’s. Barb believes, *“we had a much stronger community than Toronto. There was a bigger bar scene and you know all that [but] Toronto was already divided. Jane Rule wrote in the Body Politic, ‘you know ‘we’re all gonna end up with our own little gay organization in a phone booth all by ourselves’...it was very fractured”*.¹⁸⁴ However, Gays of Ottawa was not immune to the forces of change that ultimately impacted its close relationship with CGRO. Barry Deeprise recalls a very strong working relationship with CLGRO saying GO was *“quite the leader there for a while. Through CLGRO there was a lot going on”*. However, Deeprise believes that *“when that first generation of [GO] people left, like Denis, David,*

¹⁸³ Barb MacIntosh; Interviewed on: January 31, 2008.

¹⁸⁴ Barb MacIntosh. I am unable to locate the piece by Jane Rule in the BP to which MacIntosh refers. However in a 1979 BP essay, ‘Stumps’, Rule gives a passionate endorsement of an engaged and interconnected community. Speaking of her home community on Galiano Island, Rule wrote: “If we stay invisible or withdraw into protective communities, we are dangerously disturbing the political balance on which we need to depend. Here on this cranky little island, the lesson is clear...We have only ourselves to depend on and everyone is needed” (J Rule So’s Your Mother: Stumps, *Body Politic*, no. 54, 1979, p.20),

*John, Lloyd... those relationships then broke down”.*¹⁸⁵ Here Deeprise speaks of the period after GO had established PTS in 1984, after which it underwent a general decline. Additional factors impacting its relationship with CGRO were the increasing effects of the HIV pandemic and the Coalition’s ultimate success in having Ontario’s Human Rights Code amended in 1986. Having achieved its long-term goal, the (Ontario) lesbian and gay movement lost its primary focus. This impacted GO whose own organizational field was changing in a post-PTS era and as it dealt with generational change among its leaders.

In the next chapter I look at GO’s efforts to have an anti-discrimination resolution passed by the City of Ottawa. In this GO was ultimately successful. While the resolution protected only those employed by the City of Ottawa from anti-gay discrimination, GO believed the win symbolized something far greater. Its real power was as an enormous symbol of both the success and potential, contained within the movement. In many ways the preceding chapter on the NGECC, NGRC and CGRO sets the stage for GO’s city hall fight, situating it within the context of the movement. It also powerfully demonstrated why its city hall win was so necessary and powerful.

¹⁸⁵ Barry Deeprise. The organization Deeprise refers to is more correctly identified as CGRO.

Chapter Nine: City Hall & the Anti-Discrimination Resolution

For Gays of Ottawa the vice ring case, while tragic, provided valuable cultural, social and political. However, confronting the actions of police was only part of the puzzle. In addition to Ottawa Police, GO and the larger movement had to address politicians at all levels. Writing in the BP, Ron Dayman, one of GO's most strategic thinkers urged gays "organize to defend themselves and to pressure politicians to take firm stands on anti-homosexual oppression".¹ In Ottawa, Dayman's call for action was manifested in GOs concerted lobbying of City Council to extend sexual orientation protections for employees. In this chapter I explore the social, cultural and political capital GO mobilized as part of this effort, one which demonstrated and furthered the strength of its position within the field. While GO's effort at affecting change at the municipal level was part of a larger strategy, its capacity and capital within its local field proved crucial.

In October 1973, Toronto city council had extended protections to its employees after a successful lobby effort by local groups. Late in 1973 GATE (Toronto) secretary, W. Blumenthal, offered lesbian and gay organizations the lobbying material from its 'Toronto anti-discrimination victory'. Convinced it had set a strategic and policy precedent, Blumenthal believed "strongly...no gay group should be without this documentation, which provides visual confirmation of the validity of our struggle for civil rights". In January 1974, GO took advantage of GATE's gift of this capital.² By

¹ Dayman, R 'Ottawa: Police and press lies end in death'. *Body Politic*, no. 18, 1975, p. 6.

² CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/028, File Name: InterGroup Communications – Gay Groups 0 1973-1974 – 82-017/02/27: Letter: W. Blumenthal, GATE (Toronto) to Sisters and Brothers, ND; CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A > 82-017/01 02, File Name: Exec Mtg Min > Dec. 17 ,1973: Minutes: Jan. 20, 1974.

March GO had begun its lobbying effort. The Law Reform Committee renamed the Political Action Committee (PAC), would lead it.

The renaming of the Law Reform Committee was noteworthy. Ron Dayman reporting on activities at the third National Gay Conference in Ottawa July 1975, described GO as one of Canada's more active gay organizations. In the past year there had been "a significant shift in the political tactics used by the group, towards more political action". This was reflected in the name "adopted by the political arm of the organization...dedicated to the public struggle to end the oppression of gay people".³ This shift might have been influenced by the declining influence of Charlie Hill who scaled back participation after March 1975, and the growing influence of the more political Denis LeBlanc, John Duggan, and Ron Dayman.⁴ Denis LeBlanc, who many regard as GO's sharpest political mind, suggests Dayman was the stronger player. Arriving at the same time as Marie Robertson, "*he was the brains. [Ron] was the brightest of all the political activists in Canada bar—none. Must have had an IQ of 160...could debate with Communists! I couldn't*". He credits Dayman and himself with drafting the "*founding document, the list of demands...for both CGRO and the NGRC. Dayman and I wrote that on our dining room table on Cartier Street...and we brought them to Québec City at the founding meeting*".⁵

Gays of Ottawa's city hall initiative was more than merely following in Toronto's footsteps. After its success, John Duggan recalled, "*we were trying to get competition*

³ Dayman, R 'Sexual Orientation in the Ontario Human Rights Code: A Historical Overview'. [Speech] *Founding conference of the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario*, July 18-19, 1975. Toronto, 1975a.

⁴ In November 1974 Hill had been elected for a third term as GO's president but it appears that after March, vice president Denis LeBlanc was more influential (Body Politic, no. 16, 1974, p.7).

⁵ Denis LeBlanc.

among [lesbian and gay] groups to get your city done". Ultimately, this 'competition' was short-lived. After Ottawa, only Windsor successfully moved forward on a similar effort. After this, Duggan states city-based initiatives were "overtaken by [human rights changes by] the province".⁶ According to Denis LeBlanc, city-level efforts were a component of CGRO's strategy to secure gay rights. Along with himself, Ron Dayman, "Tom Warner in Toronto and Harold Demarais in Windsor...we were all part of CGRO and these are some of the common things we tried to do". He adds activity "wasn't just [in] these three cities...a lot of other towns were also lobbying their city councillors to build some precedents". All of which built towards "a strategy to include sexual orientation and human rights code".⁷

However, John Duggan believes that successes in Toronto, Ottawa and Windsor reflected practical matters. Denis LeBlanc is correct, lobbying occurred in many places but, "*in the other cities, there weren't strong political groups. Hamilton did not have a strong group, London didn't, Kingston didn't... [so] there really wasn't anywhere else", any other city capable of getting a policy passed.*⁸ For Denis LeBlanc, city-level resolutions were a mechanism, "*an issue that we could draw the community into... [and see the community] identified as a minority group. So that our community would realize that we were in fact a minority group. We were fighting for recognition as an official minority group within society*".⁹ Such city-level changes in employment rights had a

⁶ John Duggan.

⁷ Denis LeBlanc.

⁸ John Duggan.

⁹ Denis LeBlanc. Simultaneous with the LGF's actions at the provincial level, efforts were made to apprise federal politicians of the minority status of lesbians and gays through the distribution to them, of *Homosexuals: A minority without rights*. The booklet had been sent to the by its authors, the National Gay Election Coalition during the 1974 federal election (Smith, p. 58-9).

direct impact on a tiny number of people in real terms if once considers how many people a city the size of Ottawa would employ; how many of them were gay; would experience and complain about discrimination, etc. Thus the appeal was as a means to both tangible and intangible ends.

Accumulating small changes that build towards a larger goal has a historical precedent. Smith sees the lesbian and gay movement's strategy as tied to the forties and fifties, when Ontario "unions, ethnic minority groups and civil libertarians had pushed for the passage of human rights legislation". Their "incremental efforts of group mobilization" eventually culminated in the "creation of a human rights code and a human rights commission in 1962". These incremental gains lead finally to the development of a "rights consciousness" within the Ontario's lesbians and gays. The development of this consciousness was reflected in, and aided by, antidiscrimination legislation at the provincial level.¹⁰ Long-time GO member, social worker and social work teacher, Judy Girard provided an apt metaphor of this process. *"In my class a couple weeks ago, I was talking about gay liberation in Canada...saying it seemed like we employed a one-struggle-many-fronts approach. And it seemed like someone had passed out a shitload of chisels and hammers and everyone was just chiselling. [Chiselling] wherever you were... and the whole dam wall fell down"*.¹¹

In preparation for lobbying, PAC wrote to Father Playfair, St. George's, J. Ziegers, Unitarians and P. Harkness, Society of Friends (Quakers) and others, informing them GO would soon submit a brief to city council. Dayman's letter noted that in

¹⁰ Smith, p. 42-3; See: Warner 2002.

¹¹ Judy Girard.

Toronto, non-gay individuals and organizations voiced support and this was critical for success.¹² Drawing on its social capital with others, PAC would build a base of support among professional associations and others rich in symbolic capital. Denis LeBlanc emphasized that city- and provincial-level policy change was needed because *“it wasn’t just symbolic people who were getting fired. People were getting kicked out of their apartments just for being gay”*.¹³

For Denis LeBlanc the timing of GOs initiative reflected its discovering, *“that we had friends here and there. Frankly some of the councillors did the lobbying for us”*. As a result, *“It was a fairly easy campaign for me to lead because we had really good councillors who could watch the timing...play the game at the political table municipally”*.¹⁴ Supportive councillors who knew how to ‘play the game’ were essential. It was Alderman Brian Bourns, Wellington Ward, who was GO’s greatest ally here. Bourns advised GO that in order to make a credible case it must produce and present a brief to city council, lobby councillors etc. In March 1975, Bourns assessed the chances of a resolution passing. Overall they were favourable but a clear stumbling block was the attitude of R. Wilson, the City Commissioner of Personnel Services. Wilson believed there were no cases of discrimination and found it ‘distasteful’ to inquire into people’s privacy. He opposed a resolution because he believed it only protected heterosexuals and homosexuals, not bisexuals and told Bourns, *“I understand from Time that [bisexuality] is very ‘in’...gives one of the best of all possible worlds!!!”* Bourns

¹² CGLA GO File No.: Gays of Ottawa 1982-017/02A, File Name: Human Rights – Ontario – 1971-1975 – 81-017/017/02 02: Minutes, PAC, March 1975; See: CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975 – 82-017/01 1: Letter, P. Harkness, Society of Friends to R. Dayman, GO, Mar. 23, 1975). This letter was written in response to Dayman’s PAC letter.

¹³ Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁴ Ibid.

further advised many “more progressive Alderman” saw no need for a resolution. Believing nothing “wrong is happening now, why bring it up and disturb things needlessly”? Therefore, Bourns urged GO to “take over lobbying now”.¹⁵

One of the progressive aldermen who saw no need for action was Board of Control (BoC) member Marion Dewar, who ultimately emerged as GO’s and the larger community’s greatest municipal ally. At the time, Marion Dewar, a fierce champion of social justice, saw lesbian and gay community issues as new. She failed, like many, to understand the problem with existing policy.¹⁶ As to why Bourns so readily helped at a time when political allies were few, Denis LeBlanc offered that Bourns was a, “*young guy...he was very open*”.¹⁷ The PAC would “*liaise primarily with him. We did some lobbying obviously with all the councillors. [But] I think the real work was done by Brian and Joe [Cassey], calling their friends on council and having discussions with them. So it ended up...our friends on council frankly did most of the lobbying*”.¹⁸ These social relationships provided GO capital critical to its success, as these actors had more symbolic and political capital that did GO.

¹⁵ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975 – 82-017/01 11: Letter: B. Bourns, Wellington Ward to R. Dayman, GO PAC, Mar. 11, 1975 Wilson told Bourns he had only recently learned “that there are persons who are bisexual in their orientation” from *Time* magazine. Perhaps two prominent pieces appearing in *Time* a year earlier were an influence. The first article entitled: ‘The Sexes: The new bisexuals’ appeared on 13 May 1974. However it may have been a second, ‘The Sexes: Avant-garde in Retreat?’ (25 November, 1974) that led Wilson to believe ‘bisexuality is in’. In it book author Alex Comfort argues “group sex and bisexuality will be standard-middle class morality within ten years”.

¹⁶ (CLGA, GO, File Name.: C. Hill 1982-015 / ()), File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes 82-015/(), May 28, 1975). First elected alderman in 1972, Marion Dewar served as Ottawa’s Mayor from 1978-1985. A public health nurse, Dewar was a very progressive public health and social advocate who came to be held in great esteem, being Ottawa’s most progressive and activist politician. She was also a friend to me, enormously supportive of my academic work.

¹⁷ Speaking informally with Bourns on the sad occasion of Marion Dewar’s 2008 funeral, I asked why he helped GO. He was fuzzy about events “so long ago” but suggested for him, it was “...just the right thing to do”.

¹⁸ Here Denis refers to Alderman Joe Cassey, Capital Ward, who helped with GO’s city hall effort and was generally an ally. Cassey lived a few doors from Denis who would often go and speak with him. In 1982, Cassey lost his council seat to the equally supportive Diane Holmes.

In April 1975, GO distributed copies of its brief and related literature to city Alderman and members of the Board of Control (BoC) urging the city to pass a “resolution barring discrimination in the hiring and firing of city employees on the basis of sexual orientation”.¹⁹ In response Commissioner R. Wilson issued an April 15, press statement stating, “Homosexuals should not be allowed to work in jobs that allow contact with children”. While in our era this is a discredited view of gay men, at the time Wilson’s comments were taken as ‘common sense’ to many. After much criticism Wilson issued a letter insisting comments were taken out of context.²⁰ Overall resistance to the resolution was muted, but could arise from unexpected corners. For example, on April 29, GO learned the Ottawa Civil Liberties Association was opposed.²¹ In a May 7, letter sent to the BoC, K. Kozolanka wrote, “the matter of civil rights or human rights as they may relate to sex orientation is a matter better left to the provincial authorities and may require amendment to Ontario Human Rights Code”.²² Having learned the Association’s position before the city, the PAC sent additional letters to members of Ottawa’s BoC, stressing its current anti-discrimination policy allowed the city to address discrimination based on ‘sex’ but not ‘sexual orientation.’²³ This was also the prime argument behind amending Ontario’s human rights code.

¹⁹ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975 – 82-017/01 11: Letter: R. Dayman PAC, GO to Ottawa City Alderman.

²⁰ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Wilson Press Release, Apr. 15, 1975.

²¹ It is not clear how the PAC learned of the opposition but it discussed it at an April meeting (CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Minutes GO PA Committee April 1975).

²² CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Letter, K. Kozolanka, Ottawa Civil Liberties to E. Armstrong, Secretary, Board of Control, City of Ottawa, May, 7, 1975.

²³ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Letters R. Dayman, GO to BoC, Members, City of Ottawa, April 30, 1975.

In April, the BoC recommended council bar discrimination and GO issued a press release about upcoming meeting with Mayor Greenberg.²⁴ In May, letters were again sent to BoC members. The letter to Marion Dewar was shorter and carried less content, suggesting she was now onside.²⁵ On June 13, GO president Charlie Hill and PAC chair Ron Dayman meet Mayor Greenberg, informing him that approximately twenty U.S. cities and Toronto had enacted similar policies. *GO Info* reported the Mayor was non-committal and “appeared to be largely unaware of the discrimination suffered by gays”.²⁶ At GO’s general meeting on August 8, further details about the meeting came out. The Mayor told Hill and Dayman city staff were directed to contact U.S. cities for documentation and guidance.²⁷ Remembering the meeting, Charlie Hill said he found it “funny. We went in and I think [Mayor Greenberg] was a bit surprised to have to deal with us. He was a politician... [but] he wasn’t a heavy”.²⁸ Political Action Committee members, Ron Dayman and Marie Robertson appeared before the BoC on August 19, emphasizing four key points that I summarize here.²⁹

- 1) It was important “the City of Ottawa take moral leadership”. That no evidence of discrimination existed was because there was “no directive to City Personnel Services that discrimination should not occur”. Policy dictated the City neither recognize nor document cases.
- 2) Adopting a resolution ended a need for double life which “can make a gay person’s life very difficult and dishonest”.

²⁴ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Press Release, GO “Board of Control Recommends Barring Discrimination”; CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Press Release, “GO to Meet With Mayor” Jun. 10, 1975.

²⁵ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Letters to M. Dewar, G. Guzo, D. Reid and W. Law, May 4-9, 1976.

²⁶ *GO Info*, ‘GO Goes to City Hall’, *GO Info*, no. 2, 1975, p. 3.

²⁷ CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill – 82-015/01, File Name: GO General Mtg Min – 1973-1975: Minutes: Aug. 8, 1975. Minutes from the meeting state Marie Robertson attended but she has no memory of this and Charlie Hill never mentions her presence.

²⁸ Charlie Hill.

²⁹ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975 – 1978 – 82-017/01 11: Notes: City Hall Presentation, Aug. 15, 1975.

- 3) The City would establish a precedent for employers.
- 4) The City would establish a precedent for other levels of government.

Dayman and Robertson countered critics who argued the resolution expanded the city's area of concern into areas not in its purview, acknowledging this was the case in the U.S., where cities had a wider jurisdictional sphere. However, the resolution passed in Toronto and proposed here, impacted *only* City, employee hiring and firing practices. In conclusion, they noted no other minority group so lacked civil rights protections as the gay community. A group comprising "up to ten percent of the population—40,000 people in the city of Ottawa. We feel that it is only logical that city government, supposedly closer to its electorate, should not follow but led in this area of individual rights".³⁰ Its presentation complete, GO awaited the city's research of other cities, a task inauspiciously given to R. Wilson.

Its city hall initiative moved forward, GO began to move into Ottawa's larger political field. In September it contacted the commission in charge of the laying of wreaths at official Remembrance Day ceremonies, asking to participate. Denis LeBlanc regarded laying a wreath on behalf of lesbians and gays as GO's moving into Ottawa's political sphere. Participating in the political field would bestow on GO a level of recognition and standing never before experienced. After all, "*this was a city of national institutions... [GO] wasn't just Joe Blow laying a wreath. It was a national ceremony*

³⁰ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975 – 1978 – 82-017/01 11: Notes: City Hall Presentation, Aug. 15, 1975.

*run by the Legion. We were not just applying to buy a wreath. We wanted to be part of the official delegations of wreath layers”.*³¹

Gays of Ottawa moved to participate in the Remembrance Day ceremonies at a time of growing awareness among lesbians and gays about their role in WW II and especially their persecution by the Nazis. Late in 1973, BP published the first of three articles by Jim Steakley. The first two covering Germany’s early gay movement, the last on the Third Reich. Authors Lauristen and David Thorstad had published *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement: 1864-1935* (1974) revealing the historical roots of the lesbian and gay movement and its destruction by the Nazis. Lauristen and Thorstad: “Unlike the history of the women’s movement, however, the history of the first wave of gay liberation has been almost entirely suppressed and, thanks to the efforts of Stalinism and Nazism, many traces of it obliterated”.³² For many in the lesbian and gay movement it was a revelation, revealing a long, shared struggle and a massive, murderous effort to destroy it. Denis LeBlanc remembers the book’s publication. “*And then the Early Homosexual Rights Movement was published. That was a pivotal moment in my life. When I learned that we had a history...we were a people, with a history...that wasn’t known to me...I found out that gays had been put into concentration camps just like the Jews*”. The move to lay a wreath provided an opportunity for GO to foster relations with the local branch of B’nai Brith. “*I believe that was the first time B’nai B’rith...because*

³¹ Denis LeBlanc; CGLA GO File No.: C. Hill 1982-015(/), File Name: Gays of Ottawa Executive Committee Minutes 82-015(/): Minutes: Sept. 24, 1975, reference to Denis’s letter to Lt. Col. Lemay re: wreath.

³² See: J Steakley, ‘The Gay Movement in Germany Part One: 1860-1910’, *Body Politic*, no. 9, 1973a, pp.12-16; ‘The Gay Movement in Germany: Part Two: 1910-1933’, *Body Politic*, no. 10, 1973b, pp.14-18; ‘Homosexuals and the Third Reich’, *Body Politic*, no, 11, 1974, pp.19-20, 23.

*we had to get some people to support us...some large Jewish organizations, became out allies”.*³³

In a letter to the Royal Canadian Legion Dominion Secretary, Lt. Colonel Lamy, GO noted tens of thousands of homosexuals were interned by the Nazis, occupying the camp’s lowest social level. Moreover, “many gay people had served in the Canadian Armed Forces during both world wars”. The Canadian Legion however, resisted and refused GO at first. Lamy was worried wreath layers, Denis LeBlanc and Marie Robertson, “would disrupt ceremonies”; a claim Lamy later denied.³⁴ According to its protest habitus, GO went public, turning laying a wreath into “a local media campaign...which we fought with our usual vigour...and we managed to convince them.”

Denis LeBlanc credits Steakley’s BP articles and Lauristen and Thorstad’s book for giving GO the needed cultural capital. With it “*we educated the Legion, through letters...letters in the Ottawa Citizen and the Ottawa Journal. It became another public campaign*”. Denis LeBlanc acknowledges too that, “*we basically shamed them into letting us lay a wreath because we wanted to commemorate those homosexuals who had been killed by the Nazis*”. When GO laid the wreath in 1975, it did so as coordinators of the National Gay Rights Coalition, having decided as the NGRC office to do so. Denis LeBlanc recalled this “*wasn’t on the Coalition’s list of demands...but we [were] here in Ottawa*” and participating in the local institutional field was necessary.³⁵

³³ Denis LeBlanc.

³⁴ Body Politic, ‘Lest they Forget’. *Body Politic*, no. 22, 1976, p. 6. The BP reported GO’s participation in February 1976 but makes no mention of the NGRC. The report concludes with, “Gays of Ottawa plans to make the wreath-laying an annual event”.

³⁵ Denis LeBlanc.

The wreath was “*delivered by a Legion volunteer. They had printed the banner: NGRC...we made a felt pink triangle which we inlaid into the wreath...I laid that wreath that very first time with Marie Robertson*”.³⁶ The event was memorable for Marie Robertson. It was “*huge, that Denis and I would walk up and lay the wreath. That was the first time that had ever happened here*”. Robertson adds that, “*it was really important to us that the face of Gays of Ottawa had a woman and a man*”.³⁷ Subsequently, NGRC members criticized GO for doing so without consultation. “*We got roundly criticized; GO is taking things into their own hands....the following year the NGRC didn’t lay the wreath...GO got permission. They wrote Gays of Ottawa. The Legion didn’t care, after that big media campaign*”.³⁸

After Remembrance Day, GO turned its attention back to city hall. The BoC had forwarded a resolution to the legal committee in August but by December GO had heard nothing. Denis LeBlanc wrote the BoC to complain. Although a PAC initiative, David Garmaise stated Denis LeBlanc lead the city hall effort: “*...it was Denis’ beat*”.³⁹ This reflected GO’s so-called ‘three-front strategy’ wherein Garmaise dealt with national issues, coordinating the NGRC; LeBlanc worked on provincial issues and John Duggan addressed local matters. Because the city hall initiative, meshed with CGRO’s provincial effort, Denis LeBlanc led it. LeBlanc’s overall leadership was formalized when he succeeded the outgoing Charlie Hill as president in February 1976.⁴⁰ However, LeBlanc contends Ron Dayman played a key role. He remembers the now deceased Dayman

³⁶ Denis LeBlanc.

³⁷ Marie Robertson.

³⁸ Denis LeBlanc.

³⁹ David Garmaise.

⁴⁰ Body Politic, ‘GO Elects New President’. *Body Politic*, no. 22, 1976, p. 7. Although Hill was less active after March 1975, he remained GO president.

fondly: *“he was always the secretary of things... [Ron] wanted to be secretary [so] he could go through all the mail! He kept the notes, the minutes”*.⁴¹

As GO grew impatient, it was unaware progress was being made. Late in February 1976, city commissioner R. Wilson, and city solicitor D. Hambling wrote the BoC. Wilson, who saw no need for a policy change, had researched policies in Toronto and some U.S. cities. In their letter, the two stated their belief that “rights of this nature” (those extended by an anti-discrimination policy) were the purview of the provincial human rights code. If however, the BoC chose to move ahead, they advised a council resolution rather than a policy change. This may “frustrate the wishes of the council as indicated”, but a policy change could impact collective agreements. As to the U.S. experience, “specifically Detroit, that city had incorporated into its declaration of rights, that the city had an “affirmative duty...to secure equal protection”.

Wilson and Hambling were not totally sure as to the impact of Detroit’s Declaration. It “may or may not constitute a specific protection” for homosexuals as it merely endorsed “a principle that discrimination should not exist”. Therefore, Detroit’s Declaration “would not appear to grant any specific rights other than those granted by other State or Federal Legislation”.⁴² Wilson and Hambling provided no details on other U.S. cities. Their focus on one city which had enacted a policy change that granted (apparently) no new actionable rights might have reflected their own preference for a symbolic gesture only. Wilson and Hambling proposed a resolution based on the Detroit

⁴¹ Denis believes Dayman left Ottawa for Montreal in 1981, where *“he became a mover and shaker in the movement”* in Québec.

⁴² CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Letter: R. Wilson, Personnel and D. Hambling, City Solicitor to E. Armstrong, Secretary, Board of Control, Feb. 24, 1976.

model. To Ottawa's existing anti-discrimination policy the City would add, "there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or physical handicap".

On March 8 GO, knowing nothing of these developments issued a press release expressing criticism over with the delays.⁴³ In *GO Info*'s February / March issue Denis LeBlanc criticized the city's legal committee which was "seen as using delays". He reported the issue had returned to the BoC on March 9. LeBlanc warned that, should the BoC not now pass it on to the council GO would prepare "to pressure further city authorities through public action".⁴⁴ The *Ottawa Citizen* reported the BoC's receipt of Wilson and Hambling's proposal, noting "politicians, for the most part have tried to sidestep the issue since it surfaced last summer".⁴⁵

Aside from delays at the City, whether caused by opposition or not, the resolution faced little real opposition throughout. Greg Spurgeon remembers the city hall initiative as a non-event. "*I remember the various visits to City Council chambers on Sussex Drive. There was something stultifying about the rooms... [but] they were non-events*".⁴⁶ That there was so little opposition seems remarkable given a growing conservative backlash in the U.S. to progress by gay communities. In Canada, that a similar 'right-wing' backlash was occurring would not become apparent until the mid-seventies.⁴⁷ Thus GOs anti-discrimination efforts may have faced less opposition as they occur just prior to the emergence of an organized anti-gay opposition.

⁴³ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Press Release: GO Protests Lack of Progress, Mar. 8, 1976.

⁴⁴ D LeBlanc, 'GO at City Hall', *GO Info*, no. 1 1976, p. 9.

⁴⁵ *Ottawa Citizen*, 'Hiring policy move made', *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March, 1976, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Greg Spurgeon.

⁴⁷ Smith 1999, p. 146; Warner 2002, pp. 132-36.

Denis LeBlanc described Ottawa City Council circa 1975-1976, as having some “some old timers”, however “they weren’t dangerous. Ottawa was the capital of Canada after all. Most of them were pretty enlightened, small ‘L’ liberal types”. And in those days the council, “wasn’t as sharply divided as it became in terms of left and right”.⁴⁸ However, as the initiative came closer to fruition and drew more press, some aldermen began to speak out. For example, Alderman Joe Quinn questioned GO’s use of City community centers for dances, suggesting that city taxpayer dollars should not be supporting homosexuals. In response David Garmaise wrote a letter to the *Ottawa Citizen* editors stating “homosexuals are taxpayers too”.⁴⁹ A similar sentiment was expressed by R. Sands in the BP in 1972. A journalist with Toronto’s TV 11, Sands wrote a piece on the gays and the media stating: “Our main concern is to let the community at large know that we too are citizens, that we are involved and that we insist on our rights as human beings”.⁵⁰

Finally on March 23, the BoC unanimously accepted the Wilson/Hambling recommendation, sending it to the full Council. That same day, GO issued a press release claiming credit for getting the legal committee to act. The BoC decision had come after a year of work by GO. For GO President, Denis LeBlanc, the outcome was an “important step in the recognition of the civil and human rights of gay people. Such strong

⁴⁸ Denis LeBlanc.

⁴⁹ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Letter: David Garmaise, GO to Editors, *Ottawa Citizen*, Mar. 11, 1976.

⁵⁰ R Sands ‘Gays in the Media Continued’, *Body Politic*, no. 2. 1972, p. 19.

precedents put strong moral pressure on other levels of government to enact similar protective laws”.⁵¹ At Council on April 5, the resolution passed unanimously.⁵²

For an achievement that was so important, on which GO expended so much capital, most of the interviewees hardly remembers the vote. Greg Spurgeon said *“it was just as if there was nothing [big] happening. It’s as if someone said ‘we were going to raise the parking fee from a nickel to a dime’. It was as exciting as that”*.⁵³ Paul-François Sylvestre also attended, recalling little resistance because, *“people like Denis and David did their lobbying...good work of briefing the right people. I remember being there, sitting with some member of GO; cheering and what not”* but it was pretty muted overall.⁵⁴ When asked if there was a big celebration, Greg Spurgeon said, *“I can’t remember...but by the time certain victories came, there wasn’t even enough stamina left for people to have much of a celebration. Partly because things happened so slowly. If something happened years after you’d set it in motion, we didn’t go around jumping around and saying WOW we won! It was more like, well, what’s next?”*⁵⁵

Until the resolution passed, the *Ottawa Citizen* gave little coverage to the issue, largely ignoring what was for the movement, a big win. The day after the resolution passed the *Ottawa Citizen* ran a four line ‘news briefs’ report stating: “city council unanimously approves resolution banning job discrimination on basis of sex orientation

⁵¹ CGLA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: City Hall 1975-1978 – 82-017/01 11: Press Release: GO ‘Board of Control Accepts Hambling resolution unanimously’ Mar. 23, 1976.

⁵² City of Ottawa, ‘Minutes of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Ottawa,’ 5 April, 1976, pp. 1204-05. Resolutions required only a show a hands rather than a recorded vote.

⁵³ Greg Spurgeon.

⁵⁴ Paul-François Sylvestre.

⁵⁵ Greg Spurgeon.

or physical handicap”.⁵⁶ Toronto’s passage of its resolution had drawn *no* mainstream media coverage in all of Canada. This limited coverage reflected the degree to which media was influenced by what the City deemed newsworthy. Much as GO tried to mobilize media through frequent press releases, coverage was affected by what City Hall chose to highlight or downplay.

Reflecting back on this victory, Denis LeBlanc said “*it was a fairly easy goal...a good news story too*”. The City Hall initiative had come, “*on the heels of that awful Ottawa police department thing, the Vice Ring Affair which [by the way] we kept in the public eye for years*”. All of this resulted in, “*a lot of consciousness-raising being done. [People] had been watching their own police department [and] there was a lot of debate going on between citizens in the papers*”.⁵⁷ The city hall effort demonstrated to people within and outside the lesbian and gay community on the importance of GO’s role. Greg Spurgeon believes that, “*because of presentations and lobbying in a forum like City Hall, you began to see there were Aldermen who saw GO as important in terms of their own wellbeing in terms of votes, but also in terms of really consulting the gay community*”. As a result GO “*kind of became the ex-officio, not appointed, not elected, [but] only visible representative of the Community*”. This strengthened a “*perception that [GO] did represent the community and was not just a gang of, maybe a couple dozen people, who have decided this it was what they should do*”. Greg adds that, “*of course, as GO grew and organizations in other*

⁵⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, ‘Gays cheer as city adopts job rights law’, *Ottawa Citizen*, 5, April, 1976, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Denis LeBlanc.

*communities [grew], that became more and more the case. These organizations were seen as real representatives, the real voice of their communities”.*⁵⁸

After its success, GO like GATE (Toronto) gave lobbying materials to any who needed them, sharing its capital with at least three groups between 1977 and 1978. Accompanying letters lay out GO’s essential strategy. Securing assistance from at least one supportive councillor was essential. If the city currently had no anti-discrimination clause to amend, this was a barrier. Above all, fighting for a sexual orientation clause had to be a public exercise in order reach out to lesbians and gays; to educate the general public; and make people aware of one’s organization. In a letter to GAE Halifax, John Duggan stated, “We consider this effort or these points to be as important as the resolution itself”. Providing to the council in question, a list of cities who had moved forward was critical, giving councillors the comfort of knowing, “they are not about to do anything really revolutionary. (At least that’s what they can be led to think)”.⁵⁹ In recognition of a new emerging concern, Duggan noted, any initiative could alert right-wing groups who might organize a counter-effort. However, the benefits of a public project were too great to ignore. A public effort reached closeted homosexuals, raised consciousness, “and gay pride for all homosexuals”.⁶⁰

Commenting on the resolution’s passing in Ottawa, Denis LeBlanc stated, “*It had a more symbolic meaning...It was frankly a pretty small thing when I think about it now but it was a symbolic thing*”. Denis LeBlanc explains further, “*we weren't thinking like*

⁵⁸ Greg Spurgeon.

⁵⁹ CLGA, GO File No.: 1982-017/03B, File Name; Correspondence – Coalition Members, 1975-1978 – 1982-017/03 16, Letter: J. Duggan to R. Metcalfe, GAE Halifax, 8, September 1977.

⁶⁰ In all GO shared its lobbying materials with groups in Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax and Kingston.

*lawyers, we were thinking like lobbyists, like strategists... [about] a precedent. We're going to get the City of Ottawa to do it and create a precedent. Then Windsor did it just after us". In Ontario we then "had three cities so we had a much stronger case to bring to the province. That's what we did it for. We always had a larger objective in mind". Finally, Denis LeBlanc believes, "all these little things, they were important symbolic victories for us in our communities. We felt proud".*⁶¹

Gays of Ottawa's entry into the field of Ottawa politics was largely successful as it possessed the necessary capital and the strength of its position in the field. There is little doubt that Toronto's passage of sexual orientation provisions afforded Ottawa's local, controversy-averse politicians some political cover. As well, GATE's (Toronto) documentation was valuable cultural capital GO could use. However, the social and political capital GO already held were instrumental in its effectively playing the political-game. Yet like any lesbian and gay movement organization, GO could not escape completely the era's shifting political winds. Its successful participation in the larger political theater of Ottawa through the Remembrance Day ceremonies further demonstrated its growing credibility. In the next chapter I discuss the five years between 1979 and 1984. These years represent a coming to fruition of GO's accumulation of capital and its position-taking within its own field and the LGF. Here I also discuss a dramatic change in the membership in GO, as increasing numbers of lesbians joined the

⁶¹ Denis LeBlanc. In Windsor, Ontario an anti-discrimination resolution narrowly passed in a 4 to 3 vote on March 14, 1977. This victory had come after Monk ('Windsor: City council adopts gay rights resolution', *Body Politic*, no. 32, 1977, p. 4) in the *BP* described as an, "entertaining display of homophobia". One of those opposed, James Wiggins, who had argued homosexuality as a "lifestyle freely and sinfully chosen...just like biting one's nails".

organization. This change is one I situate in the context of a general move towards greater lesbian involvement in the movement which had begun in 1976.

Chapter Ten: GO, Lesbians and the founding of Pink Triangles Services

In this final chapter, I consider a five-year period which culminates with GO's establishment of Pink Triangle Services (PTS). Here I consider the establishment of GO's third GO Centre. Established after GO suffered a devastating fire that would have undone a lesser organization, this third Centre was its most sophisticated and strategic to date. With it, GO expanded its services, library and the social opportunities it could offer. Most dramatically, it opened a licenced bar space whose Saturday bar-nights for women were enormously successful. The success of GO's these bar nights reflected a dramatic increase in the number of lesbians participating specifically in GO and within the movement generally. For GO this was a much welcomed development, bringing to the organization a wealth of new cultural, social and symbolic capital. However, it also precipitated the organization's confrontation with issues of gender and sexism, which GO had heretofore avoided, unlike most other lesbian and gay movement organizations. This chapter concludes with GO's establishment of Canada's first lesbian and gay charity, Pink Triangle Services, to which it ceded all its social support and education activities.

Since its founding GO had been a one-stop-shopping space for lesbian- and gay-related politics, social opportunity and social support in Ottawa. Now with the founding of PTS, GO's focus narrowed to political work, the production of *GO Info*, and the running of its Centre. Pink Triangle Services marked the fruition of all of GO's efforts to accumulate capital and establish a position in the LGF and Ottawa's social service field. The move to establish PTS was taken to secure for GO, more of that form of capital it had the least of—economic—in order to provide better service, was timely, perhaps even

prescient. As the seventies ended and the HIV pandemic began, a new field of lesbian- and gay-specific service organizations was emerging, in which PTS would become a significant player.

Creating PTS and contributing to this new field greatly diminished GO. As a result of its distributing to PTS, the bulk of its capital, soon after GO saw the value of its remaining capital decline as a result of the movement's successes and changes within the local community. In part these local changes demonstrated the need for specific types of lesbian and gay service organizations like PTS, whose capital rose value as a result. While by every measure the years between 1979 and 1984 represent GO's 'golden age' they also mark the beginning of its twilight years. Before proceeding I should state the archival record for this period in terms of documentation from GO, is comprised of two sets of typed GO board meeting minutes. As a result, this chapter relies heavily on interviews with GO executive members.

After the Fire

In February 1979, GO faced the daunting task of recovering from the fire that claimed the Elgin Street GO Centre. While much of GO's documented history survived all its capital assets such as furniture and equipment were gone. As a result of the fire GO donated virtually all ten years of its documentation, including that of the Canadian Lesbian and Rights Gay Coalition, to the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives in Toronto. The fire was also the rationale for GO's now producing two sets of board meeting minutes, one of which was kept outside its offices.¹

¹ The sets differ from each other in that one set also includes monthly financial statements.

To be sure, the fire was an inauspicious ending to GO's highly successful first decade, yet the organization quickly rallied. Gays of Ottawa's phoenix-like rebirth was tied to its post-fire decision to cease coordinating the CLGRC, freeing time and energy for localized efforts. As a result Denis LeBlanc recalls "*we had such a bloom...as soon as we gave up the CLGRC*". In part the move was taken out of frustration with the sheer thanklessness of the job. As well, Denis LeBlanc noted that by this point "*there were others that took up the [federal government-level work]*", namely the federal lobbying group Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (EGALE).² Roger Galipeau agrees that now GO was able to "*be much more involved locally politically [and] with the school boards, with companies...talking to groups, doing education and also getting the women involved in GO, in a more official way*".³ Speaking to GO's post-CLGRC education efforts, Galipeau stated "*that was the big change, it was education*". It is unclear if Galipeau, who joined GO in 1976, is aware that education had always been a GO priority or speaks to a sharp increase in education efforts. Records indicate GO continued to emphasize education but do not indicate a redoubling of its efforts. Indeed in 1979 the "year of the fire" GO's annual report stated "Educationals (sic) continued to be arranged this year, though fewer than in previous years".

The fire would initiate a process of critical reflection but in the immediate aftermath Barry Deeprise feared "*that the organization would falter. I mean, I didn't know how strong it was.*" Yet quickly the fire became a strategic tool for GO to rally the community to its side, especially with regard to fundraising. Barry Deeprise said, "*I think [GO] burned on a Friday. And I took a group from...Male Homophile Anonymous*

² Denis LeBlanc. Here Denis is refers to an early iteration of the EGALE, work done primarily by Les MacAfee prior to the organization's formally coming into being in 1986.

³ Roger Galipeau.

to [Saturday's] dance. And we threw in \$20 or \$30 each, hoping to help out after this catastrophic fire." As never before, GO appealed for financial help. Eventually Barry Deeprise believes, "we got maybe \$4000 from the community...that was the first time we really went out [fundraising]. I was going out to people that I knew in the public service, who would respond."⁴ In the years prior to this, GO relied largely on donations from members, dance, membership and coffee night receipts for day to day operations.

Mike Johnstone recalled "an immediate sense" after the fire, "That we had to carry on. However, "then it became very much an issue of if we are going to carry on, what kind of place do we want?" In what way would GO, carry on? "And that's when it really got more serious in terms of our community centre."⁵ Roger Galipeau believes the fire acted to galvanize executive members. "Most definitely... [the executive] had to make decisions (my emphasis). Was it going to be status quo or are we [GO] gonna' go down? Or do we take [GO] and make a bigger statement, to push ourselves to go forward"?⁶

Peter Demski recalls a formal post-fire process to discuss GO's future. "Well we went through this visioning exercise after the fire. We had general meetings asking 'what do you want to see in a new Centre?' And this consensus developed that it should have licensable space, so the Centre can maintain its profitability and maintain itself".⁷

Lloyd Plunket recalls, "a major decision was made after the fire that we have to find some way to raise money so we're not always on a shoe string budget [relying on]

⁴ Barry Deeprise. It seems unlikely that Deeprise is correct regarding a dance occurring 24 hours after the fire given that GO had lost all its equipment.

⁵ Mike Johnstone

⁶ Roger Galipeau.

⁷ Peter Demski; Interviewed on: November 4, 2007.

dances. *That was when we decided to open the centre and have a license.*"⁸ For Roger Galipeau the fire presented GO the opportunity "to get bigger in terms of presence...we'll get a bigger place and have better recognition and meet more the community's needs also." This opportunity was also financial one, as a result of the community response to the fire which opened new possibilities. "The fire...that was the impetus basically...we had money coming from people...responding to the fire. So [we thought], okay now is the time...we're going to have new Centre, a place where we can have a bar in it"⁹ After the fire, rather than 'go home', GO had chosen to 'go big.'

Very quickly GO's vision for its new Centre included a bar. A first reference to this appears in Board meeting minutes in April 1979, partly in response to the increased rental costs GO faced with any new space. The Board wondered if "additional revenue could be raised by operating a licensed pub on Friday nights to replace [Friday coffee] drop-ins".¹⁰ That a lesbian and gay community organization would consider opening a bar was not unprecedented. The Homophile Association of London Ontario (HALO) had operated a large community space since 1974, part of which became licensed space.¹¹ In 1982, Gay Alliance for Equality, in Halifax, opened its Rumours night club.¹² When discussing planning for GO's bar, HALO was frequently mentioned. Lloyd Plunkett remembers HALO had been a strong influence. At GO "we were hearing about all this

⁸ Lloyd Plunkett.

⁹ Roger Galipeau.

¹⁰ J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting, No. 8, April, 24, 1979.

¹¹ In November 1974 the BP ('London group makes plans for new centre', *Body Politic*, no. 16, 1974, p. 8) reported HALO's renting of a 10,000 square foot space in which it came to operate a bar. In 1977, local London activists criticized HALO for doing so. In their view HALO's running a bar represented its "degeneration...from a centre for the gay community to a gay bar, run like a business" (P Ferris, 'London gays get organized', *Body Politic*, no. 35, 1977, p. 7). It is unclear what year HALO opened its bar but possibly this criticism emerged from a 1977 decision to begin doing so. However, GO members clearly understand HALO was doing so in 1979.

¹² D Bloomfield, 'New Club in Halifax', *Body Politic*, no. 87, 1982, p. 12. Rumours, like GO, worked to create women's only events within its bar operations

money [HALO] had and we realized there was a potential here too". The Board believed that "GO could not go back to what we were at the [Elgin and Gladstone] GO Centre. [GO] had to expand and get some financial base under us...this was possible based the London experience of HALO".¹³ Of those groups operating a bar Peter Demski states, "HALO was the classic example".¹⁴ Asked if the bar offered GO access to stable funding, Barry Deeprise answered, "yes, oh absolutely. Like HALO and Rumours in Halifax".¹⁵

The revenue potential of a bar was hugely appealing even as GO continued to host community dances. Recalling GO's most successful dance in honour of its 10th anniversary in 1981 Blair Johnston stated that was, "*the big one...it got us a couple of thousand bucks. We got donations, donations of flowers from other government events. Because we had a group of people with connections to other people with money*". Johnston indicates GO now had the social capital to draw on those with much needed cultural and economic capital. Typically though, Johnston recalls "*dances were great fun... [but] didn't provide much revenue*".¹⁶ Although its "supplies were scattered about the city" in members' homes, GO managed to host about a dozen dances in 1979 involving "much work but [they were] crucial to the organization".¹⁷ In the latter eighties

¹³ Lloyd Plunkett. Gays of Ottawa approached HALO for a short term loan, totally not more than \$5000 because post-fire fund raising was slowing down (J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 16, November 14, 1979). In March 1980, HALO turned GO down owing to its own commitments (Ibid, Minutes: Board Meeting, No. 20, March 11, 1980). This was bad timing as GO was set to begin building within its new space at 175 Lisgar.

¹⁴ Peter Demski.

¹⁵ Barry Deeprise.

¹⁶ Blair Johnston Interviewed on: December 18, 2007..

¹⁷ J. Law Archive 1, Document: Gays of Ottawa, Annual Report, 1979, p. 1. Further complicating GO's efforts to host dances, was a dispute that erupted with the Jack Purcell Community Centre, a preferred venue. The dispute centred on the growing size of GO dances and Purcell's complaining it was not cleaning properly afterwards. With the help of Councillor Joe Cassey the matter was settled. Jack Purcell went on to host '*the big one*' (Blair Johnston), namely GO 10th Anniversary dance.

its dances became significantly less popular. Barry Deeprise remembers, *“God! I worked those dances...those dances were hard work. And then the bar scene emerged... a whole series of bars,”* which reduced the appeal of GO’s dances.¹⁸

While ultimately Judy Girard acknowledged GO’s bar, *“yes, it paid the bills...we all knew it. We’re whores what can I say”*, she also stressed it provided something else. *“There were guy bars but there weren’t any girl bars so it provided a safe social space!”*¹⁹ This ‘safe social space’ was an alternative to less appealing and more expensive commercial bars. Peter Demski hoped for a bar that was *“a more conducive space...than meeting in a large noisy bar”*.²⁰ Blair Johnston’s experiences with the Lord Elgin bar made it clear to him how great the need was. *“I’d been to the Lord Elgin, I thought it was outrageous, this is not a gay bar, and this is insulting. I didn’t like the way the people were treating the clientele”*. Was the staff unpleasant? Johnston said, *“Absolutely...it was the whole atmosphere. The lights were on a bright as possible”*.²¹

Nash notes that earlier in the seventies assimilationist groups opened bars and restaurants as an alternative to mainstream gay bars. These were regarded as providing a shallow form of social life that acted to isolate lesbians and gay men from the very society they hoped to join.²² However, remembering the commercial bar scene of the late sixties and early seventies Bronski challenges those who saw the era’s bars as socially lacking. In bars, *“it was not some abstract notion of community that I received from bar-going but real, actual connections”*.²³ Regardless it remains a truism

¹⁸ Barry Deeprise.

¹⁹ Judy Girard.

²⁰ Peter Demski.

²¹ Blair Johnston.

²² Nash 2005, pp. 119-20.

²³ Bronski 1988, p. 48.

commercial bars were noisy, (then) smoke-filled, and designed for little more than drinking, dancing and cruising.

Barry Deeprise fondly remembers GO's bar as "*a more friendly community space; people actually talked*".²⁴ Linda Wilson, who joins GO well into its bar-planning, saw the bar as fulfilling two needs. "*To provide social space that was safe and benefited GO instead of somebody else...you know, profit. And it did provide funds so it was a source of funding as well*".²⁵ Roger Galipeau adds, "*the bar was not conceived...yes always money was part of it but it was also an alternative to the bars... [a space] where there was no sex going on in*". An additional beneficial feature of GO's bar was that while open, "*there [would be] people there working on the Gayline and you could go in and talk to them. It was a really safe place to meet people*".²⁶ Once in operation the bar had a profound effect. Linda Wilson recalls, "*the bar stabilized GO. The phone line was up and running. We had a good batch of volunteers. So we had a stable funded service although it was only five nights a week. And there was the Political Action Committee (sic) and we were organizing dances. There was a tremendous sense of getting things done...it felt like an organization that had it strings pulled together*".²⁷

GO's Third and 'Fourth' GO Centre

While GO eagerly wanted a bar in its new space, it had to find one first. In fact, what is regarded as GO's third Centre at 117 Lisgar Street was actually its fourth. If one counts a short lived, largely forgotten and forgettable space it occupied briefly after the

²⁴ Barry Deeprise.

²⁵ Linda Wilson.

²⁶ Roger Galipeau. Here we can recall how earlier in the seventies GO's Friday coffee nights also had a strong counselling element.

²⁷ Linda Wilson.

fire but before Lisgar Street. Most have no recollection of this Centre. As GO looked for a space it offered what services it could. For example, the Gayline operated out of a series of people's homes for more than a year. Barry Deeprose remembers "*first night on the Gayline which was located in John [Duggan] and Lloyd [Plunket's] bedroom temporarily*".²⁸ Meetings of GO's Board and various committees also relied on people's homes. With finances tight after the fire and volunteer resources stretched thin, *GO Info* was also reduced becoming essentially a pamphlet costing no more than \$25 an issue.²⁹

Efforts to find space began almost immediately. Peter Demski recalls core members being collectively driven by a realization, "*that if [GO] didn't get back on its feet there would be no progress*".³⁰ Yet GO encountered many landlords who resisted it as a tenant. Building owners and landlords were often vague as to the nature of their opposition to GO, forcing it to consider 60 different spaces. Through a rental agent, GO learned one landlord had refused them "for business reasons." The space in question was above Yesterdays' restaurant on Ottawa's Sparks Street located a mere block from Parliament Hill. When GO enquired as to these 'reasons' Yesterday's owner Stan Ages, told GO to stop calling. So many landlords resisted or refused to rent to GO, it filed a complaint with the OHRC.³¹ As a GO Annual Report stated because "gays are denied protection...no action could be taken other than to publicize the case".³² Officially documenting "cases of discrimination" was in keeping with a province-wide effort by

²⁸ Barry Deeprose.

²⁹ J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 6, March 6, 1979. The organization swiftly got back to work, for example the Political Action Committee meetings renewed only month after the first, focusing on the federal (Ibid, Minutes: Board Meeting, No. 7, April 3, 1979). In this period numbering of *GO Info* issues is erratic. Some issues are identified by the month only.

³⁰ Peter Demski.

³¹ *GO Info*, 'GO Centre—the search goes on', *GO Info*, May, 1979, p. 2.

³² G J. Law Archive 1, Document: Gays of Ottawa, Annual Report, 1979, p. 1.

CGRO to demonstrate the need for gay rights by providing documentation of abuse to the OHRC.³³

Finally, a new space was found at the corner of Bank and Somerset Streets. June's *GO Info* reported that while the 2nd floor space was double in size the \$550 rent was significantly higher. While GO raised about \$400 monthly from dances, this rent "necessitated a new emphasis on fundraising".³⁴ What *GO Info* did not report was the poor quality of the space, which only worsened over time. Peter Demski states that when GO moved in "*the windows had had boards on them... [the landlord] replaced the windows but sealed them, sealed us in... [with] no ventilation system*".³⁵ Apparently the landlord had installed "thermally sealed windows to save on heating costs...then refused to pay for the installation of mechanical ventilation".³⁶ Barry Deeprise stated that, "*When I first got involved we were at 288 Bank Street above the Studio...they'd sealed all the windows and it didn't have air conditioning*".³⁷ Able to open none of its windows GO's new space was dark, airless and uninhabitable during Ottawa's humid summer.

Efforts to address the window issue along with a lack of emergency exits, lighting and washrooms went nowhere. Able to use only 5% of its space GO could raise no revenue from coffee nights or events. It engaged a lawyer briefly but lacked the

³³ D Garmaise; BP, 'Hill O.H.R.C'. BP, no. 8, p. 21. 1973; CLGA GO File No.: 1982-017/01A, File Name: CGRO - General 1975 - 1978 - 82-017/01 14: Document: Position Paper on the Coalition for Gays Rights in Ontario (CGRO, Jan. 18 75; The Coalition urged LGF groups to document cases in of discrimination in areas of housing and employment and to attempt filing complaints. It had been urged to do so by OHRC as a means of demonstrating the extent of and need for, protections.

³⁴ *GO Info*, 'GO's New Centre - 288 1/2 Bank St (At Somerset)', *GO Info*, June, 1979, p.1.

³⁵ Peter Demski.

³⁶ J. Law Archive 1, Document: Gays of Ottawa, Annual Report, 1979, p. 1.

³⁷ Barry Deeprise. This 'Studio' was the Thelen and Torontow Lighting Studio, a lighting store operated by Thelen and Torontow GO's landlord.

resources for a concerted legal action.³⁸ John Duggan feels the landlord “*didn’t seem to know who we were or someone had rented to us on his behalf. [Although] we didn’t hide who we were. But once he realized there were no services...repairs he was doing and stopped. So we started withholding the rent and we had to get a lawyer...I remember thinking this is not why I got involved in Gay Liberation...to become part of a hassle with landlord*”³⁹. By late October GO had, had enough and reconsidered a space previously rejected at 175 Lisgar, because that space was little more than an empty box.⁴⁰

Faced with a ‘tomb’ of an office and an uncooperative landlord, GO strategically moved one evening—at midnight. Peter Demski states that once at Bank Street, “*it became rapidly clear that there was going to be problems...so there was one of those surreptitious moves in the middle of the night. We abandoned the place! One night Serge Gauthier showed up with a truck and we ...moved all this stuff out and over to 175 Lisgar*”.⁴¹ Traditionally, those who pull a ‘midnight move’ hide this fact and/or their new address. However, GO was neither secretive nor hiding where it had gone. November’s *GO Info* depicts a laden-down GO pick-up truck driving beneath a benignly smiling midnight moon.⁴²

GO Centre at 175 Lisgar

³⁸J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 14, October 11, 1979. Gays of Ottawa had raised the issues with the City which angered the landlord’s lawyers. As of October they had only been able to make use of approximately 5% of the rented space (Ibid, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 15, October 24, 1979).

³⁹ John Duggan.

⁴⁰ Additionally the Lisgar space cost \$50 more a month (J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting, No. 8, April 24, 1979). Attached to this set of minutes is an appendix discussing the potential for renovating the Lisgar space, estimated to be \$2000, as a pub.

⁴¹ Peter Demski.

⁴² *GO Info*, ‘175 Lisgar’, *GO Info*, no. 5, 1979, p. 1.

The 'Fourth' GO Centre was located above the Cherry Blossom, Chinese restaurant on Lisgar Street, just one building away from the busy Elgin Street. At the time Barry Deeprise recalls, "*we could barely scrape together enough to pay the rent to Mr. Lee*".⁴³ *GO Info* reported that financial advances were desperately needed. Renting the 1,500 square feet space had drained GO's finances but "with your help, either money or time, the new Centre should be ready for a Christmas party."⁴⁴

Transforming the space drew on the cultural capital of many GO members. Barry Deeprise, "*we went in and built walls, we built the Gayline [office]. I think we even put down flooring. It was amazing the skills people had*".⁴⁵ Volunteers such as Michel Lavigne "familiar with this type of construction," built the Centre.⁴⁶ John Duggan recalls months of "*physical work to be done to create rooms*". Simultaneously, GO was gathering "*information from people,*" receiving getting copies of letters or documents that were lost in the fire. Sunday work sessions at the Centre became a chance to network socially. Volunteers "*started going for pizza [at Colonnade Pizza] after...that become a reward thing; give up a Sunday and you get to have a little social party*".⁴⁷ Construction commenced in March and by April, the Centre was hosting meetings. Renovations continued but GO's aspirations were proving costly. Bar-standard washrooms required \$1,000 for a plumber and permit costs.⁴⁸

⁴³ Barry Deeprise.

⁴⁴ *GO Info*, 'GO Moves to Lisgar Street', *GO Info*, no. 5, 1979, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Barry Deeprise.

⁴⁶ J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting, No. 17, December 12, 1979. Initially it was thought renovations costs would come in at approximately \$1,000.

⁴⁷ John Duggan.

⁴⁸ *GO Info*, 'GO Centre Open During Renovations,' *GO Info*, no. 1, 1980, p. 6.

Yet GO's work carried on. The Gayline again had an office, receiving over 13,000 calls in the first three months of 1980.⁴⁹ In May, GO received federal funding to hire 3 students to continue work begun with its 1975 Project Community Outreach.⁵⁰ This time a series of brochures covering GO; questions about homosexuality; the differing oppression of lesbians and gay men; and a history of gay liberation were developed.⁵¹

Things were progressing nicely for GO until its lack of a staff person to manage renovations, was slowing things down. Ultimately, when the new Centre open on May 23, 1980, it did so without its bar.⁵² Shortly thereafter *GO Info* reported costs of creating the bar were significant and GO announced a \$3,000 funding drive.⁵³ While GO's membership possessed its share cultural capital and willing donated 'sweat equity,' GO lacked any real economic capital. Also it seems the organization did not grasp the breadth and costs of its undertaking. For the first time, GO applies for City funding. It requested a \$5,000 grant when the City announced it had a \$750,000 snow removal budget surplus that would go to community groups. While GO was rejected no anti-gay sentiments were reported as the reason. Possibly because GO sought money for renovations versus service delivery their application lacked appeal.⁵⁴ Luckily however,

⁴⁹ *GO Info*, 'Gayline – Télégaiie,' *GO Info*, no. 1, 1980, p. 6. Gayline volunteers had done 860 counselling calls; received 10,782 messages; and 1,452 harassment calls.

⁵⁰ *GO Info*, 'Grant to hire summer students,' *GO Info*, no. 3, 1980, p. 6. Initially GO fears its Summer Youth Program application will be rejected by local MP, as happened in 1975. Then it learned Centretown Liberal MP, John Evans was on side (*GO Info*, 'Director's Report,' *GO Info*, no. 2, 1980, p. 2).

⁵¹ J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting 24, August 11-12, 1980.

⁵² *GO Info*, 'Grand Opening May 23, 1980,' *GO Info*, no. 1, 1980, p. 1.

⁵³ *GO Info*, 'One Last Hurdle,' *GO Info*, no. 4, 1980, p. 3.

⁵⁴ *GO Info*, 'Director's Report: City Hall Denies GO Grant', *GO Info*, no. 3, 1980, p. 5

GO quickly raised two-thirds of its fund raising target.⁵⁵ In January 1981, the GO board announced renovations costs would be closer to \$5,000-6,000.⁵⁶ This was an enormous sum for an organization with a membership of less than 200.⁵⁷ On the up side, in terms of managing what Barry Deeprise described as “*an endless bureaucracy to get [the Centre] open*”, GO encountered few delays in receiving its various approvals.⁵⁸

On Thursday September 10, 1981, GO finally hosted its official opening of its new GO Centre at the start of a week of 10th anniversary celebrations.⁵⁹ Reporting on the opening, the BP described GO as “Canada’s oldest gay organization”. It noted GO’s involvement in projects “of national importance, such as coordinating the now-disbanded National Gay Rights Coalition (sic)...organizing national conferences in 1975 and 1979”. Also GO had “twice received federal funding for community outreach projects”.⁶⁰ In its preceding decade GO had accrued much social, cultural and symbolic capital. In fact a

⁵⁵ *GO Info*, ‘\$’, *GO Info*, no. 7, 1980, p. 9. The effort then stalled and well into the fall GO was seeking funds.

⁵⁶ J. Law Archive 2, Minutes: Board Meeting, No. 33, January 6, 1981. That same month, Treasurer Peter Demski reported a \$500 shortfall in revenue.

⁵⁷ In April 1979, GO’s membership included 94 ‘regular’ and 98 ‘closeted’ members (J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting, No. 7, April 3, 1979). By March 1981 the number had declined to 128 (J. Law Archive 2, Minutes: Board Meeting, No. 37, March 3, 1981). Not until October 1982, would the membership top 200; a first for the organization (*GO Info*, ‘GO Membership Topes 200,’ *GO Info*, no. 5, 1982, p. 4).

⁵⁸ Barry Deeprise; *GO Info*, ‘Director’s Report: Liquor licences for GO Centre? GO gets City hall and regional funding’, *GO Info*, no. 7, 1980, p. 3. During licensing hearings the Centre drew some resistance from an adjacent apartment building over parking issues and from apartment dwellers across the street concerned about noise. However, such resistance was never described as homophobic (*GO Info*, ‘GO Gets City Hall Approval’, *GO Info*, no. 4, 1980, p. 2).

⁵⁹ Celebrations included various cultural and professional events such as GO’s hosting a workshop for 10 of Ottawa’s major social service agencies. Most agencies were represented by their executive directors, a testament to its credibility. See: *GO Info*, ‘Special Issue: 1971-1981-Our History’, *GO Info*, no. 1, 1981.

⁶⁰ *Body Politic*, ‘GO marks first decade’, *Body Politic*, no. 76, 1981, p. 16.

few months earlier in July, CGRO honoured GO with a special award for its outstanding services to the lesbian and gay community.⁶¹

The breadth of GO's social capital became clear at a wine and cheese attended by long-time supporters, Mayor Marion Dewar, Councillor Diane Holmes, Centretown MPP Mike Cassidy and commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Gordon Fairweather. The results of GO's forays into the field of politics were abundantly clear. The next evening the GO bar was opened by Mayor Dewar. In her letter of congratulations, Dewar stated, it was "particularly remarkable that an organization relying on volunteers should be so productive for so long".⁶² Just six years earlier, Dewar had shown little awareness of anti-discrimination, being initially puzzled by GO's lobbying efforts to achieve sexual orientation protections for city employees. Since then she had become GO's stalwart supporter, brushing off those who had attacked her for opening CLGRC's '79 Celebration' conference and her offering of an official welcome to all conference delegates. In her speech to delegates, she stated "it can't be stated enough that the freedom of no one is safe unless the freedom of everyone is safe".⁶³ And now in 1981 Mayor Marion Dewar enthusiastically opened GO's new GO Centre. Recalling that evening Linda Wilson said, "*I know I arrived...Marion Dewar was mayor...and I thought I know that woman. We had our bar running and Jean Lamoureux was behind the bar and you know there was Marion*". It was self-evident that "*everything was coming together. And certainly, political connections had been made*".

⁶¹ J. Law Archive 2, Minutes: Board Meeting, No. 43, July 1, 1981. Meeting minutes note that at this CGRO conference, participation of lesbians was greater than it had ever been.

⁶² GO Update, 'Director's Report', GO Update, October 1981, p. 1; J. Law Archive 2, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 46, September 1, 1981. When resources were stretched the maximum, *GO Info* was reduced further to a GO Update.

⁶³ Montréal Gazette, 'Gays have rights too, Ottawa Mayor', *Montréal Gazette*, 28 June, 1979, p. 6. See also: *Ottawa Citizen*, 'Evangelist Attacks Mayor', *Ottawa Citizen*, 20 June, 1979, p. 14.

The Centre's bar had always planned to open only two nights a week. Early on Linda Wilson recalls considering opening "*one week for men on Saturday night and then the next [Saturday for] women*".⁶⁴ Quickly though, Friday became men's night and Saturday a women-only night.⁶⁵ Just as quickly GO's revenue situation greatly improved. In January 1982, the treasurer reported bar receipts along with dances, "are generating enough revenue to cover our basic expenses".⁶⁶ The Centre's long-standing Friday night coffee-drop in for gay men had evolved into a men's bar night. Barry Deeprise recalls that at the Lisgar Centre, Friday "*would be the men's bar night...was just a given...men were just not really interested in Saturday night...men wanted to get out and cruise*".⁶⁷ However, it soon became clear gay men were none too keen on GO's bar. It became a stopping off point between 9pm and 11pm before one went out to city bars. Linda Wilson remembers GO quickly recognizing, "*women were going to outsell the men*" on Saturday nights. For lesbians the Coral Reef was the only other "*alternative on Friday nights for women-only, whereas men had options many nights a week*".⁶⁸

The popularity of GO's women-only bar reflected an increase in the number of lesbians participating in and making demands upon, the larger movement which had begun years earlier. Since 1976 Canada's lesbian and gay movement had faced a sustained critique from lesbians demanding it become more relevant. In May 1976 the Queen's Homophile Association hosted the Not-so-Invisible Woman: Lesbian Perspectives in the Gay Movement conference to explore lesbian autonomy within the

⁶⁴ Linda Wilson.

⁶⁵ There does not appear to have been a firm decision that Saturdays would be women-only. It seems to have emerged unproblematically and organically.

⁶⁶ GO Update, 'Message from the treasurer', *GO Update*, no. 1, January, 1982, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Barry Deeprise.

⁶⁸ Linda Wilson.

movement. Reporting for the BP, Watson noted many participants believed gay men were “fighting for things that won’t improve the lot of women”. As GO’s Marie Robertson stated, “*when sexual orientation is put in the human rights code, I’ll still be a woman with no time and no money*”.⁶⁹ Warner notes conference organizers worked on the “assumption that deciding the relationship of women to the gay movement should involve both women and men”. However, this did not sit well with some lesbian activists. During the conference’s opening plenary, Francine Wyland, a member of Wages Due Lesbians succeeded in having a motion passed “calling on the women attendees to meet alone as a group, without men being present,” to set the direction of the subsequent conference.⁷⁰ Prior the conference, Wages Due Lesbians had issued an open letter stating that they, along with “many lesbian women” would not attend the Kingston conference. This was because they felt “very strongly that we cannot and need not continue to subordinate our interests to those of gay men”.⁷¹

In an article in the June 1976, issue of the BP, Marie Robertson came out in support of an autonomous lesbian movement, albeit for different reasons than those expressed by Wages Due Lesbians. Robertson wrote, “*It has been my experience...that the mere mention of including gay issues in the feminist struggle arouses a complete*

⁶⁹ B Watson, ‘Kingston: Conference urges lesbian autonomy’, *Body Politic*, no. 25, 1976, p. 7. It was this conference, that GO executive members were attending when the Ottawa’s Club Baths were raided by police.

⁷⁰ Warner, 2002, pp. 178-9.

⁷¹ CLGA GO, File No.: 1982-017 / 05B, File Name: National Gay Conference, Toronto 1976, 82-017/05 45, Letter: Wages Due Lesbians ‘Sisters and Friends’, May 1976. Wages Due Lesbians campaigned for lesbians to receive wages for housework through a state program similar to the ‘mother’s allowance’ heterosexual women received (BP, ‘Address to March 11 cut-backs rally by Ellen Agger’, *Body Politic*, no. 24, 1976, pg. 6. Many lesbians such as Marie Robertson, Judy Girard, and Chris Bearchell were quite willing to work on shared issues with gay men and thus they were critical of the ‘divisive’ views put forth by Wages. For example, in an essay Chris Bearchell commented on the ‘wages for housework’ noting the situation of lesbians would not be remedied by “making women financially dependent on the male-dominated state rather than individual men”, (C Bearchell, ‘The Wages of Disunity’, *Body Politic*, no. 36, 1977, p. 19).

gamut of negative responses". She favoured a "*separate dyke movement*" in order that "*gay women...finally [got] credit for all the work we've been doing and are presently doing under the banners of the gay and women's movements*".⁷² Also in June, GATE (Toronto) founded a lesbian caucus.⁷³

At September's 4th annual gay conference in Toronto, calls for lesbian autonomy continued. What began in Kingston as discussions about "the relationship of lesbians to the gay movement as a whole" had evolved. Women who the BP referred to as "politicized lesbians" were considering "specific ways to fight their oppression".⁷⁴ All of these developments reflected lesbian dissatisfaction with the failure of gay and feminist movements to acknowledge or address their realities.

In 1978, Gays of Ottawa re-affirmed its openness to women, helping to form an anti-sexism coalition in opposition to anti-gay crusader Anita Bryant's Canadian visit.⁷⁵ Writing to Gays for Equality (Winnipeg), John Duggan stated GO had taken the initiative to form the coalition with women's groups. This "greatly improved our rapport and cooperation with other groups in the city and won [GO] a great deal of support in the city at large".⁷⁶ In the Coalition were members of Lesbians of Ottawa Now (LOON) co-founded by GO's Marie Robertson.⁷⁷ Soon after Judy Girard joins GO, "*when they were*

⁷² M Robertson, 'Notes from the full-hipped polish dyke: The long & winding road to lesbian separatism', *Body Politic*, no. 24, 1976, p. 16.

⁷³ K Popert, 'GATE approves lesbian caucus', *Body Politic*, no. 25, 1976, p 4. The motion to establish a caucus had come from Chris Bearchell, reflecting GATE's "attempt to address itself constructively to the rising interest of lesbians in political activism". See: C Bearchell, 'Dykes: Lesbians and gay men can find political unity: A reply to Andrew Hodges', *Body Politic*, no. 32, 1977, p. 11.

⁷⁴ *Body Politic*, 'Lesbians call for greater Autonomy', *Body Politic*, no. 27, 1976, p. 1.

⁷⁵ *GO Info*, 'Anita Bryan is coming to town', *GO Info*, no. 4, 1978, p. 2.

⁷⁶ CLGA GO, File No: 1982-017/03C, File Name: CBC Radio Canada—Public Service Ads – 1977-1978-82-017/03 21, Letter: J. Duggan to GAE, Chris Vogel, June 12, 1978.

⁷⁷ *GO Info*, 'Against Sexism, Sexual Oppression...and Anita', *GO Info*, no. 5, 1978, p. 2. Marie Robertson was a founder of LOON which she says was formed primarily to organize a major national conference in at Ottawa's University of Ottawa, October 9 to 11, 1978. Remembering the conference

on top of the Cherry Blossom on Lisgar". Coming out in the early seventies Judy Girard, "came out as a woman...in the gay men's environment as opposed to the lesbian environment because I always felt more comfortable with gay guys than strictly women." She quickly joins the board. "It did not deter me in any way that the other eight people on the board were guys, I had no issue with that at all". Judy Girard believes she was the second or third woman to join the board. "Sandy [Ginnish] was the first woman on the board... on the board for years and years".⁷⁸ However, regardless of GO's openness to lesbians or the organized efforts to have the movement respond to lesbian concerns, it was because GO's successful women's bar that lesbians came to profoundly change the organization.

In December 1980, lesbian members signalled they wanted greater involvement, in particular through working with the future bar.⁷⁹ The bar's appeal was enhanced by the problematic nature of the Coral Reef. Barb MacIntosh described the Reef as "run by a straight guy who didn't give two shits about lesbians". For Barb the Reef reflected and strengthened the "internalized homophobia" of Ottawa lesbians. Located in a downtown parking garage, MacIntosh believes a woman's willingness to be "sneaking downstairs to go to the Coral Reef," spoke to both their self-image and the contempt of the Reef's owners. Because the Reef was located so close to Ottawa's courthouse, police station and the heterosexual club scene of the Byward Market, women furtively entered

Marie states she and "Robbie Weinberg...Rose Stanton, Sandy Ginnish, and Rose LeClerc, [worked on it]. Women from all over the province came to that conference. It was really wildly successful. We had simultaneous translation, we put our fantastic conference. We worked our asses off". Robertson recalls "we also ran our own dances at a hotel on Rideau Street. It was quite a separate organization [from GO]". See: Body Politic, 'Lesbians call for national organization at Ottawa conference', *Body Politic*, no. 28, 1976, p. 3; Warner 2002, p. 180.

⁷⁸ Judy Girard.

⁷⁹ J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 31, December 2, 1980.

the Reef. Generally they did not do so until approximately 11:00 pm, after heterosexuals had entered their own bars.⁸⁰

By February 1981, women were suggesting GO designate a specific seat(s) on its Board of Directors. Additionally, they reaffirmed their support for a women's bar night.⁸¹ After 10 years as an organization dominated by men and men's issues, GO's relevancy to lesbians was increasing. Gays of Ottawa had prided itself on being 'open to lesbians' throughout the seventies, but the sincere desire of the male executive to have lesbians join was not enough. The organization's cultural and social capital, rooted in gay men's experiences had held little value for women but now this was changing.

Thinking about seventies era GO, Judy Girard said, "*it was mostly a men's organization, historically...which wasn't unusual at that point in gay history in Canada*". While this reflected the movement's general focus on gay men's issues, Girard notes that era "*lesbians tended to flock to feminist organizations*". Wherein, lesbians "*were always on the fringe*". Girard had "*always found that I felt a lot more at home with gay guys than I did with feminists who were not gay*". As a result of their experiences of feminist groups, in the latter seventies lesbians began "*looking for other places where maybe we could feel a bit more affirmed*" namely in gay groups.⁸² Through its women's bar night GO signalled its clear effort to be affirming.

Yet while Ottawa had few spaces for lesbians, the women's night was not immediately successful. Marie Robertson recalls going to it "*before 1983*" and "*there were about six lesbians there. The bar is open and they had liked one tape, the Nana*

⁸⁰ Barb Macintosh.

⁸¹ J. Law Archive 2, Minutes: Board Meeting No, 35, February 3, 1981.

⁸² Judy Girard. Like Robertson, in the seventies Girard's witnessed first-hand feminist groups who did not "*want to be alienating funders because of lesbian*" members. Feminists tended to see lesbians as women who "*are so colourful and they swear at things*".

Mouskouri Christmas tape...played over and over again". Horrified, Robertson and her friend Patricia took over the music duties. *"We took the chairs out and redesigned the space and really ran a women's bar"*. Soon *"[lesbians] would end up lined up down the stairs to get in because we could only hold 75 people"*.⁸³ Linda Wilson who became one of GO's 'Bar Dykes', the core group who ran the bar, remembers Saturday night *"was a sell out much of the time...and we had to be careful to not go over capacity because we could lose our license"*. The bar's success reflected *"we needed our own space"*. Very popular women-only dances occurred every two months or so, but *"women were so used to not having their own space. Even on Friday [women's] night at the Coral Reef, there were men there"*.⁸⁴

More than a financial success, the bar precipitated an influx of new women. Linda Wilson recalls, *"there were new people coming out all the time...new women coming out all the time...leaking out only a little at a time out into the community"*. For Barb MacIntosh the women's bar was a qualitatively better experience than what the Reef offered. At the Reef, *"you could dance and drink, make out...pick up. That was it, you could not make friends; have a discussion with other women about anything. You didn't really feel part of a community... [GO's] Saturday night bar gave that to the women's community. Yes [there was] music dancing and fun but you could not sit around at table and talk about stuff"*. Barb's dislike of the Reef because of how it was conducive to conversation, spoke to how lesbians and gay men used bars differently. When discussing bars, lesbians tend to emphasize using it to "build upon existing friendships networks and meet potential partners". In contrast, gay men use bars for

⁸³ Marie Robertson.

⁸⁴ Linda Wilson.

“cruising not socializing”.⁸⁵ Barb also remembers “a lot of women who went to the Saturday bar weren’t really in favor of those of us who were on the GO Board, working with the men”. But they came anyways, because “that’s how big of a need there was for that space in the women’s community. And women’s dances...they were humongous. You lived for them and you lived for Saturday nights”.⁸⁶

The women’s bar was soon providing crucial revenue. John Duggan said, “It made a big difference in our bottom line...and it drew more people to the organization”.⁸⁷ Marie Robertson states “we became the biggest fund raising group for Gays of Ottawa because nobody would go to the men’s bar...you guys have other options. [Lesbians] brought a lot of money to that organization”.⁸⁸ Asked if the women’s bar was soon keeping GO afloat, Linda Wilson answered, “I would think so, yes”.⁸⁹ Judy Girard agrees. Long-time GO treasurer, Peter Demski partially agrees. He was unsure if the women’s bar paid GO’s bills at 175 Lisgar but in 1986 when it moves to 318 Lisgar (its last Centre), “it certainly is true [the women’s bar] paid the bills. By the time we move...the women’s bar is really keeping the organization afloat”.⁹⁰ Possibly this was the first time in Canada that the financial contributions of lesbians, rather than gay men, sustained an organization serving both lesbians and gays.

The growing financial clout and influence of lesbians was shortly demonstrated when for the first time, GO had to seriously confront issues of sexism and representation.

⁸⁵ McDiarmid (1999, p. 69) does not deny lesbians also ‘cruise’ but are perhaps less willing or practiced in discussing this are of their lives as gay men are (p. 64). She also noted in her interviews that only those women who were already part of a network, for example a baseball team, who credited bars with developing community networks.

⁸⁶ Barb MacIntosh.

⁸⁷ John Duggan.

⁸⁸ Marie Robertson.

⁸⁹ Linda Wilson.

⁹⁰ Peter Demski.

While open to women, GO had few lesbian members. But by being open, GO differed from other 1970's era "gay organizations - in which men were often predominant - were hostile or unwelcoming." At such organizations, Warner noted "confrontations erupted between lesbians and gay men about power and organizational process". Typically lesbian members faced a "profound disinterest on the part of gay men to take up issues important to lesbians, a preponderance of male sexuality and imagery, and organizational structures that kept them powerless".⁹¹ At GO when the issue of sexism arose, it was as in fact as a result of lesbians responding to male imagery.

Canadian artist Evergon, who had done many of GO's dance posters, had donated some of his photographic art.⁹² Some were images nude men. As the women's bar became successful, customers firmly claimed the space as one for women. This was achieved by the taking down of Evergon's works Saturday nights.⁹³ When men learned about this they were upset over what they saw as censorship and a denial of their own sexual liberation.⁹⁴ For the men, male imagery and its availability was a hard won aspect of their cultural and social capital. Interacting with it was an element of gay male sexual habitus. When raised at a board meeting, Marie Robertson recalled men "*going on about artistic expression [while] we were trying to explain to them that this is really hard for*

⁹¹ Warner 2002, p. 80.

⁹² See R Dayman, 'Evergon presents doris', *Body Politic*, no. 17, 1975, p. 12.

⁹³ Warner (2002, p. 177) makes reference to lesbians and that "many of the fights with the men in GO during the seventies were over the dominance of male sexuality. One such incident focused on an art exhibit". The exhibit in question did not occur until 1983. Prior to 1980 I found no evidence of any real strife between gay and lesbian members within GO.

⁹⁴ Among the photos that came down was an Evergon portrait of a fully-clothed Charlie Hill. Barb Macintosh recalls "*we'd be cleaning up at the end of the [women's bar] night and we'd go into the living room space to rescue Charlie because someone [would have] taken it down...because he was a man...[he'd be] behind the couch*". It was revelations about the practise of removing Hill's portrait that first brought the issue to light. "*The women on the board had to say look Charlie came off the wall because [the men] did not know. And they got all upset because Charlie's was a hero and a big symbol. And we had to tell them that we'd taken Evergon's art down*".

some women especially women who are sexual abuse survivors. They don't want to look at this especially in a women's bar". Finally one woman board member stood up and said, "I am sexual abuse survivor and I don't want to look at dicks on the wall here".⁹⁵

Barb MacIntosh felt, "*the guys didn't really want to get [lesbian issues]"* and they took to responding with "*whatever you ladies want is fine*". Yet women board members needed "*men to understand politically what the issues were... [that] we're all in this community; it is important for you to try and understand*".⁹⁶ In essence GO's lesbian members were highlighting the symbolic violence resulting from sexism, objectification and the general negative impact of male sexual habitus. Marie Robertson spent a frustrating a half an hour trying to get the men to 'get it', "*telling them it's not your experience it's ours; don't tell us what your experience is... you will accept this*".⁹⁷ For Barb it was clear the men were saying the whole issue "*doesn't really matter*" to them, while "*we were saying it should matter*" to you. Barb and the other women saw the issue as one of equity. If gay men wanted lesbians to care whether "*the Body Politic is in court or Glad Day books is in court*" on obscenity charges, then the reactions of lesbians to Evergon's photos had better "*matter to them*".⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Marie Robertson.

⁹⁶ Barb MacIntosh. Barb remembers the men began to wonder, "Should the women's art come off the walls" during men's Friday night bar. The lesbians said, "it's up to you". The men held a "big discussion" but made no such move.

⁹⁷ Marie Robertson.

⁹⁸ Barb MacIntosh. Recent events had put *BP* and Glad Day books at top of mind. In June 1982, the *BP* had been acquitted on obscenity charges for the second time. This was but a part of its protracted legal battle with the Ontario's solicitor general stemming from December 1977 raid of its offices. (D LeBlanc, 'Victory for the *BP* – Again', *GO Info*, no. 2, 1982, p. 1). See: Bébout, R 'The trials of the *BP*'. In Rick Bébout, 25 September 1996, viewed on March 2011, <<http://www.clga.ca/Material/Records/docs/hannon/lind/tbpcases.html>>. A staff member at Toronto's Glad Day bookstore had charged with possessing obscene material for distribution in April 1982. In May 1982 Toronto Police returned with a search warrant and conducted an extensive search of Glad Day stock (C Patterson, 'The News: Defending the right to read', *Body Politic*, no. 84, 1982, pp. 8-11).

Not all GO's lesbian board members felt as strongly. Judy Girard *"was okay with the photos being up all the time. I mean, it's a penis"*. Girard believed, *"if you want to be accommodated, you have to be accommodating... why did all the concessions have to be made on the other side [namely, by men] was my argument. Which made me really popular with the guys but not so popular with the girls"*. Realizing the issue could be managed by accommodation, Girard offered the suggestion *"just take [the photos] down during women's bar nights. I mean 'what the hell you guy', be reasonable, we share the space"*. Judy Girard adds *"see women...women wanted to be accommodated but they didn't necessarily want to be accommodating. And that really pissed me off"*.⁹⁹ For Linda Wilson her concern was *"we didn't want [the art] damaged. Because it was a bar and there were intoxicated people at times"*. As to why the issue arose, she says, some *"women at that time were more into having their own space completely devoid of male influences and having photos that were very male oriented was an issue. So the easiest thing to do was to take them down"*.¹⁰⁰

Although the GO men were angry they did not fiercely resist what the women wanted to do. Marie Robertson believes this reflected the growing financial power and influence of lesbians within GO. She remembers at one point, *"all the women stood up and said accept this on faith from us as lesbians"*, this is a big deal, *"accept that or we will leave"*. She adds, *"ultimately it was very important to them [that lesbians] be*

⁹⁹ Judy Girard.

¹⁰⁰ Linda Wilson. Linda Wilson recalled only one other time that the presence of men on Saturday nights was an issue. A long-time GO volunteer had *"decided he wanted to come into the [Gayline] office and work on Saturday nights and he had to go through the women's bar space"*. This quickly became an issue when he refused to change this schedule. *"We finally had to go to the Board and say it's not appropriate for a man to walking into the office at about 9:30 at night through the women's only space"*.

*there,” so in the end the men said, “okay if that's what you need’...Plus [lesbians] were bringing in a lot of money”.*¹⁰¹

A more mundane example of the growing financial muscle and influence of GO’s lesbians were seen during debates over one-ply versus two-ply toilet paper. Judy Girard said, *“I can remember when I was on the GO board...the amount of time we spent discussing things like whether or not we could afford one ply or two ply toilet paper”.*¹⁰² Barb MacIntosh recalls, *“we spent an entire board meeting once, 7 to 11 or midnight...talking about toilet paper...one ply vs. two play, more expense”.* Men *“could not care less”* but *“the women were kind of feminist. We were screaming about vaginal infections and the men were squirming. It turned into a big political feminist issue”* and the lesbian desire for more expensive two-ply prevailed.¹⁰³ Commenting on the larger movement Warner described as *“problematic...gay men’s refusal to take issues advocated by lesbians and lack of commitment to establishing organizational structures and processes to give lesbians power and position”.* However, *“one group that struggled with such issues with a fair degree of success was Gays of Ottawa”.*¹⁰⁴

Linda Wilson points out the matter of Evergon’s photos remained *“internal and wasn’t public,”* and was largely settled through education and compromise.¹⁰⁵ Gays of Ottawa’s successful managing of the issue was surely assisted through its having amended its constitution the previous year, to mandate its board be comprised of 5

¹⁰¹ Marie Robertson.

¹⁰² Judy Girard.

¹⁰³ Barb MacIntosh.

¹⁰⁴ Warner 2002, p. 174-75.

¹⁰⁵ Linda Wilson.

women and 5 men.¹⁰⁶ This move ensured that when Evergon's works became an issue GO's board had sufficient women on the board to argue their case.

In November 1982, *GO Info* editors expressed support for a '50/50' amendment motion, "to ensure an equal share of influence on GO's Board of Directors". With the increase in lesbian participation and membership, "it only makes sense that we should now recognize the importance of this".¹⁰⁷ In the same issue, Barb MacIntosh wrote, "it was time gay men in the movement had the support and benefit of our experience and perspective as lesbians, as women and as feminists".¹⁰⁸

At a special Saturday GO Centre meeting, the constitutional change was debated but with little acrimony. This contrasted sharply with the experience of CHAT. A decade earlier its effort to establish equal board representation was a disaster, leaving many bitter and angry.¹⁰⁹ Remembering that GO meeting, Judy Girard says, "*It was funny because I think a lot of us who went to the debate thinking it was going to be really contentious. But it wasn't that way at all. It was mature and disciplined to be honest...a very principled, amazingly non-controversial debate*".¹¹⁰ At the subsequent annual general meeting (AGM) Barry Deeprise remembers "*Alana Clowes, who is dead now, saying [to the men] 'you're all very nice to us, but we feel like little sisters in big brother's bedroom. And we really shouldn't be there. After that the vote really carried*

¹⁰⁶ The first reference to a '50/50 resolution' came at a board meeting in August 1982 (J. Law Archive 3, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 68, August 17, 1982).

¹⁰⁷ *GO Info*, 'Editorial: A challenge for community building', *GO Info*, no. 6, 1982, p. 2. In the same editorial *GO Info* endorsed a proposal to change GO's name to Gays and Lesbians of Ottawa (GLO). This was defeated at November's AGM.

¹⁰⁸ B MacIntosh, 'GO gains through affirmative action plan', *GO Info*, no. 3, 1982, p. 3. See: J Duggan, '50/50 insures equality and democracy', *GO Info*, no. 6, 1982, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ Warner 2002, p. 80-2; H Spiers, 'CHAT gets a constitution', *Body Politic*, no. 2, 1972, pp. 14-15.

¹¹⁰ Judy Girard.

though”.¹¹¹ At that AGM Linda Wilson recalled “*there was some discussion but I think there was enough women there to fill the spots on the board ultimately*” so the amendment passed.¹¹² Simultaneously Linda Wilson was elected as GO’s first woman president.¹¹³

Reflecting back on the amendment Barb MacIntosh recalls, “*nobody knew if [50/50] was going to work. Certainly it had not worked anywhere else in the country...not really. The men’s and women’s communities in Toronto and Montréal were totally not together*”.¹¹⁴ Perhaps because the impetus for the constitutional change came from the board rather than from the community, it provided the institutional support to ensure its easy passage. Linda Wilson noted, “*it really did take the foresight of board members to drive something like that*”. That a board comprised of 85% men drove the amendment forward was unusual for the time. Linda Wilson believes GO’s executive was willing, “*because the men involved at that time recognized the need to be [something] other than a gay male organization. The men on the board were involved in the evolution of the organization [and] were aware that there needed to be some inclusivity to help the [GO] grow*”. Marie Robertson and Sandy Ginnish were on the board already and “*there was a recognition that there was lesbian community out there...probably not as strong in numbers because women weren’t coming out as much but there were needs...we had to be there to serve women as well. And the only way to make women comfortable was to have parity*”.¹¹⁵ Judy Girard agreed, “*I thought the [GO] guys were extremely classy... really classy guys like Jean Lamoureux, John Duggan*

¹¹¹ Barry Deeprise.

¹¹² Linda Wilson.

¹¹³ *GO Info*, ‘GO elects first woman president’, *GO Info*, no. 7, 1982, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Barb MacIntosh.

¹¹⁵ Linda Wilson.

*and Bob Read and Barry Deepröse. I mean those were classy guys who were prepared to be accommodating. And we were lucky we had some good girls that were being proposed to be on the board”.*¹¹⁶

In later years however, GO struggled to find sufficient women to fill the designated seats. Barb MacIntosh attributed this to a lingering sense that, “*men didn’t understand*” women’s issues. As well lesbians who worked with GO were seen by some women as “*working with the oppressor*”. Barb believes “*women didn’t see a connection between their having a space to discuss issues on Thursday nights, Saturday bar night and women’s dances*” and a need to support GO. It was like, “*we’re happy with things, so there’s no more issues, so why would you be on the board*”? This fact might also explain why the push for the 50/50 amendment to the constitution did not come from the community. Barb points out, we “*never had trouble getting women to work the bar...sometimes with dances...nobody wanted to work they wanted to have fun.*” It was “*easier to get women to work community events but not on the Board. And many women, most women, never seemed to get the importance of the human rights code changes. Women were in the code [therefore] women’s issues that affected lesbians would get addressed*”.¹¹⁷

Community Development & Pink Triangle Services

Gays of Ottawa had sought out a new GO Centre that, according to Peter Demski, could “*be a real community center. That was going to be the GO centre...and that we were really going to serve the community. That was really what the whole thing was in the*

¹¹⁶ Judy Girard.

¹¹⁷ Barb MacIntosh.

early 80s".¹¹⁸ This fuelled an impetus to build community as never before. Blair Johnston recalls, "*it was an exciting time really...it was like [we had] a critical mass of professionals, people who were prepared to use their professional skills as bureaucrats or office workers, white collar workers to try to make this thing work*".¹¹⁹

Here Johnston speaks to GO's leadership and the years between 1980 and 1984. His emphasis on GO's makeup, its 'critical mass of professionals', was the first time I had heard GO's leaders described in these terms. Certainly since its founding, GO's board members had come from variety of backgrounds, from students to civil servants to accredited professionals. Johnston implies however, his era was marked by a change as GO's leadership composition tipped in favour of professionals. And this would appear to be true. Linda Wilson believes, "*probably at least 50% if not more*" of GO's board member were federal civil servants.¹²⁰ Wilson was a research scientist working the National Research Council. As for other board members, long-time board member Sandy Ginnish, at this time worked, as a research officer for Indian and Northern Affairs. Judy Girard was a trained social worker working at Indian Affairs and Northern Development (sic). Girard's skills would be especially germane at a time when lesbians and gays "*were not getting very good services in terms of counseling. I mean shock treatment was still a kind of a popular treatment...we were not getting appropriate social services or recognition of couples in hospitals and stuff like that. I think my social work background held a lot of weight in the sense that was an era that [GO was] looking*

¹¹⁸ Peter Demski.

¹¹⁹ Blair Johnston.

¹²⁰ Linda Wilson.

at".¹²¹ Lloyd Plunket, the chief engine behind *GO Info*'s becoming a tabloid paper in 1982, was a graphic designer. Bob Read was a senior computer programmer with Digital. Barry Deeprise was a human resources specialist with National Defense.

Blair Johnston had been a member of the armed forces and worked at Foreign Affairs. In the early eighties Blair worked for the Atomic Energy Control Board, and was a self-described "*fair bureaucrat but my background is in strategic planning, policy, understanding what's was going on, analysis of what needed to be done*". His involvement in GO was "*perfect because I could see my skill-set fit a need. [This was] a very important need at the time, both for myself [and] the community at large*". Ultimately, Johnson became the main author of many of GO's eighties-era briefs to Parliament, such as *Cleaning up the Acts*. However, these writing skills were largely kept secret as Blair was "*not out, not at all...I had a top secret security clearance. I'd been with the military for many years. I was working on the nuclear program both for the weapons side and the peaceful side...it was really dicey to do anything that would bring me out*". When Johnston came out in "1982-83....I'd resolved in my own mind if there was ever an attempt to blackmail, it would be futile... I was coming up for up for security review, so I made sure a lot of my friends knew". Once out, Johnston sought a greater profile. His by-line often appeared in *GO Info* and as GO's vice president he

¹²¹ Judy Girard. The reference to the 'recognition of couples in hospitals' is a comment on the poor reception partners of people with HIV commonly received from hospitals in mid to late eighties. Girard completed a Masters of Social Work at Ottawa's Carleton University. She fulfilled its research requirement as "*the first student [in the department] who did it on the gay issue. My issue was called Dykes & Pyschs and I looked at three different types of counsellors: social workers, shrinks, and psychologists. And I tested them on the extent to which they were gay positive*". Judy then gave the "*results to the Gayline. So the ones that ranked well would get the referrals and the ones that ranked badly well, we saved our people from those*".

appears alongside President Barb MacIntosh to present GO's submission to the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution in April 1984.¹²²

Smith (1999) and Warner (2002) both concluded that late seventies and early eighties did witness a shift in the leadership of Canada's lesbian and gay movement, with an influx of professional, middle class actors. Simultaneously the movement moved away from its sexual liberation roots to focus more on rights-seeking. Warner noted that as the seventies drew to a close the movement increasingly saw rights-seeking as an end in itself rather than a means to an end, namely liberation. Fuelling this was "the assumption of [movement] leadership by activists not imbued with the liberation analysis of the seventies, individuals more decidedly middle class, professionals (especially lawyers), and bureaucrats who embraced heterosexual models and mores".¹²³ Smith reaches a similar conclusion, relaying that by eighties the movement's sixties-inspired counter-culture elements had died off. "The radicalism of the sixties generation had dissipated over the course of the seventies and set the scene for the middle-class leadership that would dominate the subsequent period of lesbian and gay organizing."¹²⁴

Certainly for GO in the seventies and early eighties, addressing issues of class or race were not top of mind.¹²⁵ Asked if GO considered class or race, the answer was a consistent, 'no'. Charlie Hill stated "*he was not unconscious of those issues. They were always there but I don't think those were big issues we discussed*".¹²⁶ Marie Robertson

¹²² B MacIntosh & B Johnston, 'Brief to the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution', *GO Info*, no. 5, 1984, p. 4.

¹²³ Warner 2002, p. 191-2.

¹²⁴ Smith 1999, p. 146.

¹²⁵ Warner (2002, pp. 183-84) points out that the Toronto group Wages Due Lesbians was probably the first Canadian lesbian and gay group to address issues of race.

¹²⁶ Charlie Hill.

was more succinct: *"Nope, not in those days...the issue was more sexism"*.¹²⁷ Judy Girard believes it simplistic to believe only middle class people ran the show, *"because I come from a working-class background, as well and Sandy [Ginnish]...the first woman on the board [and] a first nations individual, who is from a reserve in Nova Scotia"*. Judy Girard acknowledges how the *"GO board, it was largely people who were university educated...But that doesn't describe the complexities of their backgrounds and stuff"*.¹²⁸ Barb MacIntosh is also critical of portrayals of GO and movement leadership as middle class. *"I think it's classism...People look and judge and say 'oh those people wrote briefs and presented them and did this and this they must have been middle class' because ipso facto working class people can't do that"* In fact, MacIntosh believes most of the people involved with GO in her era were working class, in part because this described who worked in social services generally.¹²⁹

However, what remains to be done is a detailed class analysis of seventies-era movement leadership. Many GO leaders were civil servants but some held low level jobs not requiring a security clearance, freeing them from RCMP scrutiny. Some worked lower income, lower responsibility jobs to be more readily available for activism. Many undoubtedly aspired to be middle class but in the seventies there were not. Broad descriptions of lesbian and gay (and feminist) movement leadership as middle class may be predicated on an equally broad misrecognition of the movement's habitus. Here we can think of Bourdieu who in *Distinction* (1992) describes how consistent, class-distinguishing consumption acts to confirm for other actors, another actor's class position. Such consumption is not consistent however. A middle-class consumer

¹²⁷ Marie Robertson. See: G Spurgeon, & M Robertson, 'Gender Justice!' *GO Info*, no. 2, 1976, p.7.

¹²⁸ Judy Girard.

¹²⁹ Barb MacIntosh.

occasionally purchases a better (upper) class of wine or attends a lower-class entertainment.¹³⁰ Gays of Ottawa's executive understood the benefits of appearing to be effective, organized, strategic, skilled, literate, and connected actors. As socially stigmatized social actors they *knew*, social credibility was achieved by competently acting the part. Therefore they strategically enacted a middle class habitus. All of which acted to shield the class diversity of the leadership of GO and the movement.

Gays of Ottawa clearly benefited from professional actors joining the organization. Yet when in the early eighties GO undertakes a period of sustained community development it was John Duggan, a non-professional, who emerged as its driving force. Blair Johnston states, "*Building a community, it sometimes requires conceptual analysis that goes beyond, what, just outrage. That was a time when John Duggan was very influential in this...he had that concept of community*" Johnston adds the move to 'build community' "*made perfect strategic sense, that was what was needed to move things to the next level*".¹³¹ John Duggan "*worked at National Research Council in the publications division...supervising the filing of orders. My attitude in those days was it was a job that gave me enough money to pay rent and buy food. Because my passion was gay social change or gay liberation... [I could] hang up my hat at 5 and leave it all behind*". John Duggan was, "*committed to making GO a community organization...I was committed to that while being president of GO*" in 1979. Blair Johnston emphasizes that the John Duggan knew, "*we can't just be little old GO and*

¹³⁰ Bourdieu 1984, p. 232.

¹³¹ Blair also acknowledged David Garmaise who had "*pushed hard to get some kind of response from the government which we could use as a lever to start working on government departments*" through the NGRC. As well as activists Chris Bearchell and George Smith, "*he did stuff on the Right to Privacy...he did an awful lot of good solid work on the concept of community*".

*have a nice library and a nice little bar and a nice little place. We're got to reach out to the larger community and see what their needs are".*¹³²

An important yet mundane event made Duggan's community aspirations all the more possible, namely his becoming GO's first paid staff member. Staffing the Centre with someone to answer phones, receive deliveries of supplies, etc. was essential to meet practical needs, and, enhance GO's credibility as a *real* organization. In October 1981, Duggan proposed to the Board that GO apply for a \$15,000 city grant for a 'volunteer organizer'. Initially the Board was cool. Ever cautious about structure and governance, it was concerned that GO's current by-laws did not cover what John Duggan presented as seeking funding for an "umbrella group for gay organizations in the city". However, Duggan's idea did align with GO's community development goal. By November the Board agreed after Duggan had met with Councillor Joe Cassey.

Councillor Cassey believed GO's application "had a good chance, but would require a large selling job" at city hall.¹³³ In May 1982, *GO Info* reported GO received a \$10,000 city grant for a volunteer coordinator. With fall municipal elections looming, the City rejected GO's application fearing "the issue would be too hot politically".¹³⁴ In response Cassey worked to convince other councillors. Here the importance of Denis LeBlanc's relationship with Cassey was clear. As he says, "*Joe happened to be a neighbour of mine...two houses down from where I lived. So whenever there was a*

¹³² Blair Johnston.

¹³³ J. Law Archive 2, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 48, October 6, 1981; Ibid, Board Meeting No. 51, November 24, 1981. Duggan had also written to 8 gay organizations and 12 social service agencies for letters of support.

¹³⁴ *GO Info*, 'GO Gets City Hall Grant', *GO Info*, no. 1, 1982, p. 1.

problem it wasn't difficult to reach out to a councillor". ¹³⁵ June's *GO Info* announced Duggan had been hired as the staff member. ¹³⁶

So committed was Duggan, that he left his Research Council job to be GO's staff. Remembering all the *"people [at GO] who believed in doing something beyond themselves...who...had some kind of will of desire to do something for people other than themselves."* Barry Deeprise gave as an example: *"John Duggan [who] didn't have to work at 175 Lisgar all by himself all day, every day".* ¹³⁷ Having staff to deal with running a community centre, allowed executive members to focus on initiatives such as boosting the number of discussion groups hosted at the Centre. Blair Johnston describes the John Duggan's position was *"both an executive director and [guy who did] Joe jobs. He did an awful lot of stuff in terms of getting things moving".* Because most GO members had fulltime work, John Duggan was *"absolutely essential if you wanted to move correspondence...anticipate things that could or will happen".* ¹³⁸ The following year GO again approached the City for funds but councillors succeeded in blocking it. During the debate Alderman Jim Durrell who became Ottawa's mayor in 1985, stated other applicant groups *"were more valuable than GO...he could see no merit in the organization".* ¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Joe Cassey was strong GO supporter. Denis LeBlanc recalls "Joe Cassey was instrumental" in stopping Anita Bryant from speaking at a city's Civic Centre in 1978. *"He looked into that and her lease was gone...so she didn't have anywhere to talk."*

¹³⁶ D LeBlanc, 'GO Hires Staff', *GO Info*, no. 2, 1982, p. 3.

¹³⁷ Barry Deeprise.

¹³⁸ Blair Johnston.

¹³⁹ D LeBlanc, 'City council says no to subsidy', *GO Info*, no. 4, 1983, p. 1. Gays of Ottawa's PAC had lobbied for months for this second grant, drawing support from Ottawa's civil liberties association. Going into the vote the PAC realized support was tied as it was certain of the support of "seven aldermen plus the Mayor". When the final vote ended in a tie GO's application failed. Jim Durrell would continue to be unsupportive of GO's efforts. Even after GO's initial grant funds ran out Duggan continued to work at GO while collecting unemployment benefits. However after these two years he was forced to find other work.

Additionally, GO began to work at developing smaller organizations to meet specific, often social needs while simultaneously fostering a sense of community. Blair Johnston recalls how many potential gay community members led their social life through trips to Montréal or private house parties. Blair believed it vital to GO's development that it "*infiltrate those. To find out where the source of power is; where [GO] can get information; where do you get money*". In the eighties, "*it was very important to have the kind of help that was not forthcoming [to GO] earlier*". Johnston attended house parties, "*talking to people, saying you should donate some money...whose going to look after the gay kids of the future if GO doesn't have a phone line*".¹⁴⁰ In response he was shocked by "A-gays" suggesting "*they had money, they had homes... [Had] made their lives work...if you couldn't reach that level, well you're a loser*". When it came to the community, "*they did not see where there was any kind of community.*"

As a manifestation of its views on community and community development, GO began "*setting up these little social groups [the] Rideau Speedeaus (sic) for example, they [have members who] just want to swim. They don't want to march in the streets*". In order to build a community up, "*you set up as many organizations as you can*". All of this resulted from our coming "*up with a concept called community development where you spin off as many organizations as you can, and if they fail, they [clearly] did not meet a need. If they were successful they are meeting a need in the community*". GO's "*thing*

¹⁴⁰ At this stage in GO's history Peter Demski estimated it had a core group of donors of "*oh, maybe 50 people. It was always the same people who responded basically. You knew who you could count on and who you couldn't*".

[was] to meet community needs and develop community around meeting those needs”.
*So that was the beginning really of PTS”.*¹⁴¹

The first reference to GO opening a separate charitable organization came in October 1981, through its exploration of “incorporating Gayline as a non-profit organization with charitable status”.¹⁴² Mike Johnston explains why the Gayline was the initial focus. “By 1979 at least there’s a core group of people...working on the Gayline [with] a social service focus. So that even though they were certainly part of [GO], they didn’t have the same cross affiliations with the rest of the organization”.¹⁴³ That GO’s phone service had a good record of stability added to its credibility. Initially GO board member Jean Lamoureux was heavily involved in exploring establishing a charity.¹⁴⁴ Lamoureux, who worked for the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation, began to explore GO’s establishing a residential co-op. Soon this initiative had to separate from GO to limit its organizational liability, becoming a separate organization. Ultimately, this work culminated in the building of Ottawa’s Abiwin Co-op.¹⁴⁵

Roger Galipeau stressed the prime rationale for setting up PTS was a belief that “if we separated the political side from the social side we might have better chances at funding”. This was a timely move. Many of GO’s “core people were burning out, the

¹⁴¹ Blair Johnston.

¹⁴² J. Law Archive 2, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 48, October 6, 1981. In 1979 the Board had received a report on GO itself seeking charity status (J. Law Archive 1, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 7, April 3, 1979).

¹⁴³ Mike Johnstone also points out with “the Board and the PAC there tended to be a lot of overlap” owing to political-focus of key members. “But at the same time it was recognized that the PAC was not the whole organization”.

¹⁴⁴ J. Law Archive 2, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 41, May 19, 1981. It was Jean who attended a workshop on fundraising and charitable status on behalf of GO.

¹⁴⁵ Gays of Ottawa first began to explore this in January 1982 through a relationship with the City of Ottawa (J. Law Archive 3, Minutes: Board meeting, No. 53, January 5, 1982). By July 1982 a committee of including Karen Venima, Roger Galipeau and Jean Lamoureux were preparing a Canada Mortgage and Housing application (J. Law Archive 3, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 65, July 6, 1982). In June 1985 Abiwin’s first residents moved into its existing heritage buildings as it built an apartment building.

political activists at the time were burning out also". The sheer number of hours such people devoted to GO, if diminished, would impact GO's cultural and social capital. Their efforts often made it possible for GO to do a lot with little economic capital.¹⁴⁶ But Galipeau's comment also speaks to transitions that many lesbian and gay movement organizations faced as its initial wave of activists moved on and/or were replaced by a new generation. Remember here Barb MacIntosh recalling how hard it was to get volunteers to work dances. As the movement made its generational transition, it drew on a second generation of activists who enjoyed benefits of movement successes but were less inclined to put in the hours an earlier generation had. They may also have believed 'things are better now,' and felt less driven to work the countless hours social change required, most spent doing not very interesting work.¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, as a registered charity PTS could effectively fundraise to pay for its own services. With the emergence of the HIV pandemic, GO was already feeling a greater need for services. The first GO reference to HIV came in July 1982, during a discussion about a forum on "gay transmitted diseases and gay cancer". In September, the Board learned that long time member Denis LeBlanc was ill, and PAC's work was suffering as a result.¹⁴⁸ The need for an unprecedented level of yet to be imagined social services, was slowly becoming clear.

While PTS would allow for expanded services, the main rationale was to access funds and funding. For Linda Wilson, PTS was "*a way to get more money to support the*

¹⁴⁶ Roger Galipeau.

¹⁴⁷ In her study of the Memphis Gay Coalition, Buring also noted the organization struggled to deal with generational changes in leadership. Specifically that a second generation of activists was less willing to put in the number of volunteer hours the previous generation had (Buring 1996, pp. 132-33).

¹⁴⁸ J. Law Archive 3, Minutes: Board Meeting No. 65, July 6, 1982; *Ibid* Minutes: Board Meeting No. 69, September 7 1982.

*[social] services because GO was generating [its] funds with the bar and managing the centre. And we were using the GO Centre a lot. We had something going almost every night". As a result if GO were to add services, the Centre was already busy pretty much full time. However, with a charity "you could make donations...get a taxable receipt... we thought we'd get people making donations" to fund services. Therefore we would need to "split [GO and PTS] to create a mechanism to provide funds".*¹⁴⁹ Peter Demski agreed: *"Once the Center was established it became apparent I guess that the Centre wasn't really funding much beyond its expenses...we still needed more money to do the job we'd really like to be doing"*¹⁵⁰. Gays of Ottawa's growing profile and desire to expand services and its community development work had paid off. Roger Galipeau said, *"we were creating an umbrella organization...because we were expanding so much and growing so much it was getting difficult to maintain all the various groups [we had] going...we needed more money"*.¹⁵¹ Galipeau's analysis reflects how at this time, GO remained a field unto itself when it came the meeting of lesbian and gay needs in Ottawa.

Establishing PTS required an enormous amount of time and effort to complete applications, attend meetings, etc. Responsibility for doing so was primarily taken up by Judy Girard and Marie Robertson because of their social and cultural capital. Girard was already a trained social worker. Robertson had become one and was heavily involved in HIV care. Linda Wilson recalled, *"Judy Girard was a wonderful apply-for-money-machine...she and a few people were good at it, good from way back. [She] applied to any program that could provide some funding, federal, provincial or municipal"*.¹⁵² Judy

¹⁴⁹ Linda Wilson.

¹⁵⁰ Peter Demksi.

¹⁵¹ Roger Galipeau.

¹⁵² Linda Wilson.

Girard had not been on the board long before talk of setting up a “charitable institution” began, “so I got involved. That was kind of my job...to investigate with Revenue Canada and lawyers, how an organization could be established. That was my main role”.

Girard had the social and cultural capital, “because I was a social worker. And [we] were creating a social service agency...it was obvious I should be” the one. Asked if she had any allies in government to assist, Judy Girard said, “I knew [GO] had them all over the place. I didn’t really have a spy in Revenue Canada when I was doing PTS stuff...although I did have a gay lawyer who [was] with one of the largest firms in Ottawa which was tremendously helpful”. Additionally, as had long been the case for GO, Judy Girard was helped by ‘donations’ made by various government departments: “photocopying...secretarial services, you got it. Yes, the federal government was very good to us...do work with their colour photocopiers...yup!”¹⁵³

Marie Robertson does not remember her role in establishing PTS very well. However, Blair Johnston recalls a particular strength of hers. Marie Robertson actively shepherded GO’s PTS applications through various agencies. This was needed because “there had been applications in the past that were either ‘black-holed’ or returned after long periods of time with some kind of failure [by GO] to justify what you’re doing”. Without Marie Robertson’s ‘shepherding’ PTS “would never have happened”. Blair stressed Marie Robertson accomplished this by “doing her best ‘lipstick lesbian’”, namely dressing nicely for her visit to Revenue Canada.¹⁵⁴ She would go there and ask,

¹⁵³ Judy Girard.

¹⁵⁴ Robertson has expressed anger over how “as a fem dyke, someone who wore makeup” other lesbians often made her feel as if “I was selling out of my sisters”. How to effectively welcome a diversity of individuals, people enacting different forms of habitus, has been an on-going struggle for the movement since the beginning. *GO Info*’s premiere issue carried an editorial stating GO’s perspective on this. Gays of Ottawa admonished lesbians and gays for (often) rejecting butch lesbians and gay queens.

“Well, how’s claim number XXX coming through”? The staff, well “they’d think, well you’re such a sweet little honey; I’ll look that right up for you”. When Marie Robertson learned GO’s application was on someone’s desk she would say, “Well show me so and so... [Asking] what’s the problem”? As Blair recalled, “she took it from one desk to another desk to finally get it through”.¹⁵⁵ As a result, PTS received its charitable status in 1984, becoming according to Denis LeBlanc, “the very first gay charity in Canada”.¹⁵⁶

Pink Triangle had to be a distinct entity. As Judy Girard explained, as *“a social service agency we could write a minister advocating for certain types of social services...[what] we couldn’t do is take the money and buy a bunch of banners and support a demonstration. We could advocate but not lobby...give money to a political campaign”*.¹⁵⁷ Linda Wilson emphasizes, *“certainly [GO] wanted to continue the political aspect...it needed to continue its life from a political aspect, and, as a political organization as its own”*.¹⁵⁸ Here Blair Johnston stresses that *“all actions are political. Every charity is a political action, a political activity. But there’s a government criteria. Meet the criteria. You may have to twist some words; draft an application in a certain way”*.¹⁵⁹ As Judy Girard put it, *“when creating PTS, we had to make this huge line in the sand between what was social services, education, and, what’s political. And oh man, I*

This demonstrated they followed “straight society in their non-acceptance of diversity” (‘Butch and Queen’, *GO Info*, no. 1, 1972, p. 1). Armstrong (2000, pp. 101-02) argued the only through the acceptance of the logic and utility of a shared lesbian and gay identity was it “possible to reconcile pride, rights, and sexual expression” into one unified movement.

¹⁵⁵ Blair Johnston.

¹⁵⁶ Denis LeBlanc.

¹⁵⁷ Judy Girard.

¹⁵⁸ Linda Wilson.

¹⁵⁹ Blair Johnston.

*learned to bull-shit like nuts [on applications] to make sure”.*¹⁶⁰ Still it was feared that era homophobia might result in GO’s applications drawing extra scrutiny, so meeting any criteria exactly was essential. *“That was one of the things worked on; to be absolutely certain that everything that was being done, fit into the [funding] framework”.*¹⁶¹ Here we can see GO strategically enacting the habitus of a competent, responsible social actor.

Keeping overt politics out of PTS would also appeal to a potential donor base GO had never successfully engaged with, one that had long regarded GO as ‘too gay and too political’. Barry Deeprise remembers attending house parties hosted by largely closeted gay men, *“in quite high positions. And I was naive enough to say ‘yes I’m working at the Gayline’, at GO and I’m on the board now. And people visibly drew away from me. It was horror somehow, someone had infiltrated their group. But where they got roped in was through PTS”.* Such people were unwilling to write ‘gay’ on a cheque. Hence the acronym GO and now PTS. *“Well just like Pink Triangles Services; that was a safe name...It was closeted enough and honoured our past at the time”.* Gays of Ottawa was now happy to access such people by employing PTS with its appealingly non-gay, politically-neutral name. Deeprise remembers GO executive members did so not with *“hostility... [But] maybe a bit of puzzlement”.*¹⁶²

Barb MacIntosh points out how in the early eighties *“we still had huge problems getting people to donate. The richer people of Ottawa were totally in the closet and were not going to write a cheque with Gays of Ottawa on it ever”.* As GO came to realize government funding was not yet in the cards it said, *“let’s set up an organization that a) does not have gay in [the name] which was an issue for some of the older gay activists,*

¹⁶⁰ Judy Girard.

¹⁶¹ Blair Johnston.

¹⁶² Barry Deeprise.

and, let's make it a charitable organization so people can have tax receipts". As to the potential for the 'pink triangle' with its reference to Nazi persecution to put people off donating, Barb reminds us that "in those days nobody who was not out gay even knew what a pink triangle was anyway".¹⁶³ The capacity to issue tax receipts was important also. Peter Demski recalled that in the "GO days...usually you'd get a \$20 cheque or the odd \$50 or the very rare \$100. But then PTS got off the ground...they were much better at getting \$100 donation cheques than [GO] had ever been".¹⁶⁴

At least initially, GO hoped perhaps naively, that it could funnel funds from PTS back to GO. Barry Deeprise recalled, *"I think people thought it would be easier to switch funding into GO. I think it even occurred to me; we'll collect the money and give it to GO. Well you couldn't do that...I don't think that had been thought through completely".¹⁶⁵ Barb MacIntosh recalled thinking, "in the beginning PTS [would be] a paper cheat. GO was going to keep doing the same thing... [PTS] can get money". Perhaps too GO "could probably get grants to fund a PTS staff person who could do some GO stuff on the side". Augmenting GO financially though PTS was not legally possible but it was not an immediate concern. The GO bar was doing quite well and as Barb said, "we saw no decline in the future. It was the peak, the heyday".¹⁶⁶*

In the end the financial relationship between the two, both housed at the Centre was (legitimately) symbiotic. During its first few years PTS operated out of the Centre. Linda Wilson states, *"In the first year PTS did not have charitable status...everyone continued working...under GO because we didn't have any separate money".* Then

¹⁶³ Barb MacIntosh.

¹⁶⁴ Peter Demski.

¹⁶⁵ Barry Deeprise.

¹⁶⁶ Barb MacIntosh.

“PTS paid part of the rent because of services that were being held [at GO]...the Gayline and various things...then [once] PTS was generating income it paid for part of the space which helped free up some funds for GO to do other things”.¹⁶⁷ Rental income was certainly important to GO but Barry Deeprise points out PTS benefited in other ways. “Now I have to say that GO also made it much easier for PTS to survive because they took care of all the logistics. If you want a light bulb changed [GO] took care of it. And that’s not fun stuff. And that made things real easy for PTS”.¹⁶⁸

Deeprise highlights the cultural and symbolic capital afforded GO and PTS by the Centre, which “gave tremendous stability to the community”. Eventually the (PTS founded) “AIDS Committee of Ottawa [at the Centre which] was always kind of a central spot. Of course the Gayline was there, discussion groups were there, the library”.¹⁶⁹ Barb indicated the Centre’s value was self-evident: “we could not have been able to build community without that physical Centre...having a physical place helped...the Lisgar Centre was wonderful”. Running a physical building had a downside however. Meeting its day-to-day mundane operational needs did not inspire. Barb recalls, “Running the Centre was ‘okay’. It was good in the sense that you did it in order to build community but I never joined the Board so I could order toilet paper or run a bar”.¹⁷⁰ Barry Deeprise expressed a similar sentiment about the GO bar. “That bar; there was just an endless amount of bureaucracy to get it open. What I really remember will be Board meetings and endless discussions about the fucking bar. They would last to midnight. I mean how many centimetres high [the bar should be], all this crap. You know, I don’t

¹⁶⁷ Linda Wilson.

¹⁶⁸ Barry Deeprise.

¹⁶⁹ Barry Deeprise.

¹⁷⁰ Barb MacIntosh.

*remember dealing with many substantive issues aside from the bar. It just went on and on and on". And then after all this effort, ultimately "the men's bar completely failed because [by then] there were any number of discos that men would go to".*¹⁷¹

Ultimately, while running GO's bar took a huge amount of energy it helped propel the establishment of PTS because of some who believed a credible social service could not be running a bar. Blair Johnston points out, "*Well [running a bar] was not in the purview of a charity. There were issues of alcohol and alcoholism...in that; should GO be running a bar because we are encouraging alcoholism*". Blair recalls the bar was "*heavily debated in the community at the time, especially between the lesbian community and gay men. Because gay men are socialized in bars and women were not...so there was a lot of friction and twisting on that*".¹⁷² Barb MacIntosh recalls, "*The main reason for making PTS was money. But we did have discussions regarding the bar because that was unethical. Some women in the 80s [believed] GO should not be running a women's' bar and making money off of women's alcoholism*". And the money to be made off the women's community was significant; far, far outdistancing the amount the men's community contributed.

Gays of Ottawa's men's bar failed and soon men's attendance at community dances dropped in the mid-eighties, while women's dances remained very popular, and, lucrative. Barb remembers, "*doing dances we'd usually make two, three or four thousand on a women's dance...and we had a dance every month...on top of the bar revenue on Sat night which was another couple thousand. We probably had maybe \$5-10,000 a month income just from women*". However, by the late eighties revenue from

¹⁷¹ Barry Deeprise.

¹⁷² Blair Johnston.

women dances and the women's bar declined. This was because *"a lot less women drinking...when the women's community got really big into AA and substance abuse, then [declining revenue] started to be an issue"*. Barb said, *"People still came out as a social event but if I'm out and drinking three pops...instead of a case of beer"* GO was making less money. By this time PTS had departed the Centre to open its own office. Thus GO could no longer rely on the rental income. This furthered the decline initiated by its establishing PTS.

Flush with the success of having established PTS, it would be a year or two before GO began to feel some of the disquieting effects of what it they had created. Initially there was just the work of two agencies to run, by a joint GO/PTS board. While this worked well at first, Barb MacIntosh recalls the workload was getting more taxing all the time. The combined board started to realize *"we couldn't manage both [organizations] at once. We were losing the men to AIDS and we were [all] getting burnt out"*. With the toll of exhaustion and loss mounting, a decision was taken to create two distinct boards of directors.

Within the larger lesbian and gay organizational field things were changing rapidly. The movement's very success was having some unexpected effects. Barry Deeprise recalls, *"gradually what happened of course was the social services stuff, overtook the political stuff with [our] various triumphs"* as a movement, for example the 1986 decision by Ontario to add sexual orientation to its Human Rights Code. As a result, *"it [(political change)] was less pressing. So services became big and...of course services went out to PTS"*. Deeprise adds that in Ottawa, as had long been the case, *"people would support providing services where as they wouldn't support political*

activity. This really took a money maker out of GO".¹⁷³ This reality went some way to explain the enormous success PTS had with its first real attempt at fundraising. Held in an elegant room in Ottawa's (former) Museum and Nature, Blair Johnston recalls "*we had donations for \$100, \$200, \$250, \$500, coming in. I think we raised \$35,000!! For PTS!...that was outrageous for a gay group at the time. Compared to March of Dimes or United Way it was peanuts. But for a gay group at that time ...*"¹⁷⁴ Between its founding in 1971 and 1984, the total revenue raised by GO from members' dues, dances and its bar would never amount to this.

Barry Deeprise implied that movement's successes had robbed it of some of its energy and organizing drive thereby elevating the appeal and profile of (non-political) service provision. This unexpected effect of success was not without precedent in Canada. Smith highlights the case of Association pour les droits des gais du Québec (ADGQ). When Québec acted in 1977 to add sexual orientation protections to its Charte des droits et libertés de la personne this undermined the "organizational base for an ongoing provincial gay rights organization". What had been a principle goal and rallying point in other provinces was no more. Before "Québec gay and lesbian groups [could]...solidify their organizational base" a key cause celeb of the movement was no more.¹⁷⁵ As a result Québec lost a valuable form of cultural capital and a target for counter pedagogic action.

While there remained in Canada plenty for GO and the movement to work on, to mobilize as capital, the nature of this effort was evolving. Barb recalls that increasingly the work of social change was becoming "*more of a legal thing and less of a political*

¹⁷³ Barry Deeprise.

¹⁷⁴ Blair Johnston.

¹⁷⁵ Smith 1999, p. 48, 57.

thing. Things like gay marriage, getting kicked out of the armed forces, human rights codes [all] started to [involve legal court cases the dragged on for years]. For Barb this reflected how *“social change [had] really became embedded in the social structure...social change was happening in the courts...[it] was happening in business and in recreation”*. For your average volunteer or for Barb, *“there [was] nothing I could do for a court case”*.¹⁷⁶ To take part in this kinds of legal struggle, the cultural, political, social and symbolic capital required, was simply too specialized for anyone at GO or PTS to engage with. As a result GO which had retained the political portfolio, found itself with a diminishing set of galvanizing actions. Court cases hardly inspired enthusiasm (until you win) and placed too many (capital) limitations on which social actors could take part.

As a result increasingly Gays of Ottawa found its field position being supplanted by PTS. Its remaining capital was becoming a little less relevant and less valuable. Upon its decision to create two distinct boards of directors, GO opened itself to an influx of new blood from the community. People with professional or accredits skill sets that PTS required; new kinds of capital. As Barb recalls, *“we made a very conscious decision to bring people from the community who were interested in [social services] onto into the new [PTS] board. The A-gay social worky (sic) crowd [with whom] there was some fairly major political and philosophical differences”*. Primarily these new people were less political and less fired-up to change the world. Their focus was on the individual. Barb found *“between those of us on the GO board and the PTS board...the underlying values and philosophy upon which [GO/PTS] it was built, as different,”* becoming more neutral

¹⁷⁶ Barb MacIntosh. Here Barb acknowledged EGALE was engaged in political work but this was a separate organization, whose rising profile would only diminish the value of GO's role or capital.

and service oriented¹⁷⁷. Some GO members did go over to PTS, such as Barry Deeprose who Barb highlighted as an “*exception...probably the only one,*” who remained politically engaged.

Had GO undermined itself by giving up its best and brightest? Judy Girard is not sure if this was the case. “*I don’t know if it was individuals who then left and took more of a vision [with them]... that might be a little overstated*”. She wonders if perhaps it was becoming “*easier to support PTS activities as opposed to GO’s activities. It was harder [for GO because] PTS of course [became] the social service in town for gays*”. Gays of Ottawa as part of its changed mandate became “*one of many advocacy kind of groups, such as EGALE and of course in the AIDS Committee of Ottawa*”. For Judy Girard, GO “*still had a role but it was less easy to figure out. And maybe the people who were on the GO board [after] the split happened, I don’t know maybe they weren’t the right people to carry it forward with that vision*”.¹⁷⁸ Barb MacIntosh is more adamant that “*yes*”, GO did “*give the best parts of GO to people who were not loyal to the other parts, [namely GO]. We did give the best parts away, that was the good stuff. Who wants to do briefs to the Senate Committee on porn and prostitution? So it was like all the good parts we had made and built, we gave away...to people who didn’t appreciate them*”. Barb does acknowledge that “*part of this is natural when you build an org, you never like or approve of what happens after*”.¹⁷⁹

However, MacIntosh who was GO’s president when the PTS board was established, speaks to a bit of resentment about ‘who’ GO turned the best parts of itself over to. For years GO had tried largely unsuccessfully to engage (if only for their

¹⁷⁷ Barb MacIntosh.

¹⁷⁸ Judy Girard.

¹⁷⁹ Judy Girard.

donations) with Ottawa's less political, better off, A-gays, those people GO's executive had known would never write 'gay' on a cheque. With the establishment of PTS, GO had finally engaged with them—through giving them PTS. Barb stresses that GO's executive, *"we weren't anti-A gay but there was a certain mentality among people like John Duggan, Heidi MacDonell, Peter Demski, Lloyd Plunket, Denis...[who] spent a major part of their adult years, for no credit, recognition, no money, and taking risks...and getting shit from the community no matter what you did"*. For Barb, *"not only did [the new PTS people] hide all through the seventies in the suburbs...now [they] came in and took away a whole good part of the organization"*. Barb then adds, *"but we gave it to them...afterwards it did feel like, 'well you came in here and took it away from us...it's a bit irrational"*.

Aside from such hurt feelings or resentment, all agree that the split with PTS was overwhelmingly amicable. There is no evidence at all of strife or discord. Judy Girard, stresses GO and PTS 'split' with each other, *"not broke away because it was very amicable... it wasn't like that at all. We shared the space for God's sake"*.¹⁸⁰ Events were unfolding naturally, albeit with a little disappointment. And then as far as Barry Deeprise believes, *"at that point GO kind of stalled. The political direction was less clear. There's a fair amount in fault-finding to be frank. Board meetings would run for hours and hours, dealing with issues, bureaucracy"*.¹⁸¹ Gays of Ottawa retained its social advocacy, political action and social activities. However, Judy Girard believes, *"in a sense unfortunately... I don't know if this was a causal agent or whatever but it seemed*

¹⁸⁰ Judy Girard.

¹⁸¹ Barry Deeprise.

that when PTS broke away, GO kind of lost its way...and I don't know they are ever found their way again".¹⁸²

¹⁸² Judy Girard.

Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

Everything and everyone has its time. Each moving through a unique life-course until it reaches an end. In 1995, Gays of Ottawa, now identified by the unwieldy, Association for Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Ottawa (ALGBO) ceased operating.¹ The change in GO's name reflected changes in its field. Increasingly in the 1990s lesbian and gay communities were challenged by bisexuals to be more inclusive. By 1995, ALGBO had been reduced to a small office and was \$13,000 in debt. Thanks to an intensive effort, driven primarily by long-term volunteer Alex Johnston and Joanne Law, the debt was paid off.

This research considered Gays of Ottawa well before GO reached its own end, considering how it did what it did. Using the theoretical lens of Bourdieu's logic of practise, I examined the forms of capital GO possessed, and its practices (its habitus), mobilized as a means of establishing and defining GO as a field unto itself and its position within a lesbian and gay social movement field. The nature of much of the capital Bourdieu's approach takes into account is ephemeral, unremarkable, and even mundane. Yet this method considered all of GO's capital and practice, uncovering the richness and power of the most mundane capital. Virtually and permanently poor in terms of economic capital, GO was simultaneously rich in cultural, social, political and symbolic capital. It is a consideration of these varied forms of necessary, instrumental capital that my research brings to the table.

¹ In 1998, ALGO changed its name to the Association of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Ottawa (ALGBO).

Gays of Ottawa members brought a great deal to that table. Through their individual capital and habitus, they manifested a collective organizational capital and habitus, allowing GO to achieve a dominant position in its local field and in the LGF. In the early seventies, conservative and RCMP-monitored Ottawa seemed an unlikely home for a major lesbian and gay movement player. It was a movement one could assume its skilled civil service population, rich in cultural, symbolic and social capital, would never take part in. However they did take part, bringing to GO particular organizational strengths which bolstered and stabilized it. They surreptitiously provided GO with as much government cultural capital, namely paper, photocopying, phone services, etc. they could carry. Gays of Ottawa benefited from social actors working in other fields too. All of this imbued GO with sufficient capital to see it quickly establish a 'field of one.' Outside Ottawa GO rapidly achieved a prominent position within Canada's lesbian and gay organizational field. As the coordinating office of the NGRC, GO did much to shape the fields internal conditions. After more than a decade, GO was sufficiently rich in capital and well positioned to establish Pink Triangle Services. To PTS, GO gave most of its capital, leaving itself much diminished, and its capital and position less valuable. Within the LGF conditions rapidly changed, sending GO into a slow decline. Meanwhile PTS had become a field unto itself, simultaneously joining an emerging field of lesbian and gay service organizations. Ultimately the field PTS occupied, gave rise to another dominated by AIDS service organizations. But that is another story.

Through personal interviews, archival and media research, I sought out the varied elements that made up GO's picture. Interviews provided me a window onto the experience of governing GO; this included running its dances, staffing its GO Centre,

picketing its adversaries, appearing before parliamentary committees and working in coalitions. The rich archival and media documentation GO left behind, acted to add richness and verify the memories of interviewees. While the interviews provided a window onto GO's private inner workings, the archival and media materials revealed its public manifestations.

While my enquiry's theoretical stance has not been seen in the literature covering lesbian and gay experience in Canada, my research tools have been used to great effect. To an existing body of work, my enquiry adds a detailed examination of a key player in Canada's lesbian and gay movement. Such a detailed analysis is rare; Becki Ross's *The House That Jill Built* being the exception. Canada's lesbian and gay movement has been well and broadly described, however this 'big picture' has left much to be explored 'on the ground'. I see as my key contribution, the addition of one such analysis, undertaken via a heretofore unseen theoretical approach applied to this area. Through Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' I have demonstrated that while isolated by a stigmatized sexuality, GO members were social actors deeply embedded in varied social fields and right in capital. Thus it is clear that social and political isolation should not be equated with a lack of skills, competencies and connections, all critical to challenging this same isolation. And while they faced stark levels of social hostility, they were not without social allies, even some quite surprising ones. Thus a key contribution of this thesis is to reveal that our picture of the social and political progress of Canadian lesbians and gays cannot be rendered in black and white; rather, myriad shades of gray complete the picture.

What else can be added to this picture? Whether or not GO was unique remains to be determined. A comparison with a similar organization, such as CHAT, would help

to clarify this. The role played by federal government funding, which provided some of the movement's earliest funding should be explored. Programs such as Opportunities for Youth funded various lesbian and gay initiatives in an era of overt federal government hostility. How was it, on one hand, that we had a government hostile to lesbians and gays while on the other, it helped fund their activities? That this is the case, undermines any reading of that era's homophobia as being monolithic and impenetrable.

Clearly the role played by the *Body Politic* as a movement player, needs to be explored further. Who ran the BP? What were the skills of collective members? How were issues of gender, race and class confronted? For an organization that had a profound effect on the Canadian movement, we have no clear picture of it. Organizations like GO established a field of lesbian and gay organizations that begat a field populated by organizations with a narrower area of service provision. This field of service organizations was then instrumental in establishing a field of HIV/AIDS organizations. Each field in turn was able to access greater levels of government funding and make forays into other fields of action, all the while strengthening the social and political position of lesbians and gays generally. The role of organizations as actors for social change needs to be explored. Too often we think of social movements as people taking to the streets. What is the impact on a movement as it is taken up by an organizational leadership, one whose actions then become more private, more responsive to, and shaped by, other actors, such as funders. As Barb MacIntosh noted, when the struggle for rights evolved to become the purview of the courts, lawyers and other highly skilled actors, fewer people were able to be involved. What is the impact on a broad social movement

which mobilizes the many, once it is taken up by the few, its once public actions becoming the stuff of closed-door negotiations?

Gays of Ottawa worked hard at consensus and at being public about all their activities, even its closed door meetings; executive meetings remained open for its entire life. Perhaps this enabled GO to retain something, a fire in the belly, that had it moved into more sophisticated fields with a habitus of closed-door meetings, it would have lost. Certainly in our era, one dominated by more corporate, dependent-on-funders, lesbian and gay service agencies and media, GO's public ethic has been lost along with it much of the fiery need for social change.

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Appendix One

Interviewees directly quoted in the text:

- Deeprose, Barry – interviewed in Ottawa on 20, November 2007.
- Demski, Peter – interviewed in Ottawa on 4, November 2007.
- Duggan, John – interviewed in Ottawa on 23, October 2007.
- Galipeau, Galipeau – interviewed in Ottawa on 15, January 2008.
- Garmaise, David – interviewed in Ottawa on 11, September 2007.
- Girard, Judy – interviewed in Ottawa on 8, November 2007.
- Hill, Charlie – interviewed in Ottawa on 15, November 2007.
- Johnston, Blair – interviewed in Ottawa on 18, December 2007.
- Johnstone, Mike – interviewed in Hamilton on 29, October 2007.
- LeBlanc, Denis – interviewed in Ottawa on 18, October 2007.
- MacIntosh, Barb – interviewed in Toronto on 31, January 2008.
- MacLennan, Ian – interviewed by telephone from Sudbury, on 21, November 2007.
- Plunkett, Lloyd – interviewed in Ottawa on 7, November 2007.
- Robertson, Marie – interviewed in Ottawa on 16, October 2007.
- Spurgeon, Greg – interviewed in Ottawa on 23, January 2008.
- Sylvestre, Paul François – interviewed in Toronto on 30, October 2007.
- Wilson, Linda – interviewed in Ottawa on 12, December 2007.

Interviewees not quoted in the text:

- Beckett, Kerry – interviewed in Ottawa on 5, December 2007.
- Browning, Catherine – interviewed in Montreal on 8, February 2008.
- Bugg, Glenn – interviewed in Ottawa on 28, December 2007.
- Gilbert, Jean – interviewed in Montreal on 8, February 2008.

Goyette, Richard – interviewed in Ottawa on 17, February 2008.

Law, Joanne – interviewed in Ottawa on 11, November 2007.

Winowski, Alex – interviewed in Ottawa on 12, December 2007.

Young, Jim – interviewed in Ottawa on 24, February 2008.

Appendix Two

Interview Questions:

- 1) How/Why did you become involved with GO/ALGO? ;
 - Previous to this, had you been involved with a political action, social movement, etc. group or organization? How old at the time?
 - What was GO's impact on you in terms of being gay, coming out, etc.?

- 2) What is your background re: education, special training or skills?
 - Any particular interests, passions, etc.?

- 3) Describe GO to me; what kind of organization was it?
 - What kinds of work did you do at GO? What was your role or contribution?
 - Why were you involved in the kinds of work you were at GO?

- 4) What do consider GO's primary functions or tasks?
 - Did these tasks/functions change over time? In what way?
 - GO provided social space, services, and works politically; can you talk about this?
 - Were there functions that you saw as primarily political vs. social; visa versa?

- 5) Can you tell me about GO's relationship to the Ottawa LGBT community?
 - How would you describe GO's role in the community?
 - What were particular issues, events, etc. that impacted this relationship?
 - Lesbian involvement; Was the role GO played for gay men vs. lesbians different?
 - Were issues of gender, race, class, etc. considered?

- 6) How was GO structured/governed? Why was it structured in the way it was?
 - Can you tell me about the Board; how/why certain people were recruited to it?
 - Can you tell me about the work of the committees; why this model was chosen?
 - Membership was formal; why this model? How were members found?

- 7) GO worked as a bilingual agency; can you tell me about the decision to do so?
 - How working in a bilingual manner play out day to day?
 - What was the relationship of GO with Francophone lesbian/gay community?

- 9) How many people were involved in GO and in what capacity?
 - Was there any paid staff during your time there?

10) How was GO financed?

- During your time there, did GO receive funding from any outside sources?
- Was GO ever denied funding because of the kind of organization it was?
- Were there restrictions attached to potential funding that GO could not agree to?
- Did GO have charitable status?

11) Can you tell me about Setting up PTS?

- the relationship between it and GO, etc.

12) Can you tell me about GO Info; was it the primary means of communicating with the community?

- What was the relationship of GO Info to GO?
- How did this evolve over time?

13) Can you talk about GO's relationship with the wider community of Ottawa?

- How would you describe GO's role in the community?
- Can you tell me anything about Carleton University's GO Section?
- Were there any local institutions with which you worked closely; perhaps worked to educate?

14) What was GO's relationship with the City of Ottawa, city council, etc.?

- Where were there particular City agencies or offices you worked with or sought to work with? Were you ever impeded in working with the City?
- Were you ever prevented from participating in events or activities; prevented from accessing City events, spaces, etc.?

15) Can you talk about Ottawa & local conditions, e.g., did these present unique opportunities or barriers to GO?

- Did Ottawa as home to the Federal Gov't present any unique opportunities or barriers for GO?
- Can you talk about the impact on GO of the dominance the Public Service played in Ottawa's professional life?
- Can you describe any particular highs or lows encountered at GO?

16) Can you tell me about GO's relationship or dealings with Ottawa Police?

- Can we talk about particular events, e.g., the Club Ottawa Bath Raid, Prostitution Ring, park arrests, etc.? How were these addressed?

17) What was GO's relationship with other GLBT Groups in Canada?

- How did you communicate with each other?

- What were some specific things you worked together on?
- What did you feel GO was able to offer such groups in particular? Did GO take a leadership role in sharing its skills, insights, etc.?

18) CGRO/CLGRO; what was GO's relationship with it?

- Can you tell me about GO's role within it; about their contribution?

19) If you were to summarize your time at GO, be completing the sentence, "during my time, GO was..." What would you say?