

# 30 years of activism

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Fredericton Lesbians and Gays (FLAG) in 1979. This year marks its 25th anniversary. Initially, it was a "group made up of men. I was invited to join; I was the 'L' in FLAG; otherwise they would have been called FAG," Brewer said with a laugh.

"We got together originally as a social group; we held dances. We'd have to move around quite a bit; once they found out it was a gay group we would no longer be able to hold dances at whatever hall it was."

The initial public reaction to FLAG was negative. "When we held dances in the SUB at UNB people would yell disparaging remarks at us as we went in to the building," Brewer said. "But the Unitarian Fellowship was supportive and we used their space for meetings."

In addition to her work with FLAG, Brewer served as president of the New Brunswick Coalition on Human Rights Reform. She was also a member of the Canadian Organization Rights Abortion League (CORAL).

"Henry Morgentaler purchased a

property on Ferry Street to begin a clinic here in Fredericton and he needed someone to run the clinic... he asked me twice and I said no twice. I didn't know anything about running a clinic."

Morgentaler asked her a third time and Brewer said that because he is a very persuasive man, "for five exciting, stressful years, I ran the clinic."

But it was her work as a founding member of the LGBT group in Nunavut, the Iqaluit Pride and Friends of Pride, that singled her out for this award. "We began with a standing committee of about six men and women," said Brewer.

"The reaction here [in Nunavut] was the same as it is anywhere. Initially people said 'This is not an Inuit thing, this is coming for the south - we don't have homosexuality here, we don't even have a word for it.'"

"We did some public education and were careful in choosing the name of the group," said Brewer.

"There is also a strong fundamentalist Christian movement here which was highly opposed to the inclusion of LGBT in the Nunavut Human Rights Act but it was passed in November 2003 by a slim margin," said Brewer.

"We have an annual picnic... at the first one we had 12 people... we called it our gay pride feast. The next year we opened it up to pride and friends of pride and we had about 50 people. Sven Robinson came the following year we had about 150 people and this year the premier of Nunavut and the mayor of Iqaluit came and we had close to 300 people," said Brewer.

When asked if her mother influenced her life's path, Brewer said, "My mother taught me how to think, how to debate and she'd always tell me 'don't let the bastards get you down.'"

"It's a real privilege to have someone in your life like that. We're very close. This is not to say we

always agree on things but in the end she's always very supportive of me. That's really valuable; it's one of the reasons I've been able to do the work I've done. And my father as well, I've got two great supportive parents," she said.

The award ceremony will be held in Rideau Hall on the 21st, and her mother and two of her three children will be in Ottawa to cheer her on. Brewer says it will be thrilling to have her family there.

"This whole thing has been so exciting. I have been hearing from people from all over Canada and as far away as Bermuda. It really feels like I've made a difference or at least an impact... and it has been such a privilege to have been able to do work in this area," she said.

## "Elizabeth was the beginning, not the end" - LaPointe on Weir's resignation

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Addressing the media on Friday, Premier Bernard Lord said, "I want to congratulate her for outstanding years as leader of the NDP. I really admire the way she took up certain causes that she felt very strongly about and defended them and defended her beliefs. She has strong convictions and she defends them very well and I respect that in any parliamentarian. We don't always agree on every issue but nevertheless I admire the way she conducts herself and the way she defends her point of view."

When Weir took the position of party leader for the NDP in 1988 she became the first female leader of

a political party in New Brunswick.

The President of the New Brunswick NDP, Helene LaPointe, said that Weir talked to her six months ago about stepping down. "After doing her best and working for 16 years it would be inappropriate to ask her to stay on," said LaPointe.

As for replacing Weir, LaPointe said, "I think she has created a climate that makes it possible for somebody to run as the next leader and to continue the work Elizabeth started. We'll have a very interesting leadership race within the next year."

LaPointe said, "For the NDP it is the beginning of something good happening to the party; Elizabeth was the beginning, not the end."

## Hoping for more in UNB development

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be preserved indefinitely, and the other 50 per cent for Heritage Development Land, meaning that it may potentially undergo thoughtful regulated development in the next 50-100 years.

Seven per cent of the woodlot has been identified for mixed-use development over the next ten years. The area to be used is between Regent Street and Kimble Road above the hospital. The foreseen projects include a commercial / retail area, a residential area, and a business / industrial park. All development will be within guidelines emphasizing preservation.

The University of New Brunswick has 11 land holdings through the province, the four most significant holdings being the UNB Campus (142 acres) the Saint John Campus (223 acres), the UNB Woodlot (3,540 acres) and the Noonan Woodlot (3781 acres). The UNB Woodlot and the Fredericton Campus were granted by King

George III more than 200 years ago to be used to support the university; others were donated by benefactors throughout the last two centuries.

Mr. Michael Baldwin, property manager with the Office of the Associate Vice-President (Campus Services & Planning), explains the process of deciding which parts of the land to develop, in which landscape dynamics were used.

"We thought about how to ensure that areas don't become isolated pockets so that species can travel." It was decided that 50% should be protected. "What happens outside [the protected area] could potentially be used for development, keeping in mind, this is very long term. The idea was to hold a certain amount perpetually."

Money from development, which is still awaiting city approval, would go towards initiatives related to the growth and development of the Fredericton campus, campus renewal and maintenance, and the management of the University's



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land endowment.

Development will not restrict use of the UNB woodlot for recreation, education or research purposes with the exception of the 7 per cent development area, where the development will still have green spaces and green corridors. Recreational uses for the woodlot will continue and eventually be improved with a specific recreational plan. More can be found out on this issue at [www.unb.ca/lms](http://www.unb.ca/lms).

Fun word of the week:

**Oppugn** v.t. To assail or oppose with argument; call in question; controvert.

from Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary

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Brewer speaking in Nunavut.

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