

# Notes From The Underground

A FREE PUBLICATION

## "25 KIDS GET CHRISTMAS THANKS TO GENDER MOSAIC MEMBERS"

### CONTENTS

President's Note by Jan Hobbs .....	1
Northwest Territories Makes History: .....	3
Affirmations Shared by Nelson & Anne Strang .....	3
Boston Passes Historic Transgender Equal Rights Legislation .....	4
I Have Heard it All Joanne Law .....	7
Vancouver (CP) - There's nothing stopping transsexual Michelle Dumaresq .....	7
Disclosure Anonymous .....	8

### CONTENTS

Think About It Shared by Mellian .....	10
BC Human Rights Commission, Decision Clarifies Equality Rights of Transsexual Women ...	10
Just another day. SURE by Joanne Law .....	11
Editor's Thoughts by Margo Ross .....	12
Gender Mosaic's 15 Anniversary Plans .	12
It Is Your Mail Box ....	12
Your Executive .....	12

### Notes from the President:

The year is coming to a close yet so many wonderful things are still happening.

This Christmas season sees us helping children who are a little less fortunate than most of us. We as a group committed ourselves to providing gifts to 25 children in the Lanark/Perth county area. The OPP and in particular Neil Fennell who runs the Angel Tree program for the area are amazed at the willingness of our group to perform this unselfish act. One of our members went into work and asked a co-worker to help in the process of buying toys for the young child they chose. As a result of this her co-workers decided they wanted part of the action and took an additional 20 names from the Angel Tree program. I personally am excited and thrilled that everyone in this organization understands the need to extend

ourselves beyond who we are.

This year marked a first for Gender Mosaic as the group elected me, a genetic non-transgendered female to act as your President. This year has provided me with the opportunity to represent a unique element of our small community to the larger GLBT community as a whole. People in the GLBT community have come to respect the needs and opinions of our group wholly due to Joanne Law, but with a little bit of me thrown in for good measure, they now have started to understand that it is not just the trans person but all those who interact with them as well.

We have made presentations to medical students at Ottawa University. We have assisted students at Carleton University to understand the beauty of being transgendered. The best of all that we have accomplished this year came as a direct result of our September Social. Alex Munter came and spoke with us about what was necessary for us to ensure that transgender was placed in the City of Ottawa's non-discriminatory codes. Margo, Joanne, Lynn and many others have been working on this proposal for us and have been assisted by Alex in that he has had the committee responsible for this element go back to the

drawing board to ensure our inclusion. This action has been further reinforced by the Northwest Territories passing into their legislature Bill 1 which ensures protections to transgendered persons.

#### Pride 2002

On Saturday July 13<sup>th</sup> 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. 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.

The Pride Parade was on Sunday July 14<sup>th</sup> 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.

This year has seen us make many advancements into the

GLBT community as a whole yet we still as usual have far to go. Next year will see us making many more.

I will be starting off 2003 by making presentations to future health care workers at Algonquin College. I have been asked to address the needs of trans persons to four classes of students in the health care section of the General Arts and Science program.

I look forward to ensuring they understand how special we are and how to care for our needs, as they should be.

We once again will be present at both Ottawa and Carleton University's Pride week celebrations in January and February.

We will continue our representation on the Police Liaison Committee and our involvement with other community organizations such as PFLAG and SAGE. We are still committed to assisting in the development of the GLBT Community Centre. We will still commit ourselves to all the schools, universities and colleges to speak about the uniqueness of being transgendered.

The year 2003 will usher in a milestone in the GLBT community as a whole. Gender Mosaic will be celebrating 15

years of being an active, growing and nurturing support group.

Joanne Law is organizing this fantastic celebration on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003. The party will take place at the Arts Court building at 2 Daly Avenue and will highlight the past 15 years with a forward look to the future. I look forward to being a part of this momentous occasion and hope you all do to.

Thank you all for a fantastic year of discovery and fun. I look forward to being a part of this great organization for many years to come.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanza, Merry Solstice

And as we wiccans say:  
MERRY MEET AND MERRY  
PART AND MERRY MEET  
AGAIN.

Jan Hobbs

## **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MAKES HISTORY:**

### **BECOMES FIRST JURISDICTION IN CANADA TO PROHIBIT GENDER IDENTITY DISCRIMINATION**

The Northwest Territories organization OutNorth, and national organization EGALE Canada, celebrated today the landmark passage of Bill 1, the

NWT Human Rights Act. Both OutNorth and EGALE Canada are organizations which advance equality and justice for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people. OutNorth and EGALE appeared as witnesses before the Legislative Committee, and successfully argued for the inclusion of gender identity as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

With the adoption of Bill 1 yesterday, the Northwest Territories has: \* created a Human Rights Commission; \* prohibited discrimination on a number of grounds, including sexual orientation; and \* become the first jurisdiction in Canada to prohibit discrimination on the ground of gender identity, which provides transgendered people with explicit protection from discrimination.

"With the adoption of Bill 1, discrimination against lesbians, gays and bisexuals is now prohibited in every province and territory of Canada except Nunavut, which is also considering enacting human rights legislation, added John Fisher, Executive Director of EGALE.

"Bill 1 also represents a historic step towards equality for transgendered people. Both the Canadian Human Rights

Commission and the B.C. Human Rights Commission have recommended discrimination on the grounds of gender identity be prohibited, but the Northwest Territories is the first jurisdiction in Canada to do so. The inclusion of this sends a message loud and clear: discrimination against transgendered people is just plain wrong, and must end. Hopefully, this initiative by the Northwest Territories will encourage other jurisdictions to follow suit, to ensure that transgendered people across Canada enjoy basic human rights protection."

## **AFFIRMATIONS**

Shared by Nelson & Anne Strang

I have the power to channel my imagination into ever-soaring levels of suspicion and paranoia.

Who can I blame for my own problems? Give me just a minute....I'll find someone.

I will find humour in my everyday life by looking for people I can laugh at.

I will assume full responsibility for my actions, except the ones that are someone else's fault.

I will no longer need to punish, deceive, or compromise myself. Unless of course, I want to stay employed.

In some cultures what I do would be considered normal.

I will honour my personality flaws, for without them I would have no personality at all.

I will be grateful that I am not as judgmental as all those censorious, self-righteous people around me.

The first step is to say nice things about myself. The second, to do nice things for myself. The third, to find someone to buy me nice things.

Blessed are the flexible, for they can tie themselves in knots

A lack of imagination saves me from immobilizing myself with imaginary fears.

Does my quiet self-pity get to you or should I move up to incessant nagging?

Today I will gladly share my experience and advice, for there are no sweeter words than "I told you so."

False hope is nicer than no hope at all.

A good scapegoat is nearly as welcome as a solution to the problem.

Just for today, I will not sit in my living room all day watching TV. Instead I will move the TV

into the bedroom.

The next time opportunity knocks on my door, I will pretend I am not in.

To have a successful relationship I will learn to make it look like I'm giving as much as I'm getting.

### **BOSTON PASSES HISTORIC TRANSGENDER EQUAL RIGHTS LEGISLATION**

On October 30, 2002, Mayor Thomas M. Menino expanded anti-discrimination protection for over 589,000 citizens of Boston, Massachusetts plus those who visit and work there. Without any fanfare or press announcement, the mayor signed a gender-identity nondiscrimination ordinance overwhelmingly passed by the City Council a week earlier.

"Gender identity and expression" is defined as "a person's actual or perceived gender, as well as a person's gender identity, gender-related self-image, gender-related appearance, or gender-related expression whether or not that gender identity, gender-related self image, gender-related appearance, or gender-related expression is different from that traditionally associated with a person's sex at birth." This definition covers such gender

variation as transsexuals in all stages of transition, cross-dressers, drag queen and kings, and the intersexed.

Addressing such concerns as employment, public accommodation, lending, housing, credit, insurance, and education, the ordinance adds gender-identity or expression to the list of protections for those who reside, visit, and work within the city. It's also noted as being one of the most comprehensive nondiscrimination languages in the country, especially on public accommodations.

"By passing this ordinance, Boston has affirmed its commitment to ending all forms of discrimination," said Cole Thayer, cofounder of the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition. Thayer was one of a large coalition of local and national groups - such as the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC), the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), and even the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) - that participated in training and in directly working and in testimony for passage of the ordinance.

"The City Council has proven to be open to learning about discrimination," added Thayer, "it has unmistakably shown that

it is dedicated to protecting the rights of all who don't conform to rigid sex stereotypes."

At least one council member had a difficult time with the extension of equal rights to transgenders. In a column written for the South Boston Tribune last summer, Councilman James M. Kelly said, "I can't support this ordinance because cross dressers have the option of dressing as they please after work, out of school, after their job on the construction site, and away from the locker room." In voting against the ordinance, Kelly remarked, "We're solving a problem that doesn't exist."

Council member Kelly's logic completely overlooks the Peter Oiler v. Winn Dixie case where a Louisiana truck driver fired by Winn-Dixie for cross-dressing on his own time. In September, a The 5th Circuit Court judge ruled that indeed an employer may terminate an employee simply for the way they dress (in this case cross-dressing) away from the job.

But despite the concerns of council member Kelly, the City Council voted 9 to 1 to pass the ordinance with one abstention and one absence.

"The sense of community that came from the amount of

support received was overwhelming," said Ethan St. Pierre, a board member of NTAC who testified before City Council for the measure. "I felt very empowered to be a part of and to witness such a historic event."

Gunner Scott, also an MTPC, added, "I am very happy and excited by the support that was shown throughout this process from both community members and Boston City Council members. Both the Boston City Council and Mayor Menino have demonstrated that discrimination will not be accepted or tolerated in Boston for all its citizens. This is a great step forward for transgender folks in Massachusetts."

Transgender activists are celebrating the Boston victory in a year that has so far seen transgender-inclusive anti-discrimination laws passed in 12 cities and towns, including New York City, Philadelphia, Dallas, Chicago and Buffalo.

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.

## I HAVE HEARD IT ALL

Joanne Law

Being around as long as I have, almost 20 years, I have heard every excuse and whimper for not being a part of the transgender community. Yet for most of you, the Internet was the first contact to our community looking for groups and resources that could help. Someone always bitches because they don't like to read about other people looking for information, dialogue and resources via this medium. Maybe a few e-mails are posted each day, so what, big deal. We are only trying to help and find others like ourselves on this list and outside this list. People are now accessing other trans people and their partners making a link to Gender Mosaic and other transgender support groups. I for one like to read and see what is happening. Gender Mosaic has been around a long time, we must be doing something right I have said this before and I will say it again, if you don't like what Gender Mosaic is doing start your own group. PS; I have told the President of Gender Mosaic of this e-mail before I wrote it. I told her that I was going to vent a little.

**VANCOUVER (CP) - There's nothing stopping transsexual Michelle Dumaresq from competing on the Canadian**

women's downhill mountain biking team, the head of the Canadian Cycling Association said Thursday. Pierre Hutsebaut, the association's executive director, said Dumaresq has met the qualifying criteria to be on Canada's team at this month's world mountain biking championships in Austria and any move to prevent her from competing could result in legal action.

"She is legally a woman," Hutsebaut said in a telephone interview. "She is competing in the woman category, she met the selection criteria, then she got selected to represent Canada."

Other national team members like Sylvie Allen and Cassandra Boon have said Dumaresq, who underwent a sex change six years ago, shouldn't be allowed to compete against women because her male past gives her a physical edge.

They want the International Cycling Union, the sport's government body, to ban Dumaresq from competing against women and have suggested she ride in a new "transgendered" category. Dumaresq, 32, who lives in Vancouver, argues estrogen and progesterone treatments have left her smaller, less muscular

and hormonally a woman. Olympic medallist Alison Sydor, a member of the national cross-country team, called the Dumaresq situation "unique". "As athletes we must respect the rulings of the sports governing bodies and focus our energies on our team and individual performance objectives," she said.

Hutsebaut said removing Dumaresq from the team would be a "discriminating situation." "We cannot discriminate," he said.

"We are governed by law and we have to enforce the law and citizenship status. People have the right to express their feelings and their opinions. On the legal aspect, she passed all standards and she was nominated to the team and she will compete at the world championships."

In response to an e-mail from The Canadian Press, an International Cycling Union spokesman said they are aware of the situation and a lawyer was studying the matter. Whether Dumaresq should be allowed on the women's team prompted mixed responses on a cycling Internet chat room. "I think there's a problem with someone who's genetically male bumping females from national team sports," said one person. Another said the Canadian Cycling Association would be



foolish to stop her from racing. "With the human rights firestorm that would follow such a move, I don't think they'd dare to try even if they wanted to, and I can't see why they would anyway," the person said.

Others wanted no part of the discussion. "Man, let's leave this one to the philosophers and medical ethicists shall we," one response said. Hutsebaut said he's hasn't received any official complaints from other team members questioning Dumaresq's status.

"The Canadian Cycling Association has not received anything," he said. "I don't see on which grounds they can appeal. The Canadian government designated her as a female, therefore she's competing in the female category."

Asked what he would tell other women on the Canadian team, Hutsebaut said: "Focus on your performance, train hard and do the best performance for yourself as we should always do in our sport

## DISCLOSURE

### Anonymous

First let me say I would like to share my experiences with you in the hopes that it may help. I do not want to suggest that you

try it. Each situation is different. Anyway here goes.

First was my wife. As soon as I understood what I really was all about I felt I needed to share it with my wife. We have always been very close and I didn't want to keep it from her. Initially it was a shock as you could expect. I found with most people, after they get over the initial idea, it takes a few days for it to sink in. We will call it an aftershock.

In general she became very comfortable with the idea as she could see it was really still me and I was much happier. We decided to wait to tell the children. I had the same fears about somehow influencing them or having them reject me. Sometimes a wife may have an opinion but mine usually agrees with whatever I feel is appropriate.

My son was next, he has some fem tendencies although I have seen no evidence of cross dressing. (trust me, he has no opportunity) He and I were always close, and he noticed when I was getting ready to go out to a support group function as he was banned access to me. He eventually confronted me. His reaction wasn't so good at first, he wrote me a letter.

Good news is, he now is more adjusted to it. He takes my

pictures, helps me with makeup, goes shopping with me, and borrows my face scrub and cream. We have actually become even closer, he has shared more of his fem side with me since then and he realizes that I really haven't changed.

My wish for him not to suffer the mental pain I have about this. This is who we are and we need to be who we are. I am too late starting.

If I had started to show my true colours as a teenager, I likely would have been better off. I didn't have what it took to do it then so I kept it a secret.

This was the case with my daughter. She will be 13 in July and has shown some negative reaction to some of the things she has seen me wearing. Last week I finally decided to tell her. Reaction was positive instantly, she said "I don't mind if you want to wear a dress, just don't make me wear one, I'm a pants person" She always came to me for splinters and bandaids cause I was more gentle. Now she comes to me for everything. She used to be closet to my wife but that seems to be changing.

With all of my immediate family on board, I feel comfortable wearing what I want to around the house. There are days when this is necessary.



I started to feel much better at being accepted, and not having to sneak around trying not to get caught. I started to realize that part of my pain was caused by trying to carry this secret around inside me.

The first one outside of the family was a friend of about 12 years. He seemed to know a lot about it and had read some books. We were discussing the subject one day, and I noticed he had a few facts wrong. I felt it necessary to correct him to set the picture straight. In the process, I let it out. He told me that he had no problem with this and that in no way would it effect our relationship at all. He even called me back after he left to assure me of this once again. There can be understanding people out there. Later on he asked my permission to tell his girlfriend. He had only known her a short while and had been divorced for some 5 years. I told him he was crazy and he shouldn't take the risk. He said that I was important to him and he felt he wanted her to know. He reported back that she was fine and was waiting to meet me.

By now I am starting to feel pretty good. Perhaps I wouldn't loose all my friends after all. The next was a lady, my friends wife. She had noticed some changes in me and was asking a

lot of questions. We eventually got around to it and I told her. She said that was fine and now understood why she felt so close to me and could talk to me so easily. The downside is I put her in a difficult position with her husband. After some discussion, we decided it would be best for me to tell him. That went well, he had no problem and proceeded to tell me of several problems he has had in his life. I suppose to make me feel that we all have things we need to come to terms with. The next weekend we went on a day trip together, and although we didn't discuss it too much, we did talk a bit about it. He didn't mind me wearing tights or a velvet hat.

A short time later, another friend called to say he was coming over. It was a Monday, and I don't get much time to dress up on the weekends. I had announced to my wife that I was going to spend the day dressed up. I decided it was time to tell more people so I wouldn't have to scramble when someone came over.

The first was my next door neighbour. We had done a lot of things together and he could drop in any time. We had discussed the subject a bit but he never put it together. I told him I felt it was time to come clean. He said that he had no problem with this and has even

come over since then to fine me in a dress. Wow he says, all dressed up today, then we get on with what ever we are doing. He said something the other day that made me think. "You know, if someone else had told me this, I might have had some trouble believing it. But since it's you, I want to learn more" believing in yourself, and presenting the facts in a serious light, goes a long way.

My other friend I hadn't seen as often lately as he has just had a new baby, well his wife did. He too said he had no problem. I told him that sometimes I felt really bad, and he was upset that I hadn't come to talk to him about it. He made it a point to say that he had no problem with this and that in no way does this effect our relationship. Soon after that he arranged for me to meet with our clients (I work with him) over the phone as he knows I don't like to go out for meetings. He now knows why. Next time he comes over, he will find me wearing a dress. This should stimulate some conversation.

The latest was only last week. We have been friends for over 20 years. He too didn't have a problem. Turns out his brother is gay, and the biggest problem he had was that their parents refused to accept him. My turn will come. His reaction can be summed up in his statement:

### "Why didn't you tell me sooner"

To date I have told 9.5 people including my wife and family, so far all has been positive. (The .5 is my friends girlfriend as she hasn't actually met me yet) I found for me that a great weight has been lifted off my shoulders. This thing was burning a hole in me and hiding from everyone including myself was not a healthy choice. Be warned, the reaction I have received is apparently not typical. Within the month I will tell my mother, I am not sure what her reaction will be, but I feel it is necessary. After that it doesn't matter. All of my friends and family have gathered around me in support. No one else really effects me.

### Think About It Shared by Mellian

1. At least 5 people in this world love you so much they would die for you.
2. At least 15 people in this world love you in some way.
3. The only reason anyone would ever hate you is because they want to be just like you.
4. A smile from you can bring happiness to anyone, even if they don't like you.
5. Every night, SOMEONE thinks about you before they go to sleep.

6. You mean the world to someone.

7. If not for you, someone may not be living.

8. You are special and unique.

9. Someone that you don't even know exists loves you.

10. When you make the biggest mistake ever, something good comes from it.

11. When you think the world has turned its back on you, take a look: you most likely turned your back on the world.

12. When you think you have no chance of getting what you want, you probably won't get it, but if you believe in yourself, probably, sooner or later, you will get it.

13. Always remember the compliments you received. Forget about the rude remarks.

14. Always tell someone how you feel about them; you will feel much better when they know.

15. If you have a great friend, take the time to let them know that they are great.

### BC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, DECISION CLARIFIES EQUALITY RIGHTS OF

### TRANSSEXUAL WOMEN

**VANCOUVER** - A transsexual woman was denied her right to equal treatment when a non-profit women's agency refused to allow her to volunteer as a rape crisis relief worker, the BC Human Rights Tribunal ruled in its first decision released in 2002.

Kimberly Nixon is a post-operative male-to-female transsexual. She was told that she could not volunteer with the Vancouver Rape Relief Society because she had not been a woman since birth. Nixon filed a complaint with the BC Human Rights Commission alleging that the agency's refusal to allow her to continue in a training program for volunteers violated her right to equal treatment under the BC Human Rights Code.

The BC Human Rights Commission's deputy chief commissioner, Harinder Mahil, supported Nixon's complaint before the independent tribunal. Mahil did not challenge the right of the agency to offer services and volunteer opportunities to women only. However, he did question the agency's definition of women, which was not inclusive of transsexual women.

"In order to promote equality as outlined in the code, it is essential that differences are not

only accommodated between groups in society, but also within groups, including women and other disadvantaged groups," said Mahil.

"Ms. Nixon was disqualified for a volunteer opportunity, not because of her skills or abilities, but because she is transsexual. The ruling in this case reaffirms that assumptions about transsexual women do not provide a basis for excluding them from acceptance as women in all facets of their lives.

The commission has taken steps to work with members of the transgendered community and women's organizations to increase understanding, acceptance & accommodation."

Nixon was awarded \$7,500 for injury to dignity, the highest award a human rights tribunal has made to date in British Columbia.

For further information contact: Wilma Clarke, Manager of Education and Communication tel: (604) 660-0692 en français: Thérèse Boulard, Agente d'éducation BC Human Rights Commission tel: (604) 660-0831

### **Just another day. SURE by Joanne Law**

A lot of interesting things have happened to me in the last

several months. Finally my new name change, which took forever to process but I now have a real identity. Joanne Penny Law. Not that assumed name that I was using for the last 15 years. Now I have the task of renewing all of my credit cards, drivers license, car insurance and legal documents to this new identity on my birth certificate.

Some of you might remember the television series "The Education Of Max Bickford", there was a transsexual female named Erica. In one of the episodes, Erica receiver her new birth certificate. Max one of Erica's colloques and friend was with her when she opened the letter. Max's comment was, How are you able to start a new life again when I have to keep mine? To me this was a radical statement but an honest one. I get to start all over again too. Finally my trip and evolution of Joanne Law is complete.

### **A Bridal Party by Joanne Law**

Another interesting event and acceptance of Joanne was the invitation to a bridal shower for our family's new sister in law. My sister sent out invitations to all the women in her husband's family and invitations to the women in the Law family, to all the girl friends of the bride to be. The shower was October

27<sup>th</sup> 2002. Folks to me this was uncharted territory, I was going into a place that most transgender women never see. I have crossed many gender lines in my past, challenged many corporations and unions on transgender issues, I became a visible activist for our rights.

The invitation was for Joanne Law from my sister welcoming me to her home as a new sister and part of the family. I called her the night that I received the invitation, almost in tears and laughter explaining this new dilemma to her. What am I supposed to do? What am I supposed to bring? How does a bridal shower work? What am I doing? Over the next fifteen or twenty minutes we shared a new kind of love that I never new existed. The day of the bridal shower was a day of anxiety for me. I was feeling great and happy at the same time, what if? I had heard from a lot of friends what to expect at a bridal shower, It was all there. I can't tell you all of the things that went on because this is a sacred space The invitation was for 1:00 pm I arrived around 1:10. Entering this new environment, this new unforeseen realm of women was a challenge beyond all challenges. This was my family, friends, wives daughters. As I entered my sister's home the 25 guests enjoying the special event welcomed me. Hi Joanne nice to see you again.

You look really nice to day. During the afternoon I had a chance to talk to everybody, I was part of the family being accepted for being me. What a feeling, a feeling like no other, I shared a new wonder of life with people that were family and friends. The wedding is Nov 9<sup>th</sup>, now my only dilemma is what am I going to wear?

The wedding was beautiful. The bride and groom held the service at their new home in Perkins sur de Lac., a little community north of Hull. That day I had made an appointment for my hair. Monica played and styled my hair with a new style for me. Flipped up with curls cascading down the side of my face, I looked awesome. The drive up to the wedding took about one hour, I arrived with other guests and we entered Alain's and Sue-Ann's place.

About 70 people in total gathered on the balcony, in the rooms and on the terrace. I mingled with my family meeting the bride and grooms friends. The wedding ceremony was beautiful, I guess my hormones kicked in because I started to cry in happiness for the couple on center stage. After the special event, we gather at tables for feast of roast duck and fresh vegetables. During the dinner of course speeches and jokes about the newly wed couple began, all in good taste.

After the dinner was over we sort of mingled all over the house talking and having fun. One conversation I remember, I will never forget. Sitting with some of my in-laws in the kitchen nook, a statement came out from no were from one of the younger cousins, you can't be Nancy's sister she doesn't have one. Some of the older folk laughed and I had to explain how Nancy now has a new sister. It was quite amusing to everybody including me. The night got longer and I had to drive back home. Leaving the fun I thanked the bride and groom for the wonderful day. Quite a day for me anyway. Thanking my sister and her husband, Sue-Ann parents and anybody that was standing at the door I left for that long drive home into the darkness. Still flying from happiness from the event that just happened.

### THE END OF AN ERA

Just to let everybody know that JOANNE'S CLOSET is going off the air December 11, 2002 my last scheduled program. After several years my volunteer time at CKCU is over.

My thoughts for my decision took a long time. Some of the reasons were the lack of interest from the TGLB community. I just had my fund raising campaign and I received \$50.00

from my listeners, less than I did from my first year. Although I did have to solicit funds from commercial companies by knocking on their door. The program before my collected \$150.00 and they have been on air 3 months. The cancellation of guests more frequent that I wish to think about. The waiting for late arrivals and worrying that many would not show. I had to pay my own parking and at \$3.00 a night it gouged a hole in my purse. Over the last 3 plus years the guests that I did have on Joanne's Closet have been a blast. I am sorry that it's gone but my time is over. There will be a void for the only radio voice in the GLBT community. Thank to all of my listeners.

### EDITOR'S THOUGHTS by Margo Ross

As I was putting this edition together, I was struck by the diversity of our community. There is always someone beginning the journey of self awareness or final realization depending on your and their perspective. Someone else who is at the "I do count stage" and that is both internal and external, another at the "I am normal" stage where they are just part of their world and community without the anxiety of venturing outside protected wall.

Then there is the legal stages,

each fight or battle comes with costs of exposure, risks of success or greater repression and the potential of newly established rights and freedoms equal to those of all others.

Finally there is a very important additional stage that is the giving back activity of refusing to be consumed by our battles and struggles and choosing to look outward to the needs of others and standing up publicly and making a difference to their lives and in doing so enriching ours. Because we are more than a medical diagnosis or a fringe minority group. We are all very neat people with much to give, share and teach, however to do so we must be ready to look beyond our individual struggles and claim our place in society.

I would like to thank all of those who provided articles and reference information for these newsletters and encourage others to join in. Your choice of silence is also your decision to walk and grow alone instead of swinging in with a growing group of people from our community and as you can see within this edition a very large and active group of people who are not Transgendered but refuse to permit you and I from being treated differently and unequal.

**Have a Great Adventure with Yourself, Margo Ross**

## 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 10<sup>TH</sup> 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.

I

## 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.

## 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@frey.ca](mailto:spower@frey.ca) or Joanne Law

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