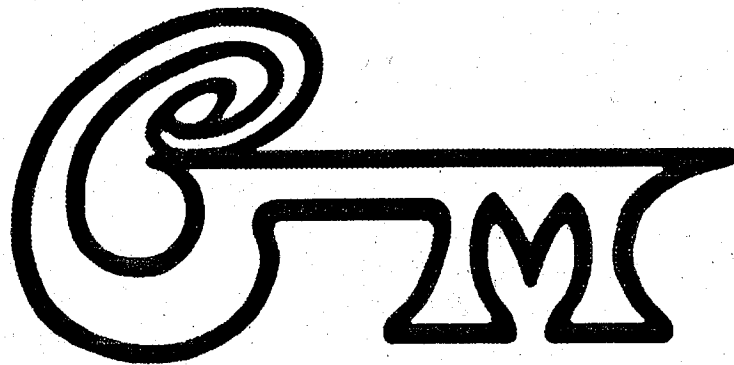


Notes From The Underground



**“T” Stands for Our
Time is Now**

**A FREE PUBLICATION
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Margo Ross Editor

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"T" Stands for Our Time is Now

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NFTU PRESIDENT'S REPORT BY JAN HOBBS

This has been a busy and active time for Gender Mosaic. We have become more involved with other organizations throughout the city and have learned that we are accepted by almost all. The Police Liaison Committee (PLC) has become slightly more sensitive in the way they address Transgendered people thanks mostly to the perseverance of Joanne with a little bit of me thrown in. Joanne has been vigilantly keeping track of the progress on the GLBT Community Centre ensuring that our needs are considered at every step of the way. Zelda and I sat in on a discussion group led by the ministry at St. John's Anglican Church to ensure that those who look after the Pastoral Care area are well versed in the uniqueness of T situations. Many of our books are presently on loan to the Kelly McGinnis Library so that

those who wish can explore TG literature.

Pride 2002 saw a remarkable turnout of Gender Mosaic members.

We started out the week with Joanne Law being on the discussion panel for the PLC presentation on safety in our community. On the Tuesday we presented three videos concerning the Transgendered journey which didn't have a great turnout but was well received by those present. On the Friday, Zelda went to the Pride Unity Service at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church – a 1st event for that parish, organized by one of the SAGE members we had met on the Wednesday video night. So many of these events rely on word-of-mouth advertising – we therefore encourage GM members to get out & get more involved in events like Pride!

On Saturday July 13th the Town Square of Info tables was

located at Minto Park on Elgin Street. Our fully stocked table handed out 50 copies of our GM pamphlet, 25 copies of the last NFTU, numerous business cards, fun stickers with our logo on them and we even sold 5 hot plates which my daughter and I created to raise funds for the 15th Anniversary party. The table was staffed throughout the day by Kaitlin & Barbara, Doreen, Linda, Joanne, Teddy, Loren, Norma and so many others that I can't remember. Thank you all for coming out and putting your best face forward for all to see. On the 11pm news on CJOH that night was a shot of me hugging Zelda, too bad they didn't get the banner in there as well so people could know who we were. We followed this with a dinner get together at Dunn's Delicatessen on Elgin St., just a short walk away. All went well – no negative incidents at all.

The Pride Parade was on Sunday July 14th starting in Hull and coming to a tremendous finale on Bank St. Joanne, Doreen, Zelda and I started and finished the parade, which is probably a first for GM to have the whole executive march in the parade. We were joined by Marc, Becky, Loren, Randi, Amber, Norma, my daughter Shirley, my son Stephen & his girlfriend, Allison & Julee, and greeted by many others on the walk by.

It personally gave me a good feeling to have such a fantastic turnout throughout the weekend by so many members of GM and to realize that as we all become more confident of who we are, we are willing to be visible to the world. For example, Zelda spent some of the march with her union from her day job, which she successfully lobbied with another steward to be involved in the parade for their 1st time. After the march, Zelda went to the North Stage to be part of the drag show as her stage personal, Maxima Coverage.

The next few months will see us continuing to build on the various activities we have chosen to undertake. In the fall, we look forward to our long-awaited meeting with City Councillor Alex Munter, in order to lobby to have "transgender" added to the Ottawa by-law of grounds on which discrimination are prohibited. "Sexual orientation" is already there as one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination, but "transgender" is not. We hope to get "transgender" added, & eventually to the Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms. (Incidentally, one of the transgender people on the PLC who is FtM & not a member of Gender Mosaic was outraged to find out that he would not be covered by Ottawa's own

municipal human rights protection on the basis of he being transgendered. But that is the present reality which we seek to change.) The state of Minnesota has transgender covered under its state human rights protection legislation, but they did this by expanding their definition of "sexual orientation" to include "gender expression". We hope to do better than they by having "gender expression" identified separately from "sexual orientation" in Ottawa's list of prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Planning for the Christmas Party is underway and in the capable hands of Jennifer Law. Joanne will keep us informed of what is happening both with the PLC and the GLBT Community Centre. I will continue to formulate plans for the 15th Anniversary Party to take place in May 2003. And above all we have some fantastic fun Socials lined up.

In addition, we now attend the Bingo for Bruce House held every Tuesday night at the Icon club (366 Lisgar Street). It costs only \$2 at the door, the prizes are fun, the hostess is transsexual & the food/beverage server is a drag queen, & it's all for a good cause (Bruce House, which offers residential care for those living with HIV/AIDS). It's also an extra night out for

your other selves, so come dress up (Go tacky or go fancy – the choice is yours!) & join us for the fun! (Unfortunately, Icon is not wheelchair-accessible.)

Thank you one and all for all the work and effort you put into being who you are and being members of an organization that is growing and becoming an integral component of the GLBT Community in Ottawa.

This is a presentation copy of a speech which I gave to the Police Liaison Committee on July 8th as part of the pride celebration 2002. I had 7 to 10 minutes to explain who we are. In the audience were members of the transgender, lesbian, gay and bisexual community and deputy chief Larry Hill of the Ottawa Police Department

THE EVER PRESENT “T DISCLOSURE”, EVEN AT YOUR MOTHER’S FUNERAL

I believe that most of you know that Joanne’s mother recently died and that like all funerals families re-connect, see each other often for the first time since the last wedding or funeral. This funeral was just like all those others except that there was a new daughter in the Law Family. Well not really for Joanne had been Joanne forever so long, in fact her mother is that wise woman who when

Joanne told her about being transgendered and that in her soul she was and had always been a girl, her mother thought for a moment and then made that magical pronouncement “Now, I have two and a half sons and one and a half daughters.”

So on the day of the ceremony the rest of the Law family also got to meet Joanne, yes there were those who wondered what had happened to Glen and those who whispered that “I did not know she had adopted another daughter did you?”

The truth is that in Joanne’s difficult moment, she had to once again reveal openly to others who she was, to be the brunt of prejudice and rejection just because she was honest to herself and could not be any one but Joanne.

Oh there is another side to this even as there always is in the case of the Transgendered person, it was the presence of Joanne’s daughter. She too had the focus and the wondered of those who could not imagine just how could she support Joanne. And well you know I have always liked her the “poor dear” what an burden for her to carry.

In the end of the day Joanne remained true to Joanne, to her mother and yes there were

some of us, her friends there to support her and even some new converts to a reality that most people never have to even think about little lone live.

Congratulations Joanne and Jennifer.

SAFETY IN OUR COMMUNITY; MY NAME IS JOANNE LAW AND I AM CANADIAN

I am a member of Gender Mosaic we are a social support group in Ottawa for the transgender community. People that identify differently that their core sex, the one that the doctor prescribed to us at birth. At Gender Mosaic we provide information, a social environment and companionship to transgender people, we provide support for their families and friends so this transgender person can explore their new identity in a safe atmosphere. In 2003 Gender Mosaic will be celebrating 15 years of existence. One of north America’s oldest transgender support groups. I have served on its board as president, and vice president several times during its history.

I have also been a visible part of the transgender community for a very long time almost 20 years and I have been a part of this liaison committee since 1994. I

have seen the abuse and suicide of many transgender people. The reason for this, is the lack of information, resources and access to the service providers dealing with transgender issues. Every day we have to explain ourselves, but no one listens. Every day we hear, Don't tell me about who you are as I have already made up my mind. For many good reasons transgender people will not report a hate crime to me or to the police dept. Some of the many reasons for not reporting a beating, or reporting a verbal sexual comment or reporting mental cruelty, is because of the shame of who we are, the home and family values as society has placed on each one of us. You see we are still classed under the category of a mental disorder. The DSM-4 requires us to be treated as such.

Over 30 years ago the gay and lesbian communities rallied to have their sexual orientation removed and it was. In our case the transgender community is 25 years behind. Reporting a hate crime will cause major ramifications if some one other than a police officer or a safe care-giver finds out. What can happen? Loss of employment, loss of family, loss of self esteem loss of financial security the list goes on. How do I know? From my own personal experience. I lost my job and my health, I lost my family I lost everything that

was important to me. Now some of my family have returned in support. I am one of the lucky ones to survive the program of being transgendered. When we come out of our closet for the first time we become a visible target for abuse. All the visual, mental and verbal clues strike an odd response to another human being. Hospitals and police departments are still asking them selves who are these people. If a transgender person becomes incarcerated, what cell or category are we placed in. What about the transgender person who is on hormones and living full time but does not have surgery. Are we placed in the woman's side or the male side of the crowbar hotel Our birth certificate identification show one sex but our gender identity is another. Which washroom do we use. It does get very confusing.

Movies like "Boys Don't Cry" "the Crying Game" and a local artist "Nice Shoes Fagot" and plays like "The Laramie Project" show us the real life test of going beyond the boundaries of gender identity and sexual preference.

In the newly released book "Heard for the First Time" the 10th anniversary incident booklet of the Ottawa Police Service Liaison Committee, there a number of documented cases of transgender persons who have reported a

hate crime, but very very few. But there is no follow-up of what was done. We have to get the legal documents of our federal and provincial governments to have the gay, lesbian bisexual and transgender communities identified and documented as a viable and recognised community, so that if there is any hate crime we are protected under that law so we can be safe from harassment, safe from job loss. Remember a few years ago, Rev Phelps and his clan entered our country and shouted God Hates Fags. He was allowed to abuse us because there is no law in the books saying he couldn't. The police service here in the new city Ottawa and the new city of Gatineau are trying their very best to help and I have seen the progress which is being done. At least there is a designated hate crime unit. What about other cities and provinces, are they doing anything to help us? Our police dept, the chief of police Vince Beven, Officers of the specialised hate crime unit and members of this community are paving in-roads and cutting trail for the next person who is willing to make an attempt to come out and make a report and for those helping in the community. Are we still in the dark ages? Are we safe on our city streets and recreational parks in Ottawa? We have come a long way baby but are we still safe, I'm open for options.

USA TRANSGENDER

RIGHTS LAW , WASHINGTON

that is protecting the rights of people whose identity does not match the genitalia they were born with – has exploded in the field and in the political arena, becoming a new wave of civil rights in this country, according to experts.

And experts concerned about affixing privileges to specialized groups say that the transgendered population is taking privilege too far.

It's "another step down the road towards radical individualism," said Linda Chavez, civil rights expert and president of the Center for Equal Opportunity. "I think it's going too far.

"We gave certain rights and protections to people so they could not be discriminated against because they were born with certain characteristics and couldn't change them. Now we are facing a situation where they can change their characteristics ... and then we confer upon them special protections. It's sowing confusion and it's very problematic," Chavez said.

But too far or not, it appears transgender rights are already bestowed on transgendered individuals.

"It's totally exploding – in law,

the amount of litigation, the laws passed, the law reviews written," said Paisley Currah, associate professor of political science at City University of New York and board member at the Transgender Law and Policy Institute.

"Transgendered people have become more organized and [are] moving beyond merely a support system for each other to actually fighting for their rights," she added.

"Transgender" is actually an umbrella term for a diverse group of people bound together by one characteristic: they do not identify with the gender into which they were born. They include individuals who dress and behave as the opposite sex, as well as those who have undergone surgery to change their sex, also known as transsexuals.

The number of transgendered people in the United States has been largely undocumented, but is still considered to be small, said Pauline Park, a transgendered woman and co-chair of the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy.

"This is a marginalised community, the group is small compared to the total population," Park said. "This

translates into political weakness. But compared to what it was 10 years ago, it's huge and more powerful and largely more effective."

Its effectiveness is apparent in the changes in law, academia and social work.

So far, 46 jurisdictions -- including states, counties and cities -- have laws prohibiting discrimination against transgendered people. Minneapolis, Minn., wrote its first anti-discrimination law against transgendered people in 1975. New York City recently rewrote its human rights law to protect "gender identity and expression" against all forms of discrimination, including housing and employment.

There are also a number of major public and private employers who have protections for transgendered people on the books and even local union bargaining agreements that include such provisions.

And that is not all. Today there are at least two court cases pending over the legal status of transgendered persons in marriage, as they relate to spousal rights and child custody. There are even more cases being hashed out over employment discrimination and hate crimes.

"There are a lot of legal issues

coming out now," said Julie Greenberg, a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law who has written extensively on transgender rights for law review journals. "For one, the transgender movement is willing to come out of the closet and push the issue and two, people are becoming more aware of it."

Opponents of gay rights who say the transgender movement is a logical outgrowth of the successes of the gay and lesbian movement are concerned that the breakdown in gender identity will result in a breakdown in family.

"The common link is the desire to disestablish or to deconstruct the two-sex system which most people view as natural," said David Wagner, a law professor at Regent University, which was founded by religious conservative Pat Robertson.

Wagner said he thinks the gay rights movement, much less transgendered rights, has a long way to go in terms of acceptance.

"I just don't think that anti-discrimination in this case has been as widely accepted by the American people in the same way Americans accepted civil rights in the 1960s," he said.

That may be evidenced in the lackluster response of states to recognizing same-sex unions, despite a great push from the

community. But people like Park are convinced that the transgender movement -- with or without the coattails of the gay rights movement -- is making great strides.

"When we formed three years ago, no one from New York City or New York State was talking seriously about transgender law," she said. "Now, transgender rights are at the forefront" of gay rights issues.

"We have been able to transform our cause," she said.

CHECK THIS OUT

PIPSC website

Check out the PIPSC website to see this too! Go to www.pipsc.ca, click on "English", then under the newest events (11 July), click on the one that looks like "Ottawa-Gatineau Pride 2002". A first for PIPSC!

The Ottawa Tourism Authority website

Lists all conferences and festivals held in this region, the one for PRDIE clearly includes the "T".

Appeals Court Rejects Complaint over Transgender Person (USA)

A federal judge ruled June 20 that the Minneapolis school district met its legal obligations when it offered alternate facilities to a teacher who objected to using the same restroom as a

transgender employee.

Transgender Trucker Denied Accurate Driver's License (USA)

Melissa White, a male-to-female transgender woman who moved from Illinois to Georgia, believed that the legal changes she made in Illinois - including changing her sex on her driver's license - would be honoured with full faith and credit in Georgia. But the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicles refused to honour the license and instead designated her as male.

Quebec Law Offers Equality for Gay/lesbian Parents

A new law in the Canadian province of Quebec gives same-sex couples the same parental rights and obligations extended to heterosexual couples. Pensions, health insurance, tax laws, inheritance and other benefits will now apply to families equally.

Editor's Note

by Margo Ross

Some of you may wonder why I include articles covering what the "T" community and our allies are doing in the US and around the world, it is to point out that much more is possible if we just ask, and then refuse to go away.

This fall Gender Mosaic has invited Alex Munter, Ottawa City

Councilor to one of our monthly meeting to discuss just how can we get the "T" added to the city of Ottawa's declaration of Human Rights. It would make it illegal to discriminate against a transgendered person in access to services, housing, employment and all of the protected services covered by Provincial and Federal Human Rights.

This will take work and it will require volunteers to write, advocate and even show up to support this initiative.

But just think if we are successful Ottawa will be the first city in Canada to include the "T" in their Human Rights declaration scooping even that mega city know as Toronto. Politically speaking that fact may be in our favour as there is a strong rivalry between the two cities and the Mayors.

So after Ottawa, what is next? The list is very long and we need to pick and choose our targets.

In light of the recent court rulings on Same-Sex marriages that may be our best target as the transgendered community is a forgotten component of that debate and we could advance on the success of that initiative.

Then what is next?

And you thought all you had to do was deal with and learn to be "T" proud within your soul, NO

it is oh so much more and it takes every one of us, the transsexuals who have moved on, the winter public cross-dresser, the part timers, the teens and youth who can not wait, the full timers and the frighten in the closet transcended person.

Welcome to your battle to be - just you.

Gender Mosaic's 15 year anniversary

Plans are well on their way and we need your help, your pictures, memories and most of all your participation in what will be a very special event. If you were at the 10TH Anniversary then you will remember just how many people wanted to and did participate, in fact some people were turned away as they waited just too long to get their tickets. Do not let that happen to you.

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.

Upcoming Events

Members Discussion Group & Couples Group get in touch with your executive for more info or see you at the regular monthly meetings

UP COMING MEETINGS

Ottawa Police Liaison Committee

The Rainbow Youth Advisory Committee (RYAC)

GLBT Community Centre Development working group

For information, contact: Stephanie Power tel: 613-277-8873, e-mail: spower@frev.ca or Joanne Law

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