June is Pride Month, which is a time each year when the LGBTQ+ community celebrates where we've come from and where we are going. Besides being a celebration, it is a time to remember those who paved the way. Pride is also deeply political and gives a voice to the otherwise voiceless.

The first Pride parade was born from the ashes of the Stonewall riots in Greenwich Village one year earlier in 1969. Led by racialized trans women like Martha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera and lesbians like Stormé DeLarverie, the riots were a literal brick thrown through the window of our collective complacency. On Church Street in Toronto, where my university office resides, the Canadian equivalent of the Stonewall riots occurred on February 5, 1981, when the police raided four gay bathhouses. The first Toronto Pride event followed soon after.

Pride signaled that queer people were no longer going to take a back seat, subject to the whims of the majority and brutalized by police. Pride claimed our power and amplified our voices.

In 2024 in Canada and abroad, the environment remains challenging for queer people. The LGBTQ+ community is experiencing a regressive period, reminiscent to me of the repression during the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. Daily headlines tell the story: provincial and state laws outing queer youth and curtailing the rights of trans people, the criminalization of our identity in many countries, along with the repression of drag, which is a queer art form.

While undeniable progress has been made in queer rights over the last half century in Canada, we're constantly reminded that our hard-fought-for rights can vanish overnight at the stroke of a well-dressed and well-spoken politician's proverbial pen. In times like these, our allies can feel distant, and the silence can be overwhelming.

Whenever I write about queer issues in the math community, I've heard in response that math is math. Math is viewed as an austere subject, removed from the issues affecting the real world. Of course, mathematics, like any scholarly pursuit, doesn't live in a vacuum. People do math. They write out proofs and computations, read and write papers and books, teach the subject, and apply mathematics to solve challenges in the world.

Mathematics is flourishing arguably as much at any point in history, and no one knows where it will be ten, fifty, or a hundred years from now. Have you considered that access to mathematical spaces isn't equally available to all? Women, disabled, Black, racialized, and Indigenous people, as well have queer people, were not always welcome at the blackboard, lecture hall, or editorial board. We won't have a fully flourishing discipline until everyone is represented. That's a tall order and unlikely one that will be realized in my lifetime.

Our subject has been as non-diverse historically as every other, and change happens so slowly. Efforts to bring equity and inclusion to our academic spaces march forward glacially, often met by ambivalence and, lately, outright hostility. In the meantime, out of necessity, LGBTQ+ mathematicians have made their own spaces where they can conduct research, teach, and network.

On this Pride month, besides the parades, office decorating contests, and posts on social media, consider how you can proactively support queer members of the math community in real, tangible ways. We have agency and have the same profession goals that any mathematician does, but we live in a world often hostile to us. Kindness and compassion are the most powerful tools at our collective disposal.

I challenge the members of the CMS and all mathematicians to educate themselves on queer history, struggles, and excellence. Pay attention to what's happening right now and speak up: freedoms are lost for the minority when good people in the majority do nothing. How can you improve things, both in the CMS, in your Department or workplace, and in the world outside our mathematical ivory towers? The rights and livelihood of your LGBTQ+ colleagues depend on those answers.

Dr. Anthony Bonato's research is in graph theory and network science. He authored over 150 papers with over 120 co-authors. He is the author of five books, with the most recent one An Invitation to Pursuit-Evasion Games and Graph Theory published by the American Mathematical Society in 2022. Bonato is currently a full Professor in the Department of Mathematics at Toronto Metropolitan University.