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Gay Pride Day Festivities Move Forward Despite Council's Refusal to Issue Proclamation

A celebration of tolerance, understanding and diversity has been the victim of ignorance and prejudice in Nanaimo, BC. In a moving and articulate presentation to Council on Monday night, the Nanaimo Gay Pride 2002 Planning Committee petitioned the City to proclaim Saturday June 29th as Gay Pride Day in Nanaimo. After requesting an amendment to the original proclamation request changing it from Pride Day to Gay Pride Day, Council denied both the amended and original proclamation in a 4-5 vote. This latest event follows two years of conflict with City Council over the Pride proclamation.

In her speech to Council, Pride volunteer Patricia Little spoke of the discrimination and fear that many gays, lesbians and transgender persons still face, and especially that faced by youth in our schools. She asked that Council embrace difference and send a message to our youth, our allies and our predators that Nanaimo is a city that embraces the mosaic of its people, and called upon Council to set the example of declaring Nanaimo a city of acceptance, tolerance and understanding.

City council passes about 100 proclamation requests each year, with Gay Pride the only one declined. The Nanaimo Pride Planning Committee is receiving emails from across the country expressing concern and outrage, and will be bringing forth the Gay Pride proclamation request to City Council again in the near future. A Human Rights complaint on the grounds of discrimination based on sexual orientation will be made if Council once again refuses the proclamation. Similar actions have been brought throughout Canada and all been successful in overturning the refusal of city councils to proclaim Pride events in their cities

With the theme of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow', Nanaimo Gay Pride 2002 is a celebration of diversity and strength, and looks towards a world free of homophobia, bigotry and hate. The festivities take place Saturday June 29, 2002 at the Pleasant Valley Hall and Recreation Fields in Nanaimo, BC, include a Community Marketplace, live entertainment, special guests, free hot dogs and pop, games for kids and adults, a Car, Truck and Bike Show and Shine, Baking Contest, Drag Ball Game and a Pride Dance. Main sponsors for this year's Nanaimo Gay Pride include Outlook Magazine, Whispers Adult Store, Thrifty's Foods, Coastal Community Credit Union, and Little Sister's Books and Emporium, with many more businesses support through donations of food and merchandise.

We welcome all gays, lesbians, bisexual, and transgender persons and allies to celebrate with us on Saturday June 29th 2002 at Pleasant Valley Hall and Recreation Fields. For more information about Nanaimo Pride please check out the website at www.nanaimopride.org.

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