

Your friendly June reminder

by SHERALYN ROMAN

June is a time when many of us celebrate the actual arrival of summer. It often takes at least into the first week of June before we begin to see a noticeable improvement in the weather and can actually plant flowers and vegetable gardens with some peace of mind. June is also a time for another type of celebration yet sadly, and increasingly so, fewer people are celebrating and it is mostly because they don't have peace of mind and feel unsafe to do so. You might think this only to be true south of the border but celebrating PRIDE, once a June event that many of us looked forward to, seems to be more divisive of late. While Canada is leading the world right now with the bombshell success of Heated Rivalry, bringing under-represented stories to the small screen, in other ways we're stepping back in time and it's a sad and troubling reflection on who we are as a community.

PRIDE done right is when a school board isn't afraid to fly the flag that represents at least 1 in 10 of their student population, likely a figure that underrepresents a community who might be afraid to disclose their true self. PRIDE done right is when a school board, in this case Peel District, proudly flies the rainbow flag sending a message of inclusivity and welcome to their students. PRIDE done right is when communities celebrate through flag raisings, picnics, special library events, drag shows, concerts, vendor markets, parades and other community-focussed and family-friendly events. It's even better when they can do so without fear of backlash, without having to hire additional security, and where all attendees feel safe enough to attend.

I usually look forward to this annual reminder that "Love is Love" but for me, June this year took on a darker meaning when members of the religious right, claiming to represent both the "majority" and the "moral high ground," unleashed a particularly noxious diatribe against members and allies of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

I won't even bother to summarize their hatred here, it doesn't deserve the space. Suffice to say that forgoing the tenets of most major world religions that preach principles such as love, tolerance and acceptance, these groups spread nothing but vitriol and hatred.

Groups like The Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) Canada, billed as a Christian nationalist group, continue to lobby against the rights of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Similar efforts are being made by other "socially-conservative" groups like Campaign Life Coalition. In this election year, be aware that they actively seek to influence elections particularly at the municipal level because in their words: "Municipal elections are often overlooked and undervalued, but these are where some of the most important battles in the culture wars are taking place. It's on the municipal level where we elect the school trustees who are responsible for accepting or rejecting increasingly radical sex-ed curriculums, and a plethora of anti-family, pro-homosexualist propaganda designed to eradicate the religious beliefs of traditionally-principled Canadians."

I suppose the irony is lost on them that by encouraging only the votes of the "traditionally-principled" they too are being exclusionary. I guess it doesn't matter though, because for them, it's for all the "right" reasons. Or at least their version of "right."

We might feel like progress is being dialed back and maybe some have forgotten the hard-fought battles waged by those who came before us to ensure that every human being; regardless of race, creed, colour, religion and yes, sexual-orientation, could live a life free of discrimination. I intentionally used "human being" in that last sentence because we are all born HUMAN. Simply that. We are humans. We are sharing this space together and whether we are born to love someone who looks exactly like us, or is a different colour, a different religion, the same-sex or opposite, honestly, who the f&*&k cares! Love is love, I say it every year. We are all just humans trying to make our way in this world and to find someone willing to share that journey with us. At the end of the day, isn't that all any of us really want?

So, on a brighter note I'll end with this: Happy PRIDE. Be an ally not a hater "there's enough hate going around already and PRIDE is really just about love. By the way, so is Heated Rivalry.

At the end of the day Heated Rivalry is a love story and if you watch episodes five and six in particular, you might just understand.

Now if you're done watching TV and looking for local events to attend here is what you need to know.

On June 20, 2026 Orangeville will once again act as the home of "Celebrate Your Awesome," an always fun and popular day-long event featuring concerts, a vendor market, lots of fun activities and culminating in an evening drag show beginning at 7 p.m. All events take place in and around Second Street and in Alexandra Park.

In Caledon, the IDEA Caledon Pride Family Picnic happens June 27 from 12 noon - 2 pm at Caledon East Park.

Free for everyone, the picnic is organized by IDEA Caledon in collaboration with local groups like the Caledon Public Library and Family Transition Place.

Whether you are 2SLGBTQIA+ or a family member, and/or an ally, the picnic is a great place to come and "celebrate community spirit."

This is your friendly June reminder. Love is love. Period. Get out and celebrate being awesome, by being a better human.