



# TRENZ ©



COMMUNITY MAGAZINE DEDICATED  
TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND THE  
DEMISTIFICATION OF THE  
TRANSEXUAL EXPERIENCE

## Trans sisters and brothers, come forth !

As you know, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the riots at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City.

The Stonewall riots were a series of spontaneous and violent demonstrations against a police raid which occurred during the night of the 28th of June, 1969 in New York.

How the riots actually began remains a mystery, but the assembled crowd began fighting the police force. History reminds us that a transgender woman, Sylvia Rivera, threw the first bottle at the police.

During the night, many trans and effeminate men were rounded up by the police and beaten. During that first night, thirteen people were arrested, as well as four members of the police force and an unknown number of demonstrators were wounded (\*).

(\* source :Wikipedia)

Although present during the Compton's Cafeteria riot and the resistance in 1969, the trans community remains discreet during Pride festivities.

To humbly quote the great Martin Luther King, Jr ... Trans sisters and brothers, "I have a dream".

In this dream, I am no longer a second class citizen, judged by a label given at birth, but as the man that I am and always will be.

"I have a dream today ..."

In this dream, as I walk in front of Parliament Hill, I see Trans Pride flags everywhere, floating side-by-side with the rainbow flags, and this fill my heart with pride - pride of being transsexual.

It is often said that our community is invisible, without a strong voice, yet trans folks are everywhere.

But for most of us, the idea of participating in the Pride parade creates many conflicting emotions. Interiorized transphobia and fear of not "passing" in public have caused the community to forget our pride, our experiences, and our courage, which makes us the men and women we are today.

Sisters and brothers, now is the time ! Let's all make sure that transphobia has got to end ! We must remember that great victories were won with small battles !

Since I recognise only too well the implications of the title of this editorial, I will be present during the Ottawa Capital Pride Parade. If your first steps seem hesitant and uncertain, I will be right beside you, making sure that we go far and that this dream comes true.

Maxime Le May, editor.

## News from here and abroad



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## The Public Service Alliance of Canada modifies the definition of discrimination

One of the most important unions in the country, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, has taken position on transsexual rights, with the goal of defending the interests of its members who are transsexual or transgender

During last April's annual congress, delegates adopted a resolution which modifies the statutes of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. From now on, the definition of discrimination has been modified to include three new types of discrimination by coworkers or the employer : discrimination based on marital status, **sexual identity**, and class.

As well, PSAC recommends the following principles to its members:

- ♦ The respect of transsexual persons, including protection against harrasment, and discrimination, as well as respecting transsexual's self-declared identity
- ♦ access to washrooms and the right to privacy;
- ♦ the right to medical insurance for necessary medical procededures.

The PSAC hopes that other large unions in Quebec and in the rest of Canada follow their example.

## Call for submissions - Trans health resources

The Trans Health Network of Quebec (THN) is currently working to launch its website in the fall of this year. The THN works to promote health, well-being and social justice for trans people in Quebec. It is currently comprised of four member organizations which include ASTT(e)Q : Action Santé Travesti(e)s et Transsexuel(le)s du Québec, Stella, The 2110 Centre for Gender Advocacy and Project 10.

In order to work towards centralizing trans health resources, we are sending out a call for submissions for resources, manuals, pamphlets, 'zines, magazines, etc, pertaining to trans health issues.

We are looking to make these resources accessible by posting them on the website in PDF format.

We are seeking submissions surrounding (but not limited to):

- how to navigate the (Quebec) health care system to access hormones/surgery;
- info about hormones (including street/internet/etc), how they work, risks, side effects, etc;
- information about ID/documentation/legal name and sex designation changes;
- knowing your rights & self-advocacy;
- employment & social assistance information and resources
- information for care providers (training manuals, frequently asked questions, etc)

The deadline for submissions is August 30th, 2009.

Please submit resources to: [santetranshealth@gmail.com](mailto:santetranshealth@gmail.com) with TRANS HEALTH RESOURCES in the subject line.

# News from here and abroad : Spotlight !

## Spotlight on a trans hero, and Toronto's Pride grand marshal

Victor Mukasa may be one of the most wanted men in Uganda.

His crimes? Being involved with initiating a Trans Declaration in 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya, as well as having conducted workshops in various parts of Africa that have sparked trans activism.

Mukasa has been in a self-imposed exile for a year from his home country of Uganda after facing years of oppression. He is currently residing in South Africa, working as a program associate with the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

The 33-year-old transgender activist was recognized for his human rights efforts as he was named the international grand marshal of Toronto's Pride festivities last month.

Mukasa has been working to bring trans issues to the forefront, something that has rarely ever been in the country's, let alone the region's, list of concerns.

"That signified a lot. Right from the trans march to the Pride parade, there were issues that were being tackled and unity was being included," Mukasa said in a Toronto hotel. "This is a beginning of a new phase of collaboration, cooperation, and the new relationship of the human rights movement of Canada and Africa, which is definitely going to lead us very far."

His experiences coming out as transgender five years ago show that living as an LGBT person in Uganda is extremely difficult.

In 2005, Ugandan government officials raided Mukasa's home and arrested a Kenyan friend who was staying at his house at the time. Documents and files regarding his human rights work in the country were illegally confiscated. Mukasa and his friend took the government to court a year later, and in December 2008 they finally won their case.

"We have a lot of people who are saying, 'There are no transsexuals and transgender people in Africa. But the IGLHRC is committed to defending people's rights. It has been there and has empowered me to really deal with situations such as the one in Uganda,'" he said. "So I've been equipped with resources to deal with those situations in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa in a better way, a more strategic way."

Through the IGLHRC, Mukasa was able to organize the first workshop on gender identity and other transgender issues in Africa, bringing together activists from across the eastern and southern parts of the continent.

As a result, trans organizations are being established in countries including Uganda, Kenya, Botswana, and Namibia.



(Source : [www.advocate.com](http://www.advocate.com))

## TR@NZ

Community magazine founded in 2009.

### Editor

Maxime Le May

### Photography

Eric Champigny

### Research

Patrick Gilbert

### Collaborators

Danielle Chénier, Roch Gagnon, Lox, Mélanie Riendeau, Luc Alexandre Perron, Caroline Sanscartier, Jacky Vallée.

### Subscription

[maxime.lemay1@mac.com](mailto:maxime.lemay1@mac.com)

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## Tr@nz ... with Pride !

### Montréal Pride

August 13 - 16, 2009



The theme chosen for 2009 is "Stonewall: 40 years!" The riots marked a milestone in the history of the community: what is now widely recognized as the first instance where gays and lesbians fought back against persecution, giving birth to the first LGBTQA Pride.

Jasmin Roy will be the spokesperson for the 3rd edition of the Pride Celebrations and will be accompanied by our most honourable Grand Marshal, Ms. Michelle Blanc.

One of the first to obtain an Electronic Business M.Sc. with a specialization in management, Ms. Blanc is known for the many scientific, educational and popular projects she leads and produces here in Canada. She hosts the michelleblanc.com blog, which has become one of the favourites of the French marketing magazine, Stratégies.fr. She has also recently been named Yahoo Canada's Big Idea Chair personality and the third most influential woman in Canadian social media. Her blog is classified as one of the most influential francophone blogs in the world, according to many sources.

The theme for the 2009 parade is "¡Fiesta!". This theme will be reminiscent of the Rio Carnival with its Latin and Brazilian flavours, its dancers, and vibrant colors.

(Source : [www.fiertemontrealpride.com](http://www.fiertemontrealpride.com))

### Ottawa Capital Pride

August 21 - 30, 2009



In Ottawa, the first "gay" pride celebration was organized in 1986 by Gays of Ottawa (GO, which later became the Association of Lesbians, Transgender, Gay, and Bisexuals of Ottawa - ALTGBO).

In 1989, the pride celebration became a week of activities: dances, exhibits, films, sporting events, and receptions.

In 2001, over 8,000 people gathered along Bank Street to cheer on as the parade made its way on a longer route from Lansdowne Park to Parliament Hill.

2002's Pride events blew away all expectations - 55,000 people attended the parade and the street party. No one expected this. Pride 2002 wasn't just the most successful Pride Festival but it was one of the most successful 1-day events in Ottawa. Organizers took a small picnic in the park and brought it to the very streets in which we live our daily lives. Pride Ottawa has been transformed from a secluded, isolated event into one of the most important festivals of the city.

In 2008, we asked you to "Live Your Pride" every day and in 2009 we ask you to join us in "Putting Pride on the Map".

(Source : [www.capitalpride.ca](http://www.capitalpride.ca))

### Community calendar.



**Please send us information on your events or activities so that we can make it available to everyone on our web site.**

**Send a brief description of your happening to our editor's email : [maxime.lemayl@mac.com](mailto:maxime.lemayl@mac.com)**

## News from here and abroad

### Trans academic wins human rights award

Presenting the award, Jenn Clamen, a Montreal community organizer, described Viviane Namaste as "a personal hero" for her efforts to understand and address the specific HIV-related needs of the bi, trans and migrant sex work communities. "There are people in our lives who display such bravery, unabashed drive and brutal strength (that) they inspire the entourage of students around them, incite change and evolve a community," said Clamen of Namaste, addressing a packed house at Toronto law school's Osgoode Hall.

Namaste, who is the research chair in HIV/AIDS and sexual health at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University, provided the crowd with a chilling education about increasing HIV rates among trans sex workers around the world.

When she first got involved in trans HIV issues in the early '90s, she said, the prevalence of HIV among trans people was double that among gay men.



*Pictured above at right, Namaste with Richard Elliott of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network.*

"Where is the political will around this population and its reality?", Namaste asked the assembled lawyers and community advocates. "How is it that transsexuals have the highest rates of HIV seroprevalence in the industrialized world, and they are still not recognized as a vulnerable population in Canadian state policy and in international policy?"

Namaste's current research involves understanding the HIV prevention needs of bisexual men and women and Montreal's active swingers community, and includes an informational website at [polyvalence.ca](http://polyvalence.ca).

"Why is it that bisexuality is something that we talk about all the time in HIV work — but you can never find a poster or pamphlet specifically adapted to the realities of bi men and women in the Canadian context?" she asked.

(Source : [www.xtra.ca](http://www.xtra.ca))

### Houston Mayor Proclaims Trans Day

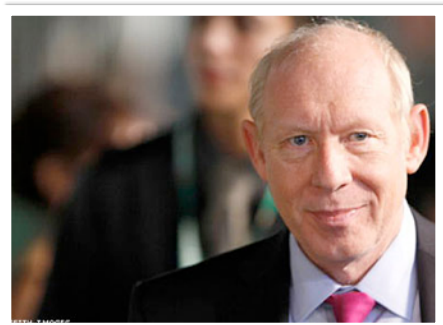
With over 100 people in attendance, Trans activists in Houston had a reason to celebrate as the city's mayor proclaimed last Saturday "Transgender Center Day" in honor of the center's first anniversary.

The daylong event included a barbecue, socializing, networking, and a brief program that was attended by local politicians and a state representative, who presented the center with proclamations and certificates.

"It's pretty amazing that a number of years ago we probably wouldn't have seen that much support from our local politicians," said Tim Brookover, a board member of the Houston Transgender Unity Committee, who attended the event on July 25. "They provide visibility not just in the trans and LGBT community but the wider community."

The Transgender Center, one of the first of its kind in the country, has become a face for the trans community beyond Houston, advancing trans causes and issues in the state. It offers many services for trans people, including support groups, workshops, health care, housing referrals, and community events.

The center also houses an archive including transgender artifacts from the Roman Empire, rare books and magazines from Europe and Africa, and 17th- and 18th-century antiquities from the Far East. Pop-culture memorabilia are also housed in the archives with ephemera from international trans movies, autographed books by writers such as Gore Vidal and Quentin Crisp, and photos of actors from critically acclaimed films like *Transamerica* and *Boys Don't Cry*.



(Source : [www.advocate.com](http://www.advocate.com))

## News from here and abroad

### A video tribute to Dr Harry Benjamin

SexSmart Films, an organization dedicated to the promotion of sexual literacy, has posted a video tribute to Dr. Harry Benjamin.

Dr. Harry Benjamin, author of the groundbreaking book, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, died in 1986 at the age of 101.

On January 10, 1987, there was a memorial service held for Dr. Benjamin at the New York Academy of Medicine. This three-hour service was videotaped and edited down thirteen minutes. Those who spoke at the service and appear in the presentation include Charles Ihlenfeld, M.D., Hans Lefeldt, M.D., Garret Oppenheim, Joel Fort, M.D., Virginia Allen, John Money, Ph.D., Walter Futterweit, M.D., Leah Schaefer, Ed.D., Christine Wheeler, Ph.D., Christine Jorgensen, Richard Green, M.D., J.D. and Renee Richards, M.D. This is a unique opportunity to see and hear these prominent sexologists share their memories and perspectives of Dr. Harry Benjamin.

His patients regarded him as a man of immense caring, respect and kindness, and many kept in touch with him until his death.

(Sources : [www.wpath.org](http://www.wpath.org) et [www.sexsmartfilms.com](http://www.sexsmartfilms.com))

### New Democrats pass resolution in support of LGBTT health

Just hours before Quebec New Democrats took to the streets in Montreal's annual pride parade, the NDP Federal Convention in Halifax unanimously passed a resolution in support of LGBTT health, Medicare coverage for sex reassignment therapy for transgender and transsexual people, and a blood and organ donation policy based on science rather than fear.

The resolution, based partly on the work of the Rainbow Health Network, addresses the disturbingly high rates of ill health, poor health care outcomes, and lack of access to health care among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people. This situation has been attributed to factors such as homophobia, heterosexism, the lack of training for health-care providers on LGBTT issues, and poor self-esteem or the lack of information in LGBTT communities.

"Despite abundant evidence of these problems, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada have not developed programs and initiatives for LGBTT people, as they have for other communities with particular health needs," said the NDP's LGBTT human rights critic Bill Siksay.

The resolution also calls for medically necessary sex reassignment therapies for transgender and transsexual Canadians to be covered under Medicare, respecting the Canada Health Act's principles of equity, universality, and free care for medically necessary procedures.

Sex reassignment therapies such as hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgeries are recognized by bodies such as the American Medical Association and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health as medically necessary treatments. However, currently in Canada, coverage for these therapies is a patchwork, with some provinces covering certain procedures, often with complicated procedures for access, and other provinces having no coverage at all. As a result, trans people's access to these procedures is grossly limited.

"With this resolution, Federal New Democrats have committed to working with the trans community and the provinces and territories to make sure that transgender and transsexual Canadians enjoy the same rights under the Medicare system as all Canadians.

The medical needs of trans Canadians must be covered from coast to coast to coast," said Bill Siksay, who tabled a similar motion on this subject in the House of Commons during the spring session of Parliament. The resolution specifies that all NDP work on the issue must respect federal and provincial areas of jurisdiction.

(Source : Matthew McLauchlin Co-chair LGBTT NDP )

To avoid delaying the deadline for sending this bulletin, the file «Health Issues: Testosterone» will be published in next month's bulletin (October 2009).

## RAMQ Update

The majority of transsexuals in Quebec have had to defray operation costs, and other costs related to their transition, themselves.

Due to recent changes in provincial laws, this situation is about to change.

The public healthcare system does not have enough available operating rooms to meet the demand for this type of operation. This is why these operations generally occur in the private healthcare system. Until now, the ministère de la Santé could only pay for these operations if they occurred abroad.

In January 2009, the transsexual community learned that operations could now be performed in a private clinic in Montreal, with the public provincial healthcare system paying the costs.

"Recent changes to healthcare laws now permits us to make the necessary alliances between a hospital and a private clinic, so that operations can be performed in Quebec" explains Dr. Michel Bureau, the deputy Minister of Health.

However, this announcement made no mention, for those transsexuals who want to undergo surgery, if they must still be evaluated by the Human Sexuality services of the Montreal General Hospital, or if evaluations from other hospitals would be recognised by the RAMQ.

After verifying with the ministère de la Santé in July, it would appear that at this time, the healthcare system is in the process of creating an "all inclusive" healthcare clinic for the transsexual community affiliated with the CHUM, before the end of September 2009. Discussions about this project, which will be based on a public/private partnership, are still underway.

After verifying with the office of Dr. Brassard, changes to the file for free access to healthcare are coming about. "To be considered by the RAMQ, a patient's medical files must contain evaluations from a doctor (family doctor or endocrinologist) as well as letters of reference from a psychologist", according to information from our source.

The information that can be found on the website of the RAMQ is somewhat more vague, mentioning only professional procedures. ([www.ramq.gouv.gc.ca](http://www.ramq.gouv.gc.ca))

Since information on this topic is rapidly evolving, to be certain of any new developments, please contact the office of Dr. Brassard (514) 288-2097 ([info@grsmontreal.com](mailto:info@grsmontreal.com)) or through healthcare specialists working with the transsexual community.

As well, please ensure that your healthcare records are up to date to avoid any unnecessary delays once this project is underway.

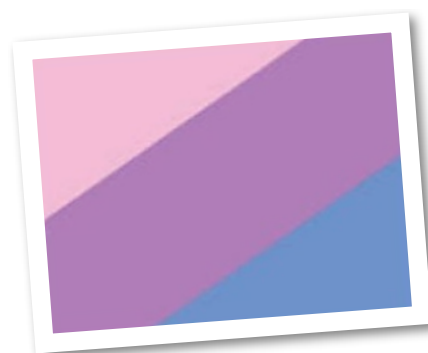
## The Directory of Resources

The directory of resources was created to fulfill one of the goals of Tr@nz : the diffusion of information.

The directory of resources will be online towards the end of September 2009, and will group together resources, organizations, and professionals related to the transsexual community, and those willing to work with them.

It will give you the opportunity to find information, as well as necessary contacts quickly and easily. We invite you to consult the information, or to submit your organization to be included in the directory by sending an email with your information to the following email :

[maxime.lemayl@mac.com](mailto:maxime.lemayl@mac.com)



## Project trans archives

**Danielle Chénier**

Since the beginning of time, the human race has left traces of the past in order to continue to evolve, through memories of both good and bad experiences.

This archival information, whether it be through written works or shared folklore, are a result of these experiences and evolution.

Documentation in the transsexual community is relatively new, and is being created from the exchange of personal experience.

There are several different types of archives. Our transsexual documentation archives are considered to be part of a private archive. Therefore, these archives can be given, bequeathed, or entrusted in deposit to a public archive, and their use can be restricted according to particular rules created by their owner.

These archives may be historical in nature, they may be about current affairs, and be of different formats including paper, audio files, video files such as news reports, television series, films, music, news articles, books etc.

The archives will be, for the most part, available through the internet from the website of the ATQ, while others will be made available for consultation by request.

If you would like to consult any of the available documentation, or would like to contribute material to the archives, please contact Danielle Chénier at the following email address : atq@atq1980.org

As well, we are currently seeking volunteers to convert paper documents to an internet ready format (scanning documents, creating text files etc...), as well as personnel to translate documentation so that it is available in both French and English.

## The Compton's Cafeteria riot

**Patrick Gilbert**

The Compton's Cafeteria Riot occurred in August 1966, in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco. This incident was the first recorded transgender riot in United States history, preceding the more famous 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City by three years.

Compton's Cafeteria was one of a chain of cafeterias, owned by Gene Compton, in San Francisco from the 1940s to the 1970s. The Compton's, at 101 Taylor Street (at Turk) in the Tenderloin -- which was open from 1954 to 1972 -- was one of the few places where transgender people could congregate publicly in the city, because they were unwelcome in gay bars at that time.

When a police officer accustomed to manhandling the Compton's clientele attempted to arrest one of the [transwomen](#), she threw her coffee in his face.

At that point the riot began. Dishes and furniture were thrown and the restaurant's plate-glass windows were smashed. Police called for reinforcements as the fighting spilled into the street, where a police car had all its windows broken out and a sidewalk newsstand was burned down.

Although the riot was a turning point for the transgender community in San Francisco, for 40 years, it was an almost-forgotten incident. This was remedied by the [documentary](#) *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria*, co-directed by Victor Silverman and Susan Stryker which premiered on June 18, 2005, at the [Frameline Film Festival](#) at the [Castro Theatre](#). On June 22, 2006, a memorial plaque was placed in the sidewalk in front of the cafeteria site, which is now the [Oshun Center](#), a free clinic for women.

(Source: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))



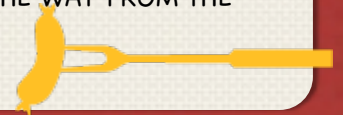
# The Annual Corn Roast in pictures...



ONCE AGAIN THE CORN ROAST WAS A GREAT SUCCESS DUE TO EVERYONE'S PARTICIPATION !

THANK YOU TO DANIELLE AND ERIC, OUR TWO CHEFS FOR THE DAY ! THANKS TO SAM, OUR DJ !

AND A VERY SPECIAL MENTION TO EVONNE AND HER FAMILY WHO CAME ALL THE WAY FROM THE BAHAMAS TO BE WITH US !!!



... because the best discussions occur under the covers !

*The Annual Corn Roast in pictures...*



*...because the best discussions occur under the cover !*

## My say : I am a transsexual

**Melanie Riendeau**



### **A friend in California !**

This article is intended to give you a taste of the transgender life in the Bay Area and is not intended as a guide. If you find a mistake, feel free to point it out to me.

My name is Melanie and I moved from Montreal to Northern California four years ago. I'm still very early in my transition process, as I finally acknowledged who I am last summer. I live near San Jose, about 40 minutes from San Francisco. Several months ago, I was coming to terms with being transgender, and what it would mean to me for the next couple of years. I needed someone to talk to. I knew that one of my colleagues was lesbian and she was nice. So I gathered my courage at some point and mentioned to her that I'm transgender, figuring she would be more receptive than the average coworker. She was stunned for a few seconds and then told me that she was also transgender, at about the same stage of transition. Let's switch pronouns... Since then, he and I keep ourselves up-to-date with our progress, how our significant others and families are reacting, the effects of hormones. It's extremely nice to have such an ally in my workplace. I just long to see the face of my boss when we come out at the office...

It is said that it's easier to transition in the (San Francisco) Bay area, but it's harder to "pass". I believe it's because people are more exposed to transgender persons and are better at recognizing the subtle differences. But that doesn't mean they will treat transgender persons badly... For instance, there are several LGBT community centers in the area. Among them is the San Francisco LGBT Community Center in the Castro neighborhood, and the Billy de Frank LGBTQQ Community Center in San Jose. The latter suffered severe underfunding and is in danger of closing. Both centers have transmen and transwomen support groups. An important resource located in San Francisco is the Transgender Law Center, dedicated to offer information and support on transgender law.

The medical situation is a bit more dire. A good part of transgender population does not have personal medical insurance and must be content with what MediCare and MediCal can offer. One good note is that Planned Parenthood started to offer Transgender Services, for now restricted to Hormone Replacement Therapy, at an affordable cost. Most medical plans will include coverage for psychotherapy and HRT, very few of them will cover Gender Reassignment Surgery and none will cover Facial Feminization Surgery, facial hair removal or other so-called cosmetic services. A transwoman I see in one of my support groups actually plucks her facial hair herself, every day!

For MtF early in their transition, there is a couple of safe places that are also used by the crossdresser community. There is Carla's, a beauty salon and boutique where transwomen can come without fear of being judged. There is also "I Love It", a boutique in Fremont visited by both crossdressers and transwomen.

The Trans March is the transgender event of the year in the area, and happens on the Friday before the San Francisco Pride (June 26). It started in 2004 and has grown in popularity ever since. The San Francisco Pride (June 27-28) also had a Transgender Pavilion on Sunday. San Jose Pride also had a Pride festival, smaller than its SF counterpart, but more family-friendly. Last, but not least, TGSF hosted its annual Cotillion on February 7th. It is a ballroom style celebration of the transgender experience.

Mélanie Riendeau was born in Montreal as a boy and lived in that area for a long time. She moved to California 4 years ago, after being offered an interesting position in a well-known computer company. Then, in the summer of 2008, she realized that something was different about her, something she could no longer deny: she felt like a woman inside. This triggered a lot of changes in her life. At this moment, she's still living 90% of her time as a man, but she's preparing the coming out as best as she can.

## My say : I am a transsexual

### Jacky Vallée

#### In memory of ...

I don't know if she's\* still alive but, considering she was probably in her late 70s when I knew her in the early 1990s, I can't be sure. From the ages of 17 to 19, I was working at a convenience store/gas station (a Shell, I believe) in Sherbrooke, QC. I knew nothing about trans issues at the time but when this male-bodied person who dressed and presented as female came to put gas in her big, white van on a regular basis, shortly before the end of my evening shift, I made it a point to be nice to her and to treat her like a lady because I knew that she probably didn't get much of that. I looked at her wonderingly through the window as she gassed up, with her flowery dress and hat and her big rough hands. Sherbrooke is not a tiny place but it is not a big city either and, at the time, it wasn't the greatest place to be queer. Not that I was anywhere near admitting queerness or transness to myself . . . probably, at least in part, because it wasn't the greatest place to be queer.

During my last few weeks, as I did with all my regular customers (the ones who were nice to me, anyway), I told her that I was leaving so that I could attend university in Montreal. This was our first actual conversation, and she told me she would miss me. She came all the way to our gas station because she was respected here, she said. The one closer to her home out in Lennoxville, about a 20-30 minute drive away, was scary. There were always nasty teens hanging around who would pick on her and even threaten her. I don't remember anything about how the service there was but, having gone to that store regularly as a student in Lennoxville, I knew that they didn't get the same kind of customer service training that we did.

I've wondered what ever happened to her from time to time. Now that I know more about some of the difficulties involved in being trans, and even more specifically, the difficulties involved in being a trans woman who does not "pass", I can imagine how brutal it must have been for her in Lennoxville and wherever else she went during her life, roughly from the 1920s onward.

I wish I knew. And I wish I could tell her how much I admire her.

\*I'm using female pronouns here based merely on the assumption that she did, or would have if she could have, identified as female. I base this assumption on the fact that she was dressed as female every time I saw her and during mundane activities such as putting gas in one's vehicle. I realise that I could be grossly mistaken and that maybe this person cross-dressed, did not identify as female, and happened to need gas every time they came out of a weekly discussion group for cross-dressers. Nevertheless, the aspect of the person that I knew radiated femaleness so the "she" is hopefully not insulting to her in any case.

(Source : Jacky's blog : [tboyjacky.wordpress.com](http://tboyjacky.wordpress.com))

Jacky Vallée is a 36 year old trans guy from Montreal. He's a Mom to a fantastic little boy, a doctoral student in anthropology and a performer with the Dukes of Drag troupe, which he co-founded in 2006. His blog, on the subject of the exploration of gender and sex, over the past few years has largely been based on contributions from other transfolk who've shared their experiences of transitioning and their thoughts.



## Reader's feedback

Let us know your opinion on articles presented in Tr@nz or post them online via our blog at : <http://www.tranzmag.com/www.tranzmag.com/Blog/Blog.html>

## PRIDE PARADE.

The idea of participating in the Pride parade creates many conflicting emotions in the transsexual community.

The reader's feedback forum was created for readers to share their opinions on the subject.

For those who wish to participate, the information concerning the march can be found at the bottom of page 15.

*Pride. I have many reservations when faced with this concept. Sometimes, I find it judgmental by itself or even a tool to show one's superiority over others. But I think the use of this word, this concept by part of the community right now, does not take into account everyone's own personal journey. The feeling I get from the concept of Pride and its supporter's use of it right now is one of obligation. An obligation to show to the world that we were born in a body that is not ours and that at one point in our lives, we had to make the only choice available to us; undertake a radical change or die. I'm being asked to relive that decision and the steps already behind me.*

*Who amongst us did not live part of his or her life with a reflection in the mirror that did not fit his or her soul, that did not fit the real being. How many of us had to live with a deeper than wanted voice, breasts that cannot be hidden, curves that give you away, 3, 4 and 5 o'clock shadows. Who, before and during transition, did not have that feeling of being incomplete...but on the road to completion. The road to our true self. Who does not remember the day we embarked on that journey.*

*That day, the one where we make our choice because keeping up with the charade is just too much. The day when our survival instincts take over and at that moment, we choose between life and death, between the violence of ending it all or the acceptance of the road ahead with all its difficulties and sorrows. The day we decide to show who we really are.*

*From that day on, slowly, patiently, with all the tools available to us, we change. Slowly, medication does its magic, facial hair disappears or grows for the first time. Slowly, surgeries alleviate differences between who we are and our external image. Slowly, we become to the world what we really are; women and men.*

*We go from deep voice to softer one, or from high pitch to a deeper one. We go from grotesque to beautiful or handsome. We go from a representation of our birth burden to our blossom. And some days, we even forget it all for a while, and only see the future.*

*Then comes Pride.*

*After all that hardship and pain, when we start to see light and happiness, we are asked to negate part of who we are, to show that really, we are not women and men but a mere product of modern medicine and fashion. We are asked to proudly say we have a prostate or ovaries and that frankly, the rest are just superficial changes, that we are not real. We are asked to face the requests for pictures, names, previous life's backgrounds. We are asked to conscientiously chose to hear comments said from afar, changes in attitudes that go from "dude...sorry, dudette" to downright disgust. We are asking of me to relive that pain all over again.*

*(continued on p. 14)*

## Reader's feedback

Maybe, one day, I'll be able to fit in that definition of pride. Maybe, when the only comments possible from the people around me will be "I don't believe you, and it's not possible", when I no longer hear the word transvestite directed towards me when people are told, maybe then, when stealthness is no longer part of my daily concerns, I will be myself enough to say it was not always the case.

I do not regret or curse the road that life put in front of me at birth. I do believe it made me what I am today, and that being born a bio woman would have made me a very different person and maybe someone I, the person I am today, would not have liked. But do not ask me to relive it. Do not ask me today, when things are still difficult, when I am still incomplete, when the pains and sorrows are still so fresh and new to show myself to the world. Do not ask me to lose my job. Do not ask me to lose more friends, do not ask me to cry again for old reasons. Do not ask me to explain to people that no, I am not a transvestite, a transgender or intersex person, but that I am a woman born with a transsexual condition. Worst, do not ask me not to even have that opportunity, and instead, just show myself in a parade where I'll face finger pointing and pretend not to see.

I am proud. I am proud of the choice I made to live. I am proud of my achievements so far. I am proud of the new life I'm making for myself. But this pride is mine, it is my guarded secret and I will whisper it to special people who deserve it. I am proud but fragile.

Please respect how I'm proud....and don't impose your vision of it

-Gabrielle Bouchard

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### **Being sick and accepting it is much better than believing that all is well!**

I need to express what I feel since I launched the idea that the ATQ can participate in the LGBT pride parade. I give my point of view, not on the participation or the non-participation at the parade but on the reasons for not participating. Before going further, I do not want to identify anybody, I know several people have expressed their point of view publicly and I would not want those who had the courage to speak to feel pointed out.

I've received many personal messages on the subject. So this is my general observation.

I realize that the internalized trans-phobia is omni present in my community. Do not think that I'm taking a position above the others when I say that. I include myself in that. Everyone of us are doing their best to "pass". Personally, my fear of not "passing" haunts me. It haunts me so much, it makes me make choices that I would not make if this fear was not there. Here is an example of what I mean: karaoke ... In my old life I would have never participated in such games even if I really wanted to. I just did not like to be under the spotlight. But today, my attraction to karaoke is still there. I always want to go but I know that my voice betrays me and I'm still sitting on my chair. My fear of not passing drives me. So, I'm going from one phobia to another ... I'm going from one pain to another. I'm going from one closet to another.

As you may know, I'm in a relationship with a woman, and by the way, she's wonderful. But it made me a lesbian. Well, I am not for these famous labels but, socially that's how I'm sight. Because I am also a transsexual, I look at other cisgender lesbians, around me. I found myself different from her and I found that I do not give myself access to a possible exploration of my masculinity. If I play women's hockey, I'm afraid to pass for a guy. Yet, there are plenty of girls who play hockey. Looks like I am restricting myself to the traditional role of a woman. Ultimately, I would be happy to be a housewife! All my life, I have always defended the rights and equality of women. Why, today, do I not apply this to me? Because I'm afraid that people see a trans in me!

To feel better with myself, I tell myself that I did not want to sing or play hockey, even uninterested in these "men's" activities, even if it's women's hockey. Why? Because I'm afraid to look like a trans. I am afraid of being trans. I'm afraid to be what I am. This is not a big improvement - to move from the secret life I had before, to the open life that I have today, if I'm deprived of these activities!

But is my life as open as that? Others think that it is. I am a woman in the eyes of others. But I still have that same fear of being seen as a guy who dresses up as a girl. I try to make my transition as quick as possible to avoid the discomfort of being in-between. And actually, I am afraid of being in-between. I am transphobic of myself.

I'm affected by internalized transphobia. It is pervasive, and many believe they are not affected by the scourge! I've read so many messages that went in the same sense as what is written above. Few were doing the same as I was. They were arguing and trying to convince me of their non-participation but they had nobody else to convince other than themselves. As if convincing me would give them more reason, and undermine their belief in their own transphobia of themselves. (Again, I am not pointing out anyone in particular. The phenomenon is very widespread. If you feel concerned by what I have written, maybe you should ask yourself questions). (continued on p. 15)

## Reader's feedback

Yesterday, my girlfriend told me that my earrings were beautiful. I reply that they were a gift from my sister. Suddenly I started crying. I realized that this was the first girl gift I had ever received! They were for my 32th birthday. I looked at pictures of me as a child and I realized that my puberty had really destroyed my body, and if my parents had listened to what I was trying to say by my actions (I've never been able to say "I am a girl"), I probably would have received more girl gifts. I would not have "lost" 32 years of my life, and for me 32 years, with my cancer, it is probably half of my life. I would have had a less masculine body, and some girl teenage souvenirs.

Yes I suffer from being trans, but I suffer less than being a man. And I would have suffered less if my parents were open to this reality. Maybe, if I was in their shoes, and grew up with their childhood and education, I would probably have done the same as they did : my best. Today, we have the opportunity to demonstrate to parents that if they believe their children are different, they can still succeed in life. Offering them the help they need, as soon as possible, will help enormously.

I realize that if I want to be consistent with myself, being a woman as I say I am - a lesbian women, moreover - I feel that if I participate in this parade as a lesbian woman, I would have to dress differently as if I participate as a trans woman. I just to want to wear a flamenco dress but I "know" that it is too extravagant for a trans woman!

**SIMPLY "KNOWING" THAT IS REALLY, REALLY TRANSPHOBIC!!**

I find it very unfortunate that people do not want to participate in the parade because they are afraid. But, I understand this very well because I'm afraid too. I do not force people to participate, of course, but please do not convince yourself through all sorts of excuses. Say, "I do not want to go there because I am afraid to see myself as a transsexual", and yes it's internalized trans-phobia and accept it. It's the same reason that you choose certain fields of interest in your life. This fear is deeply embedded in us and is so insidious.

- Marie-Ève Baron

**OCTOBER/  
NOVEMBER 2009**



**NEWS FROM HERE AND  
ABROAD**



**REPORT : THE CHURCH AND  
TRANSEXUALITY**



**TRANS RESOURCES**

Whatever you choose to do, the 24th Annual Capital Pride Parade will start at 1:00 p.m. with over 75 parade entries and 1,200 participants, ranging from floats to marchers. This signature event of the Capital Pride Festival attracts over 30,000 people annually and heads down Wellington Street passing the Supreme Court of Canada and Parliament before turning down Elgin Street and ending at City Hall. (Source : [www.capitalpride.ca](http://www.capitalpride.ca))

