ADVERTISER OR FOUNDER?:
Adding Insult to Injury, a Statement by Jearld Moldenhauer and the Founding of the UTHA, Canada’s First Gay Student Organization

INTRODUCTION

There may be few people out there seriously interested how the organized gay movement got started in Toronto but it is a story that might benefit by being told by the individual who in one way or the other actually founded many of the organizations that helped to build a political and cultural movement on a national scale. If Toronto, or even Canada itself for that matter, had been fortunate enough to attract the establishment of a capable history there might be no need for me to offer you my tale, but alas this has not happened despite the passage of some 41 years now since things began with the founding of the UTHA.

Cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia have all seen hefty tomes about their gay pasts published during the past 10-20 years. San Francisco has its Gay Museum as well as books and films centered on the life and death of Harvey Milk. Even Buffalo has a book chronicling its lesbian history! As well there are several books that cover the gay history of Britain and at least a few about France, Spain, and Germany, Italy and Australia. I start by mentioning these efforts to put Toronto and Canada into perspective.

On the positive side Canada has at least three gay and lesbian archival projects that I am aware of with Rick Bébout's web-site still the only serious attempt to capture Toronto gay history starting in 1970.

During the past year or so a few university students have published research papers on historical aspects of The Body Politic and Queer Ontario has embarked upon a video interview project with involving a sizable group of activists. Personally I have long lamented the apparent disinterest in a broad based oral history project which might have recorded the lives and social dynamic of the homosexual working class that seemed to dominate the Toronto scene when I settled here.

So the lack thereof of any seriously researched history on the earliest event in modern gay Canadian history made it necessary for the Ontario Heritage Trust to conduct its own effort at researching the founding of the UTHA. Amanda Robinson, a history graduate student at York University was hired by the OHT to carry out this research. By the time U of T and the Ontario Heritage Trust decided on the plaque as a way of commemorating the founding of the UTHA there had already been a number of journalistic pieces that attempted to tell the story. The latest had appeared in the University of Toronto Magazine in June, 2009.
My own story of gay activism began at Cornell University in 1967. I had come out in my second year in 1965 and spent much of ’65-’67 immersed in reading books related to the history of sexuality. I wanted to understand why it was that society had placed such strong taboos on homosexuality, making it both a criminal act and a mental illness. The more I read the more radicalized I became. Of course this was the time of the counterculture in America, fueled in part by our war involvement in Vietnam. My generation was open to questioning most everything and this encouraged my developing analysis of sexual repression and oppression in Western society.

In May of 1967 the New York Times ran a front page article entitled "Columbia Charters Homosexual Group". After reading the article I contacted "Stephen Donaldson" (Robert Martin), the student who had founded the group. This was three years before Stonewall and so the organization, like the ones at Cornell and U of T were called "Student Homophile Associations or Leagues". During the following year I made the trip from Ithaca to New York a few times, to explore the Village scene and to meet Martin and attend meetings of ECHO, the East Coast Homophile Organization. It was there that I first met Franklin Kameny, Barbara Gittings and Foster Gunnison, the leaders of ECHO. I admit that none of these people really excited or inspired me. The older homophiles leaders were far too conservative and Martin himself proved to be an army/navy "brat" (a term he might take a liking to after you read his bio by historian Wayne Dynes on Wikipedia) and our sensibilities were far apart. None the less I went back to Cornell and made the decision to form a local student gay organization. The Cornell Homophile League was officially recognized in May of 1968, still more than a year before Stonewall.

The Cornell story is a separate one with many tales worth telling. But for the purposes of this document it is sufficient to say that I arrived at the University of Toronto with a "founding" event already under my belt. For some reason (nationalism) almost no Canadian reference even mentions my international activism.

Jearld Moldenhauer, 1967
Cornell University
Ian Young

I should start by admitting that I have no idea exactly how Young characterizes me or the founding of UTHA except for the written record. He may have just ridden the wave of inaccuracies flowing from journalism and from the group's own weak sense of history. Once the wave began it would be relatively easy for anyone, especially a writer, to embellish one point and diminish another. This now is my written record, including my response to his quotes in both Rick Bebout's website and Anne Purdue's article. I state unequivocally that Ian had no part in the founding of the UTHA and he was not at the first meetings attended by a handful of friends and people who had responded to my ad in the Varsity. I begin with Ian's quotes that appeared in Anne Purdue's article.

"My first meeting with Moldenhauer was not at a party. I must have been given his number by a mutual acquaintance; I phoned him and he asked me to come see him at his place of work at the U of T. I remember very clearly that the first time I met Moldenhauer, he was vivisecting a dog. You don't forget something like that!"

"We were never friends. As a long time anti- vivisectionist, my first encounter almost led me to have nothing to do with him, but I thought, well, I'm going to have to work with lots of diverse people in this cause, so I'd better get on with it. Still don't know whether that was wise or not.”

This is outrageous! I was "vivisecting a dog"! Yes I worked for a physiologist who used dogs for his experiments but there were very few operations and they took place in a surgery room to which neither Ian Young or anyone not connected to the staff would never be invited. He goes on to say "We were never friends." How on earth is it possible that we could have founded the first "modern" day gay organization in Canada if, indeed, we were not "friends" of some sort? Truth is we had been friends of a sort in the months before I went ahead with the UTHA. Our friendship was based upon a mutual interest in both boys and gay literature. I was even invited to at least one of Young’s tea parties (or what ever he called them) out in Scarborough where he lived with his parents. After thinking it through I believe we met in one of those many Yorkville cafes or at Rochdale College. I would have given him my phone number(s), possibly both my home number and my U of T work number. He probably did visit my laboratory but certainly did not attend any surgical procedures. I assume he concocted this tale to elevate himself morally above a lowly lab technician who spent most of his days analyzing the digestive juices of Dog A, B, C, and D. And I am "Moldenhauer", neither Jearld nor "Mr. Moldenhauer", another sign of distancing and distain.
On one occasion Ian Young brought Scott Symons and his young lover John to my basement apartment on McCaul Street. They had just recently returned from Mexico where they fled following an RCMP order for their arrest after publication of Scott's homoerotic "novel" Place d'Armes. Later he introduced me to Norman Elder, another born with a silver spoon in his mouth anglo Canadian homosexual. Interesting people. Even more so after Young published accounts of both their lives. But rather bizarre individuals, born with a deep sense of entitlement, something far afield from my own class origins. Neither of these great men ever did anything for their gay community that I am aware of. Decades later Scott at least came by Glad Day Bookshop on occasion. Never bought a thing, wasn't even interested in the books. He just took up space sitting in the office smoking his foul smelling Gitanes and asking to look at pornography. So much for gays from the English-Canadian ruling class. As you will see in the accompanying photographs Ian also sat in for a portrait shoot. I mention these things to counter his dismissive statement about our history.

If I recall correctly Ian was born in London, England but grew up in apartheid South Africa. He had strong racist views at the time we met each other and when these "views" became clear to me it was I who dropped the "friendship". My closest friend in Toronto at the time was a black American draft dodger from Ohio (John Mitchell). Ian and John got into a dangerous physical fight in my McCaul Street apartment after Ian started spouting his views defending segregation in privately owned businesses such as restaurants. Of course I had discussed the Cornell gay group with Ian and told him about my plans to start a similar organization at U of T. Ian actually spoke with me about trying to "connect" this as yet to be founded gay group with the Don Andrews/Edmund Burke/Western Guard crowd which he was some how connected to. This combined with the altercation Ian had with my friend John made me want to distance myself and any gay projects I had in mind from Ian Young. Imagine if the first gay group in the post Stonewall period had right wing/racist ideological connections! I was schooled by the analysis of Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown. Ian Young was an ardent follower of Any Rand. The cult of selfishness and greed, the hero(ine) of so very many both then and now. Despite our mutual aesthetic and cultural interests once I realized where he was coming from, the relationship came to a halt.

Ian Young did not bother go to the Ottawa demo. I do not recall him joining any activist gay political organizations in Toronto during the early 1970's. Ian was interested in Ian and advancing his career as a writer. This did not include involvement in political activism or civil rights organizations.

Ian Young’s other comments in Ms. Purdue's article I also personally find rather bizarre and calculated to pull the mask over reality. "I wanted to change things" he says, "reflecting on his student days at U of T". What exactly were his "school days" at U of T? When we met he had no official standing at U of T and in fact (according to Ian)
dropped out of the undergraduate program the year before. If Ian Young had had some legitimate affiliation with the University I would have found it impossible to not involve him from the beginning. To my knowledge Ian never returned to U of T in any capacity, except to attend UTHA meetings once I submitted an amended "Statement of Purpose" (derived from the Cornell document which in turn had been influenced by the one at Columbia University) to SAC and we were granted official status as a student organization, thereby allowing us to list our meeting time and place announcements in the Varsity newspaper.

He also says that he wanted to be a teacher "but in those days you couldn't be openly gay and teach at any level". Probably not at stuffy old U of T or in the secondary school system. I admit it posed and still poses a major challenge however I remember at Cornell the most popular professor on campus at the time was about as "openly gay" as could be. His lectures were the camp highlight of the times and he could always be found cruising the bars at night. Unfortunately he was a very self oppressed man and taught a course in "deviance" using Irving Bieber's (no relation to the pop star) classic text on the homosexuality as a mental illness, "Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study of Male Homosexuality" book on homosexuals as mentally sick. Pressuring him to stop using the book was the one political action undertaken by the Cornell Homophile League when I was at the helm.

Ian Young did indeed immerse himself in New York's gay culture but I'm not so sure about the time line he suggests. From his first meeting and throughout his history with the UTHA he never stopped trying to attack and undermine my place in the organization. Charlie Hill sadly just sat there passively letting Ian spew his vengeful venom again and again.

Ian Young 1969

Portrait #2 by Jearld Moldenhauer
Philip Atkinson, the person who is my oldest Toronto friend attended those first meetings in the "cave" as my off campus McCaul Street apartment was humorously referred to. He was considerate enough to respond to my written questions about those founding gatherings and attests to the fact that Mr. Ian Young was not in attendance. The interview, conducted through an e-mail exchange is available upon request.

To conclude my remarks I want to add that I do not think Ian Young maintains many of the political ideas that were so dear to his identity back in the early 1970's. There are indications that he has shed at least some of his right wing and racist views. As a bookseller I always respected his published efforts and treated his books in the same even handed way I did all the titles I promoted and sold during my career. Seeing his then vast gay library back in 1970 was also something of an inspiration to me both in matters of finding my role as a gay bookseller and serious book collector. As far as the UTHA goes, he was a joiner, not a founder.

Charlie Hill

Charlie Hill and I met a few days after the classified ad I submitted to the Varsity was published. It was a simple ad which was my way of reaching out to a student body I barely knew. It asked if there was anyone "interested in discussing the establishment of a student homophile association" to contact me. I provided my home phone number and a few people did call and were invited to my apartment to discuss launching the group. Charlie I met in the notorious UC washroom after an "encounter". To say the least the UC washroom was probably the most famous place in all Toronto for a "quickie". It was almost always busy from morning till night with not only students, but faculty, staff, Queen's Park employees and townies. I met George Hislop there as well as a few well known people from the arts' community. Unlike other similar underground scenes people actually carried on conversations from time to time so it had a social function at a time when there were few places outside the bar and disco scene where people might do so. And that is exactly what happened between Charlie and myself. He simply asked me if I knew who had placed the ad. When I told him that it was I, we talked further about his student status and I invited him to come to the meetings held in the "cave". Because I saw myself as an organizer and founding force and I was neither a student nor a power oriented type of person Charlie seemed a good choice to be the Chairperson for the new group. If there was a cauldron for the gay movement it might well have been two floors down in that famous loo.

Once word got out about university recognition the Globe & Mail published a letter stating that it was a mistake for SAC to recognize the group. As the group's founder I wrote a reply. Anne Purdue's article quotes my letter: "If the homophile represents a challenge to society, it is only that he promotes an increased freedom of expression
between human beings." Pretty basic stuff reflecting my larger world view. My boss at U of T, Dr. Roy Preshaw called me into his office to inform me that the old gentlemen who was the Head of the Physiology Dept. had seen the letter and asked Dr. Preshaw to dismiss me which he did. I neither asked for nor received no back up from Charlie or the organization. It was a fledgling organization learning to find its way and internally the waters were already murky thanks to Ian's obsession for revenge.

And so I paid a high price for taking the initiative to found the UTHA and was left high and dry to deal with this turn of events. I recently tried to get answers to a few questions and to feel out Charlie's position and memory of events so I wrote to him, hoping for his support but sensing nothing had changed about Charlie's wishy-washy ways. He wrote back once and I could see he was waffling, claiming an uncertain memory. My follow-up e-mails to him bounced back as I assume that they were blocked. At least he is consistent.

Reviewing Anne Purdue's article for Charlie's comments, forgive me if I admit to feeling that some of them are embarrassingly shallow. In response to my ad seeking student members, Purdue has Charlie think: "I am," thought Charles Hill" she wrote. That blows me away, but not as much as the next remark. When asking "the curator for the National Gallery and member of the Order of Canada how mustered the courage to be the leader of the homophile association" he replied: "Anger and irritation." OK I know all about anger, but someone needs to explain what he means when he says he's irritated. I get "irritated waiting for the TTC, or in any number of hundreds of ways. Such as having to constantly defend my role as "founder". Am I nitpicking? He does go on to speak about "coming out" and "being out" and says: "We were an invisible minority and as long as we were invisible people could make up their own theories about us." Hurrah!

Charlie Hill
& Roger Wilkes, Gay Student Group Conference, York University, 1972
The Researcher, Her Conclusions and Freedom of Information

I first heard about the "Plaque Project" in an e-mail on March 18th from David Rayside who immediately assumed the news would "make me smile". He quickly sent a second e-mail to inform me that similar messages went out to Charlie and Ian. Yet another followed and I started to see the writing on the wall. He referred to me as someone who had "placed that first ad". I didn't know there were more but already I sensed that their version of fair play had already reduced me to an "advertiser" rather than the founder. Even before Ms. Robinson began her "research" I sensed the direction things would head in and I wrote back: "I truly would rather be left out, denounced or simply ignored rather than be framed within a dishonest rendering of historical fact." I am not known for mincing words and many have recoiled at my bluntness. On September 27th David forwarded the OHT Invitation. I wrote back asking about the wording on the plaque and was informed that the "plaque text is not being revealed to anyone prior to the actual event." I reminded David that a few months earlier I had written a polite inquiry to Ms. Robinson about the conclusions to her research and she hadn't bothered to respond. That alone had sent another signal that something was afoot. David also told me that he had "considerable faith in the preparatory process used by the OHT." Writing back I declared my own lack of faith in the "system" and I think for good reason. There could be no reason to with hold the wording from me except to prevent a response. It's not that it's some sort of national security threat. In his next e-mail he ended the communication stating, "I see no particular advantage in continuing this exchange."

How I received the release and the plaque wording.

On Oct. 14th a friend sent me the Press Release for the Plaque Unveiling. No one officially associated with either the OHT or the SDS sent this public announcement to me! A few days later on Oct. 19th another friend sent me a precise description of the actual plaque wording. So much for courtesy and officialdom! So there they are, my name as "advertiser" in the press release and no names on the plaque itself. So much for the secrecy David Rayside insisted were the rules of the game. I also felt a certain déjà vu, reminded of an award the old Gay Academic Union presented some decades ago to the "Glad Day Bookshop" instead of to the human being who effectively was the Glad Day Bookshop. Let's be as impersonal as we can! The human being behind the organization matters less than the name of the organization. Obviously the people who make such decisions have no idea how they make the person feel who is the legitimate founder. The person who did his work and paid his price for these ground breaking initiatives. Or maybe they do it intentionally as a way of negating the individual. Somebody should ask them.
During my communications with Ms. Robinson I took what I considered a straightforward factual pathway, assuming that as a researcher up to her task that once any facts were disputed that I would hear back from her. How else can a person doing historical research proceed, assuming they are up to the task? When after months I heard nothing whatsoever it became obvious that either the wool had been pulled over her eyes or it was decided that the "safest" path to proceed would be to leave all names off the plaque, even if this diminished the role of the founder.

**Founder or Advertiser?**

Is it Canada? Or is it Ontario? Or perhaps just Toronto? "Founder" has a basic enough definition in Oxford. "A person who establishes an institution or settlement." Take me away from UTHA, or Cornell SH, or Glad Day Toronto and Glad Day Boston, even from The Body Politic and the CLGA and what do you have?

So it's the idea and implementing the idea that makes one a founder. Why then have I had such a hard time getting the simple honest credit due? It should be obvious that founding the basic institutions of the gay movement was my special talent, my contribution to the evolution of culture. In psychological terms a founder has special qualities a follower does not have. They have the guts to take on the world and to try to change it. This requires not only unusual courage but also a heavy component of naivete, something you often find in youth.

As a small additional note to this "founding" phenomena I refer people to a web site from Thunder Bay, Ontario call "Ebb and Flow - The Seventies". 1974

“[Lakehead Gay Liberation (LGL)](http://example.com) was formed in Thunder Bay at Lakehead University, sparked by a visit by Jearld Moldenhauer (of Glad Day Bookshop fame). LGL was recognized as an official club by the Lakehead University Student Union(LUSU). In February, a live interview aired on CBQ radio. The group was short lived as most members left for Toronto that summer, and attempts to revive it in the fall were unsuccessful.”

This happened on a National Tour sponsored by GATE Vancouver and GATE Toronto. I was sent by train west from Toronto to rally the troops in any and every city I was invited to in order to forge a national front to the movement. Yes this particular group was apparently short lived but it marked the beginning of gay political awareness for the Thunder Bay community and they are kind enough and upfront enough to remember this history. Their historical memory and honesty does not go unappreciated.
What is gained by mentioning my name in the Press Release but excluding it from the plaque? Avoiding controversy? The researcher did her work well? The conclusion, or at least the one I feel they reached is that it's better to deny the person the credit he deserves rather than pass judgment on other accounts of what happened. In the case of U of T this may well be the preferred course. As I said in Anne Purdue's article "Somehow I don't except to receive an apology 40 years later." First they would have to acknowledge that the dismissal happened. Apparently no one wants to do that. After all do you think there is another university anywhere that fired the founder of a gay group? I somehow doubt it. U of T may not be what it was back in the early 1970's and that's all the more reason for finishing this chapter honorably.

During the 1970 and up until the mid 1980's there seemed to be no question about who the actual founder of UTHA had been. Sometime during the '80s I was even invited to give a talk about gay U of T history as I remembered it. In the year 2005 the group now called LGTBTOOUT (what a mouthful!) had a major 35th Anniversary Party at the ROM. I had of course heard about it but had NOT been invited. Close to the event I became aware that Ian Young was being touted as the founder of the group. About two days before the event someone from the organization finally contacted me and invited me to attend. In simple language, by this time I felt both hurt and angry and could not bring myself to be the belated guest.

That was the beginning of this serious distortion of UTHA history later reinforced and amplified by the Alumni magazine article. None of this really surprises me when you consider that the "Executive Committee" of the current group do not even use their last names on their web site. When I asked about this some years ago, I was told that it was a "tradition". A sad one at that. Whatever we knew as gay liberation and the central role of being "out" apparently was diminished quite some time ago. If this phenomena is wide spread and not just at one of Canada's major universities, perhaps it partially explains the increase in gay related bullying and in suicide rates of gay teens. Where is the leadership of people at such a major university who fear for their careers and opt to become Jane D. or John Q.?

**Ego maniac or deserving activist?**

I am so very tired of being put on the defensive about my role in the gay movement in Canada. It no doubt has something to do with why I no longer live there. People might ponder the fact that some of us early activists paid a price for the public positions we took. In my case the price was quite a rather heavy one, but one I took in stride. Not only did U of T dismiss me but a year later the Toronto Western Hospital did the same thing after I brought Issue One of The Body Politic to work to show the people I worked with. The next year I got a job working for the City of Toronto as a Gardener. Once established and past the probationary period I gradually came out once again by bringing gay newspapers to work to read during break times. Despite my good standing I was not only fired but sent to work in isolation for 2-3 weeks at the Woodbine Beaches before
they could officially terminate me.

After this introduction to the real world I decided to build Glad Day into a real bookstore instead of operating at half throttle from my home. It was the silver lining in the cloud of despair. Little did I realize that within a few years of starting the Yonge Street store Canada Customs would begin seizing and censoring gay and lesbian literature. What started as an "irritating" occasional event grew into an all out assault in 1982 with Mulroney's internal Memorandum D-9-1-1. People know something of the court battles (such as over "The Joy of Gay Sex") but have you any idea what this war cost not only in legal fees but also its psychological impact on someone just trying to do their job as best they can? Until 1991 when I finally weared of these "customs" it was a daily battle for survival where all the power of the State is unleashed upon the tiny business establishment in an attempt to shut you down.

Three talented people, all successful in their own right. Charlie is the author of a well reviewed book "The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation, published in 1995. In 2001 he received the Order of Canada for his book and long career as Curator at the National Museum. Ian Young is the author of some 10 (?) or so books. And Jearld Moldenhauer in his youth was a fire brand for establishing many gay organizations and institutions internationally. Eventually I developed myself into professional bookseller with an encyclopedic knowledge of most every title and author who ever addressed homosexual topics. This career lasted from 1970 with the inception of Glad Day out of a backpack and continued for 30 years, ending in the year 2000 when he closed the very successful Glad Day Boston operation. Glad Day Toronto is now the world’s oldest surviving bookshop specializing in gay and lesbian literature. In our time we hosted readings and book signings by most of world’s greatest living gay and lesbian writers including Christopher Isherwood, William Burroughs, Edmund White, Michel Tremblay and Jeanette Winterson. As far as my ego goes, I think it's both pretty humble and low key. My class origins are lower middle class, something which helped me break through the barriers middle class and upper class individuals often find impossible to transcend. In sheer biological terms (my area of study) I saw myself as a sort of "sport", a hybrid with the right combination of genes, class and education to push my society a tiny bit forward. When I was just 14 years old at my request my grandmother gave me the Collected Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson with Thoreau's "Walden Pond" soon thereafter. So at a very young age I was schooled in the concepts self determination and belief in one's own intuitive grasp of reality. These imbedded ideals have served me well.

Jearld Moldenhauer
Fes, Morocco
October 30, 2011
The above text is in the process of being published as part of a larger autobiographical account. All photos by Jearld Moldenhauer are copyrighted.