

Victoria Pride Society: 2019 Board of Directors Election

Continuing Directors:

Alex Carroll Liz da Mata Scott Daly Denis Eve Rotem Gabay
Tina Gould Lindsay Herriot Charlie Nash David Tillson

For Re-Election:

Britt Kohn (she/her)

Britt was raised in Victoria on the traditional lands of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples and is very grateful to serve her home communities. Growing up with a love of the water, Britt has been instrumental in the success of numerous dragon boat festivals over the last ten years as the dock official and coach. With this skill set, Britt was recruited to help with the Victoria Pride Parade marshalling five years ago by her friend, the past parade coordinator, Jim Stewart.

After four years of volunteering for the Victoria Pride Parade, Britt joined the VPS board of directors and became the Parade Coordinator in 2018; in this role, her talent for event management thrived. During her first year of being a VPS Director, Britt's skill set in web development and information architecture enabled her to take on a three-month, full-time task of overhauling the Society's Operational Procedures. To achieve this, it meant implementing a thorough application and jury process for parade applicants, festival vendors, and partnerships. For this process to be successful, Britt needed to create a new website architecture for the new VPS website. After its first year in use, the new website and new application/jury process significantly increased revenue streams and data collection. It was a success!

Britt is an enthusiastically approachable people-person who is committed to creating an environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all. She is passionate about serving our diverse queer communities and is very invested in learning the history of Victoria's pride. Britt's next initiative will be Community Engagement; this is where her dream of seeing "Community Heroes" can become a reality. If she is re-elected, Britt is committed to serving alongside her fellow board members to keep Victoria's Pride Society growing with youth initiatives, community heroes, and continually improving Victoria's largest parade, the Victoria Pride Parade! She feels honoured to have served her communities for the past three years and looks forward to the opportunity to continue working with her fellow board members.

For Election:

Nick Luney (he/him)

Nick, after 8 years working with youth in Qu'wutsun territories as a Youth and Child Director in the non-profit sector and 5 years as a Life Coach/Marital Artist/Kickboxer has relocated to Victoria to work with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

In the fight for greatness, self improvement and health, Nick works out weekly to fight the negative voices in his head, closet drag to express the artistic kaween inside, and writes music to organize his brain. Of course, video games to say a big 'F U' to working too hard.

Nick is interested in relationship building and creating safer spaces for all. Nick has experienced and lived in a very close-minded world and decides daily to open his heart and mind to everything presented to him.

Matteus O'Connor (he/him)

Originally from Anishinabewaki territory in Southern Ontario, Matteus has been rejoicing in experiencing life on Vancouver Island's Snuneymuxw and Lekwungen territories for nearly ten years now. While studying Communications at Camosun College and Royal Roads University, Matteus contributed to local publications, writing on an array of subjects, including queer issues and personal identity, and reporting on local arts and entertainment.

Matteus works in various industries including film, television and advertising production, event production, and news/social media throughout Greater Victoria. He aims to use his networking abilities to bridge gaps and create connections between the various communities he exists within; believing that we all have more in common than not.

Having combatted intolerance outside of the queer community, as well as the often divisive culture within, Matteus hopes to find peace in giving back to LGBTQ+ people by working towards the success of the Victoria Pride Society in whatever capacity needed.

Aaron Nickol (he/him)

Aaron was born and raised in Alert Bay, in the traditional lands of the Kwakwaka'wake Peoples. Proud of his Indigenous background, Aaron is a member of the Namgis First Nations Band. With strong roots to small demographics and communities, Aaron is proud to lead and stand up for the rights of community members. Moving to Victoria in 2014, Aaron studied Anthropology, and deepened his love for studying cultures and people.

Over the past two years Aaron has spent his days working in finance, building trust and fueling pride within the industry. He has worked with others in the industry across the nation to raise funds for pride initiatives, and educate staff and clients about LGBTQ2+ issues, and driving for professional queer workspaces.

Aaron is also known as Shelita Cox, one of Victoria's staple entertainers within the local drag scene. Building Drag Sunday, a safe space for experienced and novice drag queens, kings, and

any gender representation drag performer to take to the stage. Seeing a need, Aaron has worked hard to establish this space for entertainers to build and practice their craft.

With experience volunteering and participating in many Victoria Pride celebrations, Aaron is looking forward to many years of service with the Victoria Pride Society.

Jo McFetridge (she/her)

I'm the managing lawyer at a full service law firm, Breakwater Law, right here in downtown Victoria. I have practiced since 2011 in the areas of business, family and wills and estates law, with a smattering of criminal and administrative law along the way. A former member of the Canadian Forces Reserve between 2000-2012, I served with both the army and the navy, first as a non-commissioned member and later as an officer. I remain well connected to our substantial military community in Victoria.

A passionate denizen of greater Victoria since 2007, I'm in fact a transplant from Vancouver, and prior to that, from Hong Kong, China. Growing up queer in a foreign country as a non-Brit was an interesting but difficult experience; it was really not OK to be gay there in the 80s and 90s. I remember doing my utmost to conceal my queer identity, going so far once as to shoplift a few queer books (I'm sorry) because I was too afraid of outing myself by buying them - the stakes there were high, in those days. I remember the joyful liberty I felt the first time I donned, without fear of prosecution, my rainbow pride necklace, the day after moving into residence at UBC in 1997. And, of course, I remember massively reaping the benefits of our community's struggles, both in Canada and worldwide, to win substantive rights and social equalities throughout the 60s-90s, and participating myself in that ongoing fight during the late 90s and 2000s.

These days, I practice a lot of law within the LGBT2 and poly communities. I love assisting our businesses, people and our families. I'm known for my approachability as a lawyer, for my work ethic, and for getting a tough job done.

I'd be delighted to bring my life and world experience to the Victoria Pride Society as a Director, experience not only as a member of our community, but also as a local business owner, and, where appropriate and where I am able, as legal counsel.