

# Notes From The Underground

A FREE PUBLICATION

## DISCLOSURE IS JUST THE BEGINNING

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by Margo Ross, President

By design this edition looks at an often forgotten reality of our community that is except as an obstacle or difficult disclosure - our family and society.

I have purposely sought out articles from adult children , partners and several significant main stream articles about living with and the emergence of a transgendered person.

All to often our focus is on "us" and our struggle with only passing concern for those around us, yes we exert great effort and experience anguish in a disclosure and but far less is invested in the maintenance of the relationship, and growth of those individuals' comfort in our transgenderism.

It is some what a kin to the 70's phrase "what do you say to a naked person", after the shock, relief and disclosure then just whose responsibility is it to carry, share and nurture that disclosure with the person who you deemed so very important

that you just had to share the secret.

It is "ours", yes not just he individual but the whole "WE".

It is in fact the very reason we have a group, meet in public, invite and encourage family, friend and partners/spouses to attend. You see it is still a secret if we do not talk about our lives and integrate it into daily living despite the fact that we have disclosed.

Share not just the fact that you are transgendered but your lives as a TG positive community build it - one family, one friend, spouse/partner at a time.

#### UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

BY: Jennifer

It was 12 years ago that my father came out of the closet as Joanne. At the time he explained it was crossdressing. I was very surprised but in time came to terms with it. We had many heart to hearts over the years and I was told that it would never go beyond

After Disclose Then What?

wearing woman's clothe. A promise was made and a promise was later broken. I was talking to a friend over a year ago and I was informed that Joanne had started taking hormones. I fell silent, not knowing what to say but is this for real. She had not realized that I was not aware of this. The conversation ended and the wave of emotions that would rule my life up to November last year began. Joanne had promised that she would never go there and I had clearly expressed that if she did I could have a problem with it, now I felt that the line had been crossed and there was no going back.

I was already feeling like I had lost my father and now I knew that I had. My view is that he renounced his title of Daddy the day he took that first pill. I called her to try and confirm it for sure, I guess I hoped so much to hear that it wasn't true but she played dumb to my questions and denied anything was going on. I was so angry that she would think I didn't know what was going on. She was aware that I had suspicions and she chose to "Chicken out on the truth". After that call I knew it had to be true. After the anger came the mourning, I felt my father had died only there was no burial leaving me with no closure and no opportunity to tell her until she would admit it. I continued to get her to tell me for months but always the same

answer: "There's nothing going on". The more time passed, the more angry I became. When she would leave me a message saying it's Daddy calling I would get so upset because as far as I was concerned my father was gone and it was like being haunted by someone who did not exist anymore.

These feelings lead me to depression where my whole life turned into a downward spiral. I could not cope with my work, my health was taking a hit and my smile disappeared. I had pretty much decided to walk away from Joanne when my acupuncturist, who I ended up talking to since she was treating me for stress and depression advised that it would be the biggest mistake to walk away from family. My health already plagued by a chronic illness would get worse by walking out and not facing the problem. She treated many patients with severed relationships and explained to me that emotional blockages contribute to ailing health problems.

With that, I began to consider how I can come to terms with it or even if I could. My general doctor's opinion was that it was a serious mental illness and that I should walk away. That absolutely did not help me with my coping strategy.

I realized that it was really up to me as there was next to no support except for a friend who advised to not walk and just

talk to Joanne about my feelings and my Mom who reminded me of the good memories of my dad and that she would be there whatever I chose to do. There was no information to refer to and no one could help me through this but I just knew that I had to tell Joanne. I figured up to that point I had asked the wrong questions and now I had to ask the question so that she would have to give me a yes or no answer. In November 2000 I arranged to meet with her. I had 5 hours of travel where I was incredibly nervous about the confrontation about to take place. Can I really tell her what I had to say? How will she take it?? Will she come clean and tell me the truth??? I knew my words would hurt her and I rehearsed over and over what I would say trying to prepare myself. I imagined every possible scenario: if she denied it would I walk out on her, would I ever talk to her again and that this could be the end of our relationship.

The moment I dreaded had arrived. Joanne & I went out for dinner. I was waiting for the right time to ask the question during conversation. My heart pounding, palms sweating, I finally asked her straight: "Are you taking hormones?" She immediately said yes. I told her that I knew and that I was glad she told me. I went on telling her the hardest thing you could ever tell

someone: As far as I'm concerned my father is gone, he passed away and there's nothing left of him and now there is Joanne. I told her how much it hurt to hear it from a third party and how angry I was for not telling me herself and to deny it all that time. As we sat facing each other, I told her what I had been holding in for so long and she was so receptive and so understanding. I told her I was sorry to hurt her but it had to come out, it was destroying me. I reached for her hand and in that moment I felt the most incredible feeling, the bond that exists between us, one that was not male or female, not father and daughter, just two souls connecting as humans. It was magical and it was there that I felt and understood the meaning of unconditional love. I looked at her and said: "I closed the book on my father and hold his memory dear to my heart but it's now time to open the book of Joanne and create new memories. She knows it will be difficult for me at times and it won't be easy but we both know we need to be honest about our feelings and always be open to communicate with each other. I was an amazing night and it changed me as I now grow with her and not away from her. I know why she hesitated telling me by fear of losing me and how hard it was for her to not tell me the truth. We were both hurting.

The truth is by not talking the

bigger the degree of separation became and how close she was to losing me, now we are closer than we ever were.

I am very happy to have her in my life today and that I did not walk away, she is a best friend, an incredible person and she helps me develop into a better person. Now I believe that no one should be judged for being true to themselves. Most people are in such conflict with their true nature and if they lived like Joanne, people would be more at peace with themselves and others. I admire her courage and I am honoured to be her daughter (I don't know who else to introduce myself but as Joanne's daughter). I have now moved back home and have lived with her for a month and I think we can definitely get through this. And when things get tough I can now turn to the members of Gender Mosaic and have the most powerful support because you are the most wonderful group of people I know (and you're a lot of fun too).

I can finally say It's gonna be O.K and so will I. I love you Joanne!

### **SAN FRANCISCO APPROVES SRS**

By Associated Press writer - Margie Mason

San Francisco on Monday became the only city in the nation to pay for its

employees to receive sex changes, after the Board of Supervisors narrowly passed the measure.

"It is landmark legislation," said Supervisor Mark Leno, who has worked about two years to have the benefits added. "This is not like losing one's hair. It's not like displeasure with the size and shape of one's nose."

An audience filled with transgenders and supporters wearing fluorescent green and pink stickers that read "Transgender Equality" leaped into the air and cheered following the 9-2 roll call. The measure needed nine votes to pass. Supervisors Tony Hall and Leland Yee were the two opposing supervisors on the 11-member board.

The measure, which awaits the signature of Mayor Willie Brown, will extend up to a \$50,000 lifetime cap in benefits to city workers who want to switch their gender. San Francisco apparently would be the only governmental body in the nation to make such benefits available. The state of Minnesota offered similar benefits, but the program was phased out in 1998. The issue was discussed in Oregon, but a commission decided against it in 1999.

"This is just one step against discrimination," said Theresa Sparks, a transgender

commissioner at the city Human Rights Commission. "This is the first step, and it's an important step. I look forward to working with Supervisor Hall." Hall, who has spoken against the benefits, received countless e-mails and phone calls from the transgender community following his public opposition at a meeting last week. The benefits were scheduled to go to a vote then. The vote was postponed because of Hall's opposition plus the absence of two supervisors, which would have left the proposal one vote shy of the necessary nine. "All of us were born with problems," Hall said. "This is not society's problem, and to think otherwise is to discriminate."

Hall argued the city's benefits are meant to cover procedures that are medically necessary. He considers gender reconstruction surgery elective and said the city should not pay for transgender benefits without extending the same coverage to those who suffer from obesity, anorexia and learning disabilities. "Once again, the city and county of San Francisco is paying for something that is not necessary," Hall said following the vote. "I suspect there will be hidden costs that were not revealed in today's debate."

Leno stressed the insurance would not cover cosmetic procedures. It instead would

pay for genital reconstruction, hormones and other medical matters such as hysterectomies and mastectomies only after a doctor deems it medically necessary. The city currently has 14 identified transgender employees out of its 37,000 workers. The insurance changes that would cost \$1.70 a month would include items such as infertility drugs, Viagra and acupuncture, in addition to the sex-change benefits.

The benefits would be available starting July 1 and would cover male-to-female surgery, which costs about \$37,000, as well as female-to-male surgery, which runs about \$77,000. It also would cover hormones and other procedures. Employees would have to work for the city at least one year before they would be eligible. People wanting sex-change surgery would have to pay 15 percent out of pocket if they use a doctor in the city's health network. If an out-of-network doctor is used, that goes up to 50 percent.

The term transgender covers a broad range of categories including cross-dressers, transvestites, transsexuals and those born with characteristics of both sexes. Veronika Cauley, a transgender commissioner on the city's Veterans Affairs Commission, said she's more interested in electrolysis and breast augmentation and isn't sure what city benefits she will use.

But she's thrilled to know she now has the option. "I am who I am. I just have a gender dysphoria issue," she said. "It's all about R-E-S-P-E-C-T."

## **Our Road to Disclosure** by Barb

A friend of mine has asked me an interesting question. "How do you get to the point where you are able to tell significant people in your life about your true self." There is a contingent question. "Why do you need to make such a proclamation." Six months ago these would have been much more simple questions as neither of them related to my own life. However life changes and these questions are now real for me and as a result they are no longer so simple.

First I think some background is necessary. It is my position that to live a happy fulfilled life a person must feel that their life is significant. In other words one must be involved in the world in a meaningful way. That involvement will be determined by the one's abilities and interests. Closely connected to this is the need to live in intimate relationship with others. This will probably be a small number of people. However the relationship will be marked by a deep knowledge of each other, a deep honesty. It is in these relationships that I come to



know, respect and feel good about myself.

In common with many other people, the most significant person in my life is my partner/wife. Over many years we have come to know ourselves and each other in our interactions with each other. We came into understanding of my gender nature together. It was the strength of our relationship which gave us what we needed to deal with my "gender enrichment" (my preferred term). For a while our needs were met and further disclosure was seen to be neither needed nor wise. However life moves on and so things change. It soon became obvious that there was a goodly portion of the transgender community that found their gender nature a difficulty. They are hidden, without support in a hostile world. It so happened that there came an opportunity for me to make a difference. It didn't matter that it might be a very small difference. There was an opportunity for me to increase the significance of my life and derive the personal benefits that would result. A small group was started, not by me, in a community close to home. I became involved and it soon became apparent that there were further opportunities to "make a difference" which might put my private life in danger of being exposed.

At the same time it was

becoming more difficult to keep an essential part of my nature a secret from others who are family members with whom we are very close. The honesty of those relationships were being compromised. The need to correct the situation is becoming significant.

All of this means that some realities need to be looked at. First I must decide whether or not to continue my involvement in the transgender community. If I continue there is the possibility that people close to me will discover the truth about me by accident. This would be hurtful to them and relationships essential to me would be strained.

Secondly these same relationships are being strained because of the absence of disclosure which now exists. Intimacy will eventually be destroyed by any form of dishonesty.

The last ingredient in making this decision relates to my own self respect. Gender, in part defines who we are. If we fully accept and honour who we are, as all people should be able to do, then I need to share that with those who mean the most to me. For these people, if the relationship is as I believe it to be, the disclosure may stress the relationship but the trust and honesty shown will result in strengthening the relationship.

The result of these deliberations is that with care and sensitivity the disclosure will be made. Honesty in intimate relationships is essential and there is work to do.

After a while people wonder about regular trips away and what is done on these trips. Questions are not asked but sometimes there seems to be an awkwardness about saying "Oh it is just some business", or some other excuse. Besides, as Kaitlin already said, honesty is compromised and that isn't good.

As it turns out there was an easy intro to the whole thing and once opened up the talk flows back and forth. However everything cannot be covered in one conversation and so there is now time for pondering and questions arise for another discussion.

The one thing to remember is to reveal things slowly and simply so that people can absorb this news carefully without being threatened by such a change in family understanding.

### **Crossing over**

By Patti Hartigan, Boston  
Globe page N01, on 3/11/2001.

Once despised or invisible, transgendered characters are showing up all over popular culture few weeks ago, Joan Hoffman and some friends drove into town from the

suburbs to catch "Dame Edna: The Royal Tour," the smash hit starring the alter ego of comedian Barry Humphries. Hoffman and company dolled up for the occasion, putting on their finest froufrou and frocks. They dined in the theatre district and thoroughly enjoyed the performance.

Everyone agreed that the Dame, with her lacquered hair and rapier wit, puts on one heck of a show.

It was a typical girls' night out - except for the fact that there were no real girls in the group, at least in the biological sense.

Hoffman and the other ladies are all members of the Tiffany Club, an association of cross-dressers who gather regularly at a nondescript clubhouse in Waltham. At 68, Hoffman (who was born Stanley) has been donning women's clothing since the age of 5, but only recently has he felt comfortable appearing in public dressed as Joan.

Seeing people like himself on stage, on screen, and on television is part of the reason.

"I go out to dinner, and no one seems to care," says Hoffman, a large woman who favours matronly attire. "They might look for a second and then go on their merry way. Years ago, they would have thrown stones."

Strides made by the gay and

lesbian movement have loosened societal strictures for transgendered people. But images of cross-dressers in theatre and popular culture have evolved as well. No longer are they invisible. Nor are they merely being depicted as freaks, laughingstocks, victims, or psychopaths.

A more complicated picture is emerging - one that doesn't equate cross-dressing with homosexuality, one that confronts all audience members with a very different view about gender and identity.

"We used to think of gender roles as pretty fixed, and we thought that sexual preference defined us, as in: You are a man who likes to have sex with men, or you are a man who likes to have sex with women," says Lennard J. Davis, a cultural critic and the chair of the English department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "Now this generation feels that your gender identity is completely separate from your sexual preference."

Davis's son, a college student, recently changed his name to Emma and began wearing women's clothing. Emma dates women and has friends who do not conform to the traditional roles of male and female; their gender identities are fluid and have nothing to do with preferences in bed.

The professor contends that this change has been in the air for several years now, and that popular culture is only beginning to catch up. Media images have changed significantly since the days of "Silence of the Lambs," "Dressed to Kill," or "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective," a comedy that featured the not-too-subtle Jim Carrey hyperventilating because he unwittingly kissed a man dressed as a woman.

When Rupert Graves knowingly kisses a postoperative female transsexual in "Different for Girls," his lips linger, and he enjoys the moment.

Hilary Swank won the Oscar last year for her performance as the female-to-male transsexual Brandon Teena in "Boys Don't Cry."

Cross-dressing comedian Eddie Izzard won two Emmy awards for his solo tour de force "Dress to Kill." And recent foreign films such as "Ma Vie en Rose" and "Different for Girls" feature sensitive depictions of transgendered people.

The Belgian "Ma Vie en Rose" could be a primer for children struggling to come to terms with their gender identity. Fashioned as a kind of modern fairy tale, it tells the story of a 7-year-old boy who believes that the magical baby maker in

the sky made a mistake, and that he is going to turn into a girl some day.

Some of the year's most provocative movie releases promise more to come. Top prizes at the recent Sundance Film Festival went to the gender-bending rock musical "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" and "Southern Comfort," a documentary about a female-to-male transsexual who develops ovarian cancer and can't get medical treatment.

The trend isn't just limited to art films: Transgendered characters have also made a splash on television, the most mainstream of all media. This season, such characters have made prominent appearances on "Ally McBeal," "Gideon's Crossing," "Nash Bridges," and "Just Shoot Me."

Certainly there is a long tradition of cross-dressing in both high and low entertainment: Think Shakespeare, Monty Python, the Hasty Pudding Theatricals.

Cindy, a male-to-female transsexual featured on "Ally McBeal," initially sparked outrage in the transgendered community. The character was ridiculed by the bullies at the show's law firm and rejected by a man who was repulsed by her gender identity. In a later episode, however, the same lawyers rose to Cindy's defence, declaring her a great

And in the early 1990s, there was much hype about drag culture being accepted in the mainstream, what with movies such as "Wigstock," "The Crying Game," and "Mrs. Doubtfire." The leggy RuPaul hit the charts in 1993 with a No. 1 dance hit, and it seemed like everyone was putting on a dress in those days, from Howard Stern to Dennis Rodman.

But the current boom feels less like a passing fancy, the entertainment industry's version of the designer latte. And for those who have been living with transgender issues for decades, the change is long overdue.

"For years, every depiction of cross-dressing was for the purpose of ridicule," says Nancy Nangeroni, cohost and founder of the radio show "Gender Talk," which airs locally on WMBR. "I don't know how to estimate the damage that is done when people grow up with images that are denigrating."

woman worthy of love.

"It's important for transgendered people to have visibility on television, but I am concerned that it isn't just for the 'very special episode' during sweeps month," says Nick Adams, entertainment media manager for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

Members of the Tiffany Club contend that the latest crop of characters helps to affirm the existence of their once-taboo subculture. "Any exposure is good exposure," says Brenda R., the club's 42-year-old vice president. "But," she warns, "there is still a whole lot of negative stuff that desensitizes people."

Stereotypes haven't gone away, whether the transsexual prostitutes in "All About My Mother" or the flamboyant and abused drag queen in "Flawless."

Observers wonder whether some of the recent television depictions aren't, to some degree, exploitative. Many shows, including "Ally McBeal,"

introduced transgendered characters during sweeps month, when networks desperately want to attract viewers.

"I am looking forward to the day when we will see transgender characters incorporated into shows and not segregated into the sweeps period for shock value."

Still, some say any depiction is better than nothing. "Even stories with underlying negative images can humanize

experiences of difference," says Jennifer Levi, a lawyer for Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders of Boston who recently represented a 15-year-old Brockton boy barred from attending school dressed as a girl. "At least it begins the conversation."

Popular culture images play a dual role: They empower and disempower at the same time. "For people who have been stigmatized, there is a sense of affirmation when the mainstream culture gives you some space," says Joshua Gamson, associate professor of sociology at Yale University and author of *"Freaks Talk Back: Tabloid Talk Shows and Sexual Nonconformity."* "On the other hand, more visibility makes you more of a target."

That fine line existed several decades ago when gay and lesbian characters started to emerge in popular entertainment. First there were over-the-top stereotypes like those in *"The Boys in the Band"*; today we have shows like *"Will and Grace,"* in which the gay characters are just normal, everyday individuals who aren't required to represent an entire group.

Transgendered characters may follow a similar arc in film and television. But how do such stories affect mainstream audiences? They sit in the theatre and laugh amiably, but what happens when they go

home and their sons or daughters announce they are transgendered?

That happened recently to Davis, the professor whose son changed his name to Emma. Davis and his wife are both liberal academics; children of the '60s, they lived through one sexual revolution and, as such, are quick to accept progressive ideas. But their son in a dress? "We went through a few stages of horror and despair, which I can say lightly now, but we eventually realized that he - I have trouble with the pronouns - is our child, and we love him," says Davis.

It's easy to accept characters on the screen; it's another thing entirely when faced with transgender issues in real life. "I think there is a disconnect between what people do and what they see in the safe environment of a theatre," says Courtney Sharp, a transgender activist in New Orleans. "I'm not so sure all of this entertainment and comic relief is doing a lot of education and sensitivity training."

Of course, it would be a mistake to look to *LaLa Land* as a primary source for education on any subject; the transgender community is hardly monolithic, and the distinctions among its members are way too complex for most Hollywood producers.

Consider *"To Wong Foo,*

*Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar,"* which follows the adventures of three New York drag queens after their car breaks down in a Podunk town. Several members of Waltham's Tiffany Club aren't thrilled with that film and others like it, since they continue to confirm the impression that all cross-dressers are gay. In fact, almost all of the members of the club are middle-class, straight, white men. And therapists estimate that the majority of cross-dressers are heterosexual.

"When spouses become aware of their husband's situation, the first question they ask is, 'Is my partner gay?'" like in *"The Birdcage"* or *"To Wong Foo,"* says Diane Ellaborn, a Framingham-based social worker who specializes in gender issues. "It's good that there are more images, but unfortunately, the images are inaccurate for most cross-dressers."

Sensitive depictions or not, all the fictional characters in the world don't change the fact that transsexuals are still largely misunderstood and often demonized by the culture at large. Nangeroni, the cohost of *"Gender Talk,"* puts it this way: "For every two steps forward, we take one step back."

A next step, according to the transgendered, will be popular culture images that present



them as multidimensional.

"There is more to me than being transgendered," says Michael McKenzie, a Boston activist and preoperative FtM. "I am a musician. I'm an artist. I'm a writer. I'm a poet. I'm a carpenter."

British comedian Izzard, for example, may wear women's clothing and nail polish. But in his act, he riffs on everything from Stonehenge to squirrels - just like any other comic.

Other taboos may begin to fall later this year, when HBO broadcasts the Sundance award-winning documentary "Southern Comfort." Its central character, a female-to-male transsexual named Robert Eads, is dying and falling in love at the same time. Critics have hailed the film for its sympathetic look at a world that was once forbidden - or presented as laughable.

Eads himself sums up changing attitudes about gender. "Being a man or being a woman has nothing to do with your genitalia," he says. "It's what's in your mind or in your heart."

## **DON'T LET THE BULLIES PULL YOUR STRING**

by: Joanne Law

Over the last several years, I have seen the destruction of our community by individuals that want to control the entire transgender community by

what they think is the only way of salvation.

Several years ago, early 90s, I was lucky enough to attend JoAnn Roberts "Paradise in the Poconos" at a resort called The Pines, along with a dear friend Sandy. The Canadian dollar was almost at par to the US dollar. Small social trans supports groups were starting up in cities across the states and Canada like Gender Mosaic and IFGE. There were maybe one or two conventions for those that could afford that getaway weekend. The politics of being transgender were just getting off the ground.

During the three day weekend, I meet so many wonderful people. I believe there were over 100 people registered, 8 from Canada. Some attended only because this is their only time to identify who they are, others spent the weekend to just cross-dress and enjoy the illusion, others their very first time. Lets just say there were cross-dressers transvestites transsexuals alike. "Oops did I say those forbidden words". One of the highlights of that weekend getaway I had a chance to sit down and talk with JoAnn, one of the leading people the transgender community in the states. We talked about the different issues between Canada and the states and how we could reflect each others issues. During our conversation she said a very propounding statement, "Its too bad that the transsexuals and

the cross-dressing communities could not join forces to help each other".

Now in the year 2001 this is still the case. The cross-dressing community have all the money because they still have their high profile male income. and the transsexual community have lost their jobs because they came out. Her next statement to me "There should be a name or contact person on a business card to whom the people of our community can reach". I was the president of Gender Mosaic at that time and I was reaching out to greater communities about transgender issues in the Ottawa area, with the permission of the members the name Joanne Law was added on the Gender Mosaic business cards. Now there was a name and a cross-dressing support group in Ottawa. Some of you might still have that very very old card. The cross-dressing was changed to transgender several years later. FYI, during the three day weekend the Canadian Flag (2) were placed in the flag holders on the front veranda. During the weekend the flags were never removed or tampered with. At the closing breakfast the flags were given the staff of the Pines resort and to JoAnn herself. The cross-dressing community are the people that go out TRADING when the time and space is available, attend all of the conventions and enjoy the festivities of the convention, basically another closet only

bigger. While the transsexual community who have lost their financial income are going to soup kitchens and hostels. They became VISIBLE and look what happened. So the privileged and the underprivileged are still separated. The privileged don't want to see the lost transgender soul who are there, and tend to over look their existence. During these conventions, workshops listed in the program deal with coming out, loss of income, loss of family, loss of self-worth. so the majority of the people participating in that workshop are still privileged in being able to attend the conference itself. After the conference most but not all of the people attending, leave dressed the way they showed up. No make-up, no wig, no illusionary camouflage. They go back to their ho-hum male privilege jobs until the next convention. Lets just say these events are costly, hotel rooms, food, travel, and membership fees to the event. If you live in Canada and the convention is in the states, double your costs. Conventions do have their place in our community, issues are dealt with but only the elite are able to attend.

In the USA, the Trans lobby groups will make an attempt to change social justice on Capital Hill this spring. The population of the US is about 300,000,000 and about 200 trans activists will be visible. It's a start. Remember the Gay community marching by the hundreds of

thousands to have the right and to be removed from that dreaded DSM-4. Here in Canada the population is about 30,000,000 and we have about 20 transgender people who are becoming visible to TV cameras, media, and the press and making a statement to our legal and moral issues. We have national lobby groups like EGALE who have included us into their mandate. Now we have a stronger voice with our allies. We are changing history in Canadian politics.

I read about some trans-group that doesn't allow a certain kind of person because of their sexual preference, or they are not the right sex or they don't pass, or they have a mole on their left foot so they can't wear high heel shoes. Membership to some groups are so high that the average person wanting to join can't. Rules, rules, rules dominate the environment of the trans organizations. Yes we do need some rules, but to control who can and can't join, separates and eventually causes the demise of that group. Power and control are other reasons for the downfall. We have to join and co-ordinate all of our efforts in a collective to make the changes we need.

As transgender communities and groups we must all have the same thought, the same ideas and preach the gospel 101 about who we really are. We need spokes persons and they must share the same ideals speaking for the community and not for themselves. I see

individuals who never talk to other lobby groups or confide in people who are becoming visible. They just want their high profile visibility, leaving the real issue behind. We all have to unite and that includes everybody. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Straight and the greater communities too. I am not saying that everybody become active because that is a false statement. Some of us just can't and that's OK. The more active transgender people can join in the ranks in local outreach communities or join national organizations like EGALE in Canada and help in our development of our rights and others. Trans folk can become involved with community police, or become involved in the outreach of the greater community. We all have a place in society, when and where depends on you. Lets all work together as a team. If we work together giving the same message to those that want to hear us, maybe legal issues will be solved. It just takes one person to stand up and be counted then another and another. Lets do it for all transgender people around the world.

### **President's Challenge**

be it on a one to one basis or to a friend, at work or in a group, a letter to the newspaper Editor, refuse to have wrong and inaccurate information shared about your community the transgendered people of Canada.

**IT IS Your Mail Box TO?**

The Gender Mosaic, PO Box 7421, Vanier Ontario. K1L 8E4 can be used by all members for their packages, delivery of books or magazines.

We will pick them up and get them to you some way. Just let me know. Thanks Margo  
770-1945

P.O. Box 7421  
Vanier, Ontario  
K1L 8E4

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Next Edition  
September 2001

**Upcoming Events**

- TG Person Support &  
Discussion Group ON HOLD  
FOR MEMBERS INTEREST

- GM Couples Discussion  
Group ON HOLD FOR  
MEMBERS INTEREST

**UP COMING MEETINGS**

Pride Ottawa July 2001 -  
Ottawa Police Partners Assault  
Unit July 2001

**Executive Committee**

**Year 2001/2002**

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**Second VP:** Jan Hobbs  
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**Ombudsperson-** Kaitlin Acres  
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Gender Mosaic

