

Northampton (Mass) TG Pride 2008-----a Trip report by Jan Brown

Whenever I go to a TG event with others from my local group, I try to write a trip report to show the members of the support group, "Mid-Hudson Valley Transgender Association (MHVTA)", how it went. I, along with approx. 1000+ attendees, joined together at the First New England TG Pride 2008 in Northampton, Mass. (north of Hartford along I91) on Sat. June 7, 2008. I asked other attendees from our support group and locality if they'd provide their views to flesh out the report from their own experiences.

Name	Where you live	How do you identify	Group Involvement
Janice	Putnam Co. north of NYC	CD/TS	member of MHVTA, 1 st timer at FE
Jodie	Dutchess Co. NY	CD/TS	New member of MHVTA
Gray	Dutchess Co. NY	CD/TS	FTM MHVTA member
Rena	Western Ct	CD	MHVTA member and COS member
Sage	Western Ct	GG	Partner of Rena & a so-called lesbian
Jan Brown	Dutchess Co. NY	CD	MHVTA member

Check the NE TG Pride website (<http://www.transpridemarch.org>) with lots of additional photo's.

The event is organized by members of the trans and gender variant community, and their allies, with the intent of taking a visible and positive stand for transgender rights. The March and Rally is dedicated to diverse representation among organizers and participants and sought to educate and build awareness of the movement against gender-based discrimination and to promote self-acceptance and acceptance of TG identities and lives. It was a time to gather to celebrate and affirm TG individuality, diversity, and strength.

The Transgender Pride March and Rally 2008 seeks to:

- Build a community of compassionate and open-minded individuals who represent all gender expressions, and wish to unapologetically stand up for their civil and human rights.
- Address the institutionalized and intrapersonal racism, classism, ageism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination faced by many trans and gender variant people on a daily basis.
- Promote the self-determination of all trans and gender variant people, in support of the International Bill of Gender Rights:
<http://www.transgenderlegal.com/ibgr.htm>.
- Unite with one another and allies to speak out for social, economic, and political justice of under-represented and marginalized communities, and support the right of all communities to be heard.

To get the spirit of First Event, I asked the following questions:



MHVTA Marchers (before and during)

What did you expect attending the event? What surprised you?

Janice: It was everything I expected but I was surprised by the many friendly people and that the town was out in support during the march.

Sage: I really had no idea, we had been to the gblt pride the month before but I wasn't sure if people would show up for this. I was thrilled to see the turn out so many people standing tall and proud. It was wonderful!

What surprised me? I have to admit that I was surprised at the number of FTM's there. It might be due to the "places" we tend to go but there are usually many more MTF's and this was the first time I had met more than one or two of these nice gentleman in a group setting.

Rena: Hey folks I have been to Prides in Northampton before so there weren't really any surprises for me but this was the first Transgender Pride so I was a little surprised about the turn out by both TG's and supporters, but mostly by spectators, and well wishers. I was kinda surprised I marched LOL my marching days are long past LOL!! I was very proud to see the turnout of TG Folks and I am very sure our numbers were felt and will swell in the future. I was very pleased to see that after all the hard work that the Pride Committee put into the event it was such a success!! YEAH!!!!!!!



Scene after the march where the presentations and everyone gathered

Jan Brown: I had a good time. I thought there would be a few people.. maybe 200 – 500 but I estimated there were 1000 marching and viewing. Northampton its a great small town

Gray: I didn't really have expectations. I was surprised to see so many transmen

What 2 things did you like and 2 things didn't you like?

Janice I liked: the town and its shops and the opportunity to lend support to our cause and agenda. I didn't like: the heat and too many speeches.

Gray: I had to go into the women's restroom and got some stares.

Sage: Of course the heat was a problem, we had expected it but it really was brutal. Even with serious sunscreen and spending most of my time inside I still got burned. I liked showing friends around town (read *shopping*) Lunch at the brewery was lovely. I really enjoyed the relaxed camaraderie, it was easy to talk to people along the parade route and you felt as though the merchants were very glad to have you there. We could not have been treated more graciously by townspeople or visitors. Everyone was wonderful



Lunch was lovely

Jan Brown: I liked talking to some people but we visited the town and the merchants accepted our money without question. Everyone was very friendly. It was nice to get to know Jodie, Janice and Gra better and yes, I was tired when I got home. I think the organizers did a good job but I think they jammed too much into the presentation sessions. I will listen to a talk or a few talks but it was one after another after another. I zoned out and went to lunch. It was also a really hot day. I learned that I needed to apply sunscreen all over as there was a part of my skin which was exposed (1st time for this area) and got a minor sunburn.

Would you attend again?

Janice: Yes I would attend again!. Thanks all for the company!

Sage: Definitely!

Rena: YES!!!!!! a Very Big Yes

Jan: Sure since it was a fun and enthusiastic time.

Gray: I'd still go again given the opportunity

Any suggestions for the next time?

Sage: I would bring a hat no matter how much Rena teases me for wearing one. I think that the marchers should space themselves a little further apart, they were so close that you could barely read the banners. Could we talk to mother nature about a little bit cooler day? Tents for the tables at the rally would have made life a whole lot more comfortable for the persons staffing them. I thought a few were going to melt into little puddles.

Gray: Suggestions" - More people attending.

Rena: Suggestions very few I think most bases were covered, I think the only thing I did note was that, For the most part, most of the Big Names in our community, the ones making a living off books and things from us failed to show and support us. I have seen this in other venues before and it always bothers me but who needs them??

Jan Brown: We couldn't stay the whole time and left relatively early. It would have been interesting to see what else happened but such is life. It was a good day. I would liked to have had more time to relax before jumping into events (like presentations). Maybe a community cookout would be interesting for marchers.