

TGSF Fashion Show

TGSF • The Channel

Transgender San Francisco
(formerly ETVC)



The Channel

TGSF, Inc., a non-profit corporation, is a non-sexual, membership based organization serving the educational, social, and recreational needs of gender-gifted people, their spouses, significant others, family members, friends, and professionals in the helping services. For details about TGSF programs, membership, article submission guidelines and classified ads, please write to TGSF Secretary, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486.

ExCom 1999 - 2000 Officers

(Fiscal Year: May 1 - April 30)

President Leslie Bailey
 Vice President Lulu Blau
 Secretary Roxanne
 Treasurer Janis Ryan
 Education Nancy Cupps / Tianna Marie
 Outreach Theresa Sparks / Telzey Adams
 Social Nicole and Debbie Cook

Membership Report

As of September 15, 1999

Fiscal Year		Number	% of 98-99
1998-1999	Total members	290	100.0
1999-2000	Renewals	187	64.5
1999-2000	New members	26	9.0
1999-2000	Non-renewing	103	35.5
1999-2000	Total members	213	73.5

TGSF is a non-profit corporation. Donations to TGSF are TAX DEDUCTIBLE on both Federal and California income tax returns. Talk to your tax advisor for details.

The Channel, the TGSF Newsletter, is published monthly. Submissions should arrive at TGSF by the 15th day of the month preceding publication. Contents reflect the opinions of the contributors and are not necessarily those of TGSF. Other organizations may reprint or reproduce uncopyrighted portions of the newsletter for their members, provided TGSF is acknowledged as the source of the material. Copyrighted materials may be reproduced only with written permission from TGSF.

Newsletter Staff

Editor Ayme Michelle Kantz
 Advertising Janis Ryan
 Contributing Photographers This Issue Telzey Adams,
 Nicole and Debra Cook

Ad Rates

	Per Issue	Six Months	Per Year
Business Card (3-1/2 x 2)	\$ 25	\$125	\$ 250
4x5	\$ 60	\$300	\$ 600
Full Page	\$100	\$500	\$1000

Personal ads from TGSF members: \$10 for up to 40 words per issue. We will not accept ads with a sexual objective. Ad deadlines are the 15th of every month. Send ad copy and check or money order to TGSF, Advertising Dept., PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486



FROM THE EDITOR...

Well no sooner did I open my big mouth and whine about my employment situation out here, then not one day after I sent last month's newsletter to the printer did I get a call for a second interview... and an offer! Woo-hoo! I feel so totally vindicated about taking the up-front-and-honest tactic in the course of my job search. I must've said something to my new boss that struck a chord as I wouldn't have pegged him to be so open-minded, as he's a conservative Christian family man (and by Okie standards, that's saying something). But he made me an offer and I'm grateful and it's turned out to be just the kind of work I was looking for: artsy fartsy kinda stuff, four color process display ads, brochures, audio/video presentations and most particularly, authoring an entirely new e-commerce website; sort of a catch-all creative services gal for a venture capital group. Got a 25k salary (took that 10k a year payout, but what the hell), my own huge office (with windows!) on the 14th floor of one of the older skyscrapers in downtown OKC, with my own private bathroom (what more could a girl want!) and paid valet parking - I just call the garage when I'm ready to go and they have it on the street by the time I get there... *sigh*... Hog Heaven, as they're fond of saying out here...oink!

One of the more interesting features of the building I'm in (since it was built in the late 20's) is an old-fashioned (and fully functional) fire escape, sort of this spiraling metal tube that spins 'round and 'round for thirty-odd floors. I'd never seen one before, and I was an architect major in college and had never run across anything like this... what a trip! My boss showed it to me and said he'd brought his kids up there over a weekend and they all slid down the thing. Said it was a better ride if you didn't wear shoes and slipped your legs inside a burlap sack. I'll just bet! Sounds like a hoot to me - beats any of the rides they got at the State Fair hands down.

So with the new job and a steady paycheck, the stress I've been under these past few months is easing up, what with moving half way across the country to an entirely new environment and setting up a home and a routine, max'ing out my credit cards and doing that nasty job hunt thang... whew - boy am I glad that's over with. Now I got bills to pay! But god help me, I'm starting to pick up some of the lingo (I'm being Okie-fied! Aaaaagh!), and Micheal says that I'm butchering the lingo is more like it, but hey you adapt right? Gotta go with what works. And you know what I've picked up so far? Calling people "sir" or "ma'am" during the course of my daily business. Folks are just so darn polite out here (for the most part) and it's really nice. Unusual, but nice. It's a distinct and noticeable difference from my daily grind in San Francisco.

Reader's Respond...

Got an interesting letter on page 8 from Michelle Gordon (dated 8/27) that should ring a few more alarm bells for you. This notion that TGSF socials are unfriendly and cliquish keeps resurfacing and in the past I've devoted column space to that very problem. Granted, I believe that the monthly socials should be more focused on newcomers, at least for part of the evening in some way - but first we gotta know who they are! Register them as they come in the door and later have 'em stand up, introduce them and have them tell us a little bit about themselves. But that takes a couple of bodies to show up early, set up a table and signage,

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Hotline & Voice Mail
415-564-3246

WWW.TGSF.ORG
NEW SITE! GET ONLINE!



PRESIDENT'S POTPOURRI

by Leslie Bailey

Duh!

There are all kinds of reasons why relationships don't work out and why people end up drifting apart, not marrying or separating. What's even more fascinating perhaps are the reasons why people are ultimately attracted to and remain attached to each other. Some relationships fail because of behaviors or differences that are serious or harmful. Others fail to mature or last because of needs not met or changing perceptions and agendas. Variety may be the spice of life, but sometimes too much of something is simply too much of something that holds no interest.

I found a newspaper review of Ester Williams' new autobiography quite interesting. In the book she reveals that six foot 4 inch, rugged Jeff Chandler was in fact a transvestite and that upon learning about his affinity for wearing women's clothing, she immediately terminated their marriage plans. Now I can understand that many women are going to opt out of such relationships for a variety of reasons not the least of which is that cross dressing just never quite made their wish list. (I was, however, a bit tweaked by the implied judgment). After turning Jeff away she up and marries Ricardo Montalban for a twenty year serving of macho male domination. She describes how his jealousies and insecurities led him to burn old pictures of her previous friends, alienate and isolate her from her children from a former marriage, order her to fetch his drinks and insisted that she not work outside the home. This is the short list but it is enough for me to ask, "Am I the only one here who doesn't get it?" "Hello." One more reason why I refuse to let society make me feel guilty for being transgendered.

Class

For five semesters Jennifer A. and I have done an outreach presentation together in a class on women's studies offered at DVC in Concord. I decided that this semester I would take the class as well. We are spending the first few months looking at issues surrounding sex roles, history of sexism, gender stereotypes, nature/nurture dichotomy, etc.. As part of an assignment on motherhood I was looking through a family history that my mother had put together a dozen years ago and I was captivated by the pictures of my parents when they were in their twenties and early thirties and my sister Susan and myself when we were young children. Quite suddenly as I was looking at one particular picture of myself as a three year old I felt like we were staring at each other and looking into each other's souls. Origin and result, innocence and experience were contemplating each other and the connection felt satisfying. I felt that I had kept the trust with the young boy. I hope that this makes sense because the image carries on and I like it.

Apologies

For those of you who have sent email and have waited in vain for a reply, let me apologize. I try to strike a balance between doing what has to be done as president of TGSF, being innovative and caring about our programs, taking care of household and work responsibilities and enjoying staying-sane activities which are otherwise known as hobbies, interest and friends. Believe me when I say that it is difficult to find sufficient time and energy to do it all. I am not happy about it, but one area that has consistently suffered is email communications. If the communication is essential to you, please phone me. I do check my voice mail. Otherwise I will do the best that I can and hope that you will understand.

From The Editor...

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name tags, registration forms, cash box, in addition to setting up the evening's entertainment and overseeing its production. It's not like ExCom doesn't know what's going on - they're quite aware that, being a volunteer organization (and an under-staffed one at that), there's only so much a handful of people can do. And if you read the September Minutes, you'll notice that this letter did get ExCom's attention.

But it's really not about what ExCom can or will do to solve the matter. It's about what YOU can or will do. I've said it before and I'll say it again: you get back what you put in. Show of hands - does anyone here know how many people sit on Nicole & Debbie's Social Committee? Not one other member! You think two people can do it all by themselves and make everybody totally satisfied? Gee Nicole, you look a bit crazed with this fashion show thing, can I help by greeting new members for you? By the way, I'm new here myself...or how 'bout if I help out with the name tags, or do you need assistance backstage? Get the idea? All I can say Michelle is that, had I been there, I would've certainly said hello - but I live in Oklahoma now, and have been since June...Helllllooooo! But if you're going to sit there like a bump on a log, expecting and waiting for the world you want to be a part of to come to you, then you're in for a long wait sister. A little assertiveness on your part would've done much to make your evening more enjoyable.

On The Flip Side...

OK that was kinda callous of me. What can we do to ease first-timer's fears and make them more welcome? It took a tremendous amount of courage for Michelle to come to grips with her fear and get dressed to attend a social for the first time. It's intimidating and can make one weak in the knees and keep a perfectly good conversationalist clammed up for hours. Wouldn't it be nice to have a Welcome Sub-Committee of the SocialCom (or Big Sisters Group) to be at the socials to make sure newbies were brought into the fold, offering support and reassurance? Sure it'd be nice...but Nicole and I have run ads in the newsletter for months asking for volunteers to sit on her committee so that these kinds of programs can be staffed, but the response from the membership has been abysmal.

When I sat on ExCom (quite a few years ago) as EduCom Chair, I published my committee's (and sub-committee's) meeting schedule, and made phone calls and got bodies to show up and delegated responsibilities. There's power in numbers and we had much success in implementing various educational programs. I think if the current ExCom were to do the same thing (publish each committee's meeting schedule - and keep the appointments!), then the membership would be more inclined to participate if they knew these meetings occurred consistently. Right now TGSF is relying on just a handful of people to make all its programs work. Sure they get volunteers (often at the last minute) for special events like the Cotillion or the Parade, but for the regular month-to-month things like mid-month and EOM socials, education seminars and the like, TGSF is woefully understaffed - and it shows when we get letters like Michelle's.

TGSF is about more than offering a safe space to wear your pretty clothes. If you're donning a dress to get in touch with your feminine side, then understand as well that women in general are more at ease with striking up a conversation with someone new than men are. Once in femme mode, one should also do more to get in touch with their feminine personae and respond accordingly - otherwise you're just a guy in drag, on the outside looking in.

Give of yourself and it all comes back to you.

EXCOM MEETING MINUTES

The monthly meeting of TGSF's Executive Committee was held in Sebastopol on September 12, 1999, at 3:00 p.m. In attendance were President Bailey, Vice President Blau, Secretary Camino, Treasurer Ryan, Outreach Co-Chair Adams, Social Co-Chairs Cook and Cook and Education Co-Chair Cupps. Also present were guests Deborah, Susan, Angela and Karen Andrews. Education Co-Chair Marie was attending to personal business. The meeting was called to order at 3:51 p.m.



Communications and Announcements:

Outreach Co-Chair Adams mentioned the death of transgender Physiologist: Shoshanna Gillick from self-inflicted injuries. Telzey also mentioned "Hot Pants Homo," starring Trauma Flintstone, was still playing. The production is a graphic portrayal of gay stereotyping. The Ducal Coronation is also next weekend and the auction of gowns from past Coronations was today. Roxanne mentioned an article sent by a member about transvestites being arrested and fined in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico and an radio and newspaper article about a transgender person climbing a high voltage tower and performing a stunt, in Washington State. A letter was also received with no name and return address that protests the cost of clothing for transgender people. Both Telzey and Janis mentioned the shooting death of a transgender person on Polk Street, near the Motherload this weekend. Later reports said it was the case of road rage violence to a homeless person.

Old Business: Leslie and Lulu restated to the ExCom events relating to a personal matter and the actions following two special ExCom meetings. Janis mention she had completed drafts of proposed Bylaw changes, including wording of the changes, to be voted on by the membership. Janis reported Randal Shiller has been paid for his services at Cotillion 99. It was noted his bill was for \$1295.00 and was higher than expected because of needed sound and lighting equipment that was not working at the Design Center. Lulu asked about wording on the new membership cards. Nicole and Debbie said the part that says "this person is a crossdresser" was removed.

The ExCom accepted the resignation of Miss TGSF: Margo Duval, for personal reasons. Leslie will write a letter from the ExCom thanking Margo for her participation, contribution and input to TGSF during her tenure.

Minutes: Janis submitted three sets of minutes; the first being the minutes of the August ExCom meeting. The second set is from the special meeting after the August ExCom and the third are from the Special ExCom meeting of August 11, 1999. Janis stated that the minutes of any meeting may be reviewed by the general membership at any time and are to be archived by the Secretary. Lulu mentioned some members in reading the newsletter felt something covert was going on. Most ExCom members restated that business of personal matter is not printed in the newsletter. This is to protect and not harm those persons involved. With no corrections from the ExCom, Nicole moved for August's Minutes to be approved, Roxanne seconded the motion and they were unanimously approved.

President: President Bailey said there would be a meeting with the Goodnights' next week to discuss California Dreaming 2000 Conference. She will call to check on the exact date. Leslie has not had a chance to work on standing rules for the President.

Vice President: Vice President Blau said the Cotillion Contestant Manual is about done. Lulu said she also has not gotten to standing rules for the Vice President and that Nicole can continue to work on them. There was a Cotillion planning meeting September 11 and the turnout was very low and not very encouraging.

Most of the ExCom agree there needs to be more notice of these meetings and that more people need to be involved. Leslie stated Cotillion planning is usually headed up by the VP but so is the Big Shew, Parade and other events, which stretch this person thin. Lulu said Sharon Durand has submitted a proposal to direct. The theme still needs to be decided. Lulu also said we should involve other groups more, such as the Courts and maybe have someone from them be M.C. Lulu said the idea of a charitable sponsor, who could help with activities, was discussed. Lulu talked to Nancy Ann, who said that it would be good to have tickets ready by the Halloween Social. Also, we need to involve the press more. Janis said she would handle financial matters. Finally, Lulu said we should establish a phone tree of Cotillion Planning Committee members. Susan mention there needs to be a list of volunteer positions available. The next Cotillion planning meeting will be at Lulu's at 7.00 p.m., Tuesday, September 21, 1999.

Secretary: Secretary Camino noted her report covered two meetings. Roxanne attended a Community United Against Violence workshop given to City College of San Francisco staff and instructors on awareness and classroom issues related to gay, lesbian and transgender students. Roxanne was asked to represent the transgender community for this workshop. Roxanne mentioned in reading Ayme's article in the newsletter and Outreach Co-Chair Sparks work situation, that employment issues for transgender people are important and should be a topic for an education seminar. Roxanne asked about if there was any news from the educational presenter who was establishing a shoe business specifically for transgender customers. Nancy said that business never got off the ground. Roxanne wondered if presenters at education seminars, who have established or are establishing businesses that cater to the transgender community have benefited from information given and if the group has ever received anything in return. Roxanne was trying to get welcome letters out but wanted to include the preferred names on the letter and mailing name on the envelope but that she could not tell the renewals from new members with the information given. She also wants to develop something with the exchange publications. Roxanne mention that she was having trouble doing the Secretaries duties because of job schedules and technical difficulties and that she would give the ExCom notice in two months if she will continue or not. Roxanne wants to be more involved in the Cotillion and outreach activities. Current TGSF membership is at 213 of whom one was new. Because of the length of the Treasurer's report, other committee reports were moved up in the agenda.

Education: Education Co-Chair Cupps briefly described the seminar scheduled for 1pm Saturday, September 18th at Kimo's: "A Painless Alternative for Permanent Hair Removal", featuring Guy Campo of Wave Electrology in San Jose. Guy will present an overview of various types of electrology, including the two types performed at his clinic: blend and thermolysis. Because Wave Electrology shares office space with the Seahorse Medical Clinic, run by Joy Shaffer, M.D., clients can take advantage of anesthetic injections that allow electrology to be performed nearly pain-free. Tianna is working on a seminar covering transgender family issues for October. Leslie said she knew someone working on a thesis topic related to children with transgendered parents, and thought this research might make an interesting seminar topic in the future.

Outreach: Outreach Co-Chair Adams mentioned the e-mail that Outreach Co-Chair Sparks had sent noting a difficult work schedule and the need to step down. For now, Telzey is doing coordination of the Speakers Bureau but has little time. Janis restated from her e-mail to the ExCom that the position opening for Outreach Co-Chair be announced in the newsletter and that the President has the duty to either call an election or appoint someone with ExCom approval. Telzey mention she had met with people at the Pacific Center and had received a notice from Leslie about

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the "Trannyfest Film Festival," asking if someone was going to present at it? Telzey mentioned the Trannyshack evening benefit for the Gay Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgender Historical Project.

Social: Social Co-Chair Nicole Cook mention the next End-Of-Month Social will be on September 30, 1999 at the Blue Muse and the theme will be a return of the legs contest. The June Mid-Month Social will include TGSF night at Trannyshack, on October 12. This event will be in three parts, starting with the group meeting for dinner at the Line-Up, then moving to the Cafe Mars for social time, the then to Trannyshack at the Stud, for the midnight show.

All locations are in the South-of -Market area of San Francisco. The October End-Of-Month Social will be the Halloween celebration, on the 23rd at the Billy DeFrank Community Center and Carla's, in San Jose. The event will include the same bar and food concept as last year. Nicole and Debbie spent a day in San Jose getting all the proper permits from the police department. Deborah volunteered to work on decorations again. Nicole needs places in San Francisco to sell tickets. Various members of the ExCom mentioned Good Vibrations, on Valencia, Piedmont Boutique, in the Height and Rosalie's, on Columbus. Nicole noted the Mid-Month-Social for November will be a return to the CoCo Club. There will be a special social on November 13, at the Cliff House. It will be a dinner to celebrate Debbie's birthday. This is a chance for members who have requested a place to meet for dinner to go out. The November End-Of-Month-Social will most likely be on the 18th, at the Blue Muse, because a later date runs into the Thanksgiving weekend. Nicole will be teaching a class on Internet and HTML, at the College of Marin, if anyone is interested in enrolling. Nicole and Debbie will respond to a letter sent by a member who said they were ignored at the last EOM Social. Nicole and Debbie noted on the other hand, that someone had complained that they were being socialized with and were being asked to many questions. When a person does not volunteer to be social, it's hard to judge whether they want to be recognized or left alone. Leslie and Janis will also respond to the letter sent to Ayme. Lulu also noted the ExCom received a letter of compliment regarding the same EOM Social. She will try to forward this letter to the Editor. Methods of greeting members in the past and limits of the Blue Muse were discussed.

Treasurer: Treasurer Ryan has posted the current figures, presented reports to ExCom and will include them in her report in the newsletter. Janis mentioned Cotillion 99 posted a \$1181.00 loss and noted the amount of the final bill mentioned in Old Business. Janis mentioned receiving a letter of potential attachment of the bank account for the penalty for not filing the proper fee with the State. Janis has gone to the State Building and received the proper forms and information needed to file and pay fees. Leslie thanked Janis for her following up on this matter. On the reporting forms, Janis was not sure where to put "insurance premiums." Janis mentioned an additional \$150.00 has come in from tickets sold for Cotillion 99. This came in from Ann at Romantasy. Janis said reimbursements for the ISE Coronation tickets were about 1/2 complete. Per Lulu's request, Janis submitted reports of previous years' memberships back to 1988. A noticeable trend is that membership chops off in May and June, due to expired memberships. Janis was also looking for financial information in back issues of the newsletter. She said income and expenses were listed in 1994 and 1995.

She noted the Treasury emptied out in 1997 and then it went back up because of Ayme's work on the newsletter. Janis said some members have had concerns about financial reporting on the web and that she has no problem with it. Janis showed the non-profit tax forms that she requested to be filed with the IRS and

wanted to know if they have been filed before. She is trying to find records of it; if not they need to be done and she was told they need to be filed back to 1994. In order to fill out form 990 or 990EZ, she needs tax records. Who has recorded or filed the forms before? State filings also need to be done including form 190. Leslie said to contact Sandy???? who has handled tax filings previously for the group. Janis also mentioned State tax issues. We are exempt from paying sales tax only on the newsletter paper to the membership. Items that are possibly taxable are the resource guide and any food or beverage sold at the Cotillion. Leslie asked how much sales of the resource guides, food sales and the resulting tax liability amounted to and if it is low, is it a concern? Leslie said she will get the information from Sandy and in the mean time, lets get the forms filled out and see what information is lacking. This will be reported at the next ExCom. Leslie again thanked Janis for all her work on this matter. Nicole said this is all good information to look into for standing rules for the Treasurer. Janis apologized for not keeping up with contacts with advertisers. Nicole said that task could be split by region and other ExCom members could handle it.

Comment Period of Visitors: Angela mentioned her appreciation of the work of the ExCom.

New Business: Leslie mentioned that Jane Bolig has a complete set of newsletters available and if we could collect them and save them? Status?? Lulu asked if they could be posted to the website? It would be a large task but would be looked into. Leslie mentioned that the Parajo Dunes Weekend would be the first week of December. Participation in this social event can be at different levels, starting at \$180.00 and up. For information, contact Carla.

Janis then presented her Bylaws proposals:

1. **Change** of name officially to Transgender San Francisco or TGSF. This is to formally amend the Bylaws and amend and file articles of incorporation.
2. **Membership Year.** At present, all memberships renew at once. Janis proposes with renewals going on all year, October then November then October year? book keeping would be established? This would be simpler and would add the month of membership to the newsletter label. This would stagger membership.
3. **Confidentiality:** In general, any member can request to see membership list per state law. [NOTE: Do we want people to know this?] This loophole can be remedied if ExCom feels it is not in the best interest of the membership, by offering an alternative. Janis proposes to add provisions, to Section X Confidentiality.
4. **Article XII Fiscal Year.** Because it is impossible for accurate records, it is proposed that an interim financial report be made to the membership at the Annual Meeting and that a final report be posted on May 31 of that year.
5. **Wording Changes to Executive Committee.** This would note that members of the ExCom are the Directors of the organization.

Janis proposes to have ExCom look at the amendments and act at the next meeting. Then post 45 days to notify members and 60 days before an election/vote. Janis said we need to decide if we want the vote itemized. Janis also asked about budgets — if they are done and when?

Roxanne had requested the handling of ExCom meeting scheduling and notification be brought up. But in the interest of time this was moved to the next meeting.

Next ExCom Meeting: October 10, 1999, in Albany, Calif., at 3:00 p.m. At approximately 7:53 p.m., Janis moved to adjourn the meeting; Nancy seconded and the motion was unanimously passed.

Friday / October 8 / 8:00pm

LIBRARY/POKER NIGHT

Call Nancy Anne at (415) 469-5445 for information and directions. Peruse our extensive archives or join in the game! Please call to confirm.

Monday / October 10 / 3:00pm

EXCOM MEETING

Now is the time to make a difference. As Halloween and the Cotillion approach we need all the volunteers we can get to help make these events a success. One of the best ways to volunteer for a short term task is to attend the ExCom and see where the help is needed. This month's meeting will be in Albany (the East bay) This is the time to come to the ExCom meeting and get involved. Come see how your organization works. . . come be heard !! If you are considering coming, please call Nicole and Debbie at (707) 824-0860 and we will be happy to give you directions.

Tuesday / October 12 / 8:00pm

MID-MONTH SOCIAL

Once a year we divert from our normal Wednesday Mid-month schedule to take part in one of the most well known TG events in the San Francisco area. Yes, that's right it's time for our trip to Trannyshack again!! Since Trannyshack does not start until midnight it is necessary to have a staging area where we can meet and eat prior to the main event. To this end we will start the social at Cafe Mars at 798 Brannan St. in San Francisco, then as the clock approaches the hour of midnight we will move a short distance to "The Stud" (home of Trannyshack) at 399 9th St.

For those of you who want to stay more lo-key or can't stay out too late, or just want to attend two events in a row, lets not forget that Wednesday is the day that the TransBay group meets at Quetzals. Quetzals is located at 1234 Polk, between Sutter and Bush (right down the street from Kimo's). Park in the large parking structure and walk around the corner to where the coffee shop is located. This event starts at 7:00 pm.

Saturday / October 23 / 6:00pm

ANNUAL HALLOWEEN PARTY

And so it was written, when the calendar reached the twenty third day of October in the year nineteen hundred and ninety nine, the fog will rise up from the ocean and the sun will set on the once friendly town of San Jose, a bone chilling feeling will overtake the locals as TGSF holds it's 1999 Halloween Party. An event this frightening could not be held just anywhere, and after an extensive search of graveyards and mortuaries the sprits brought us to Carla's at 195 Stockton Ave. (see enclosed orange flyer for directions). As the sun begins to set and the vampires begin to come out at 6:00pm the doors will open, the sprits will begin to weave their effect on the party at around 7:00pm (when the bar opens). A live DJ will be on hand to insure that the eerie howls and screams emanate from the sound equipment all night. Hors D'oeuvres will be on hand until they are consumed by the creatures of the night. Contests will be held for ghoulish prizes. Then well after the bewitching hour of midnight, as the clock approaches 1:00am, the entire event will vanish back into the darkness from which it sprang. The next day the only hint that something happened will be the maids dressed casually in Carla's, working to clean up a large mound of Halloween decorations.

Saturday / October 30 / 1:00pm

EDUCATION SEMINAR: THE TRANSGENDER FAMILY AND FAMILY ISSUES.

We would like to invite everyone who has concerns or questions about being part of a transgender family to our October seminar. We would especially like to invite members of transgender families who can share their experiences with others. Our featured speakers will be Marcia Perlstein, Clinical Director, and Zhav Doherty, Co-Facilitator of the Transgender Parents Group; both with the Alternative Family Project. The Alternative Family Project (AFP) is located at 425 Divisadero St., Suite 203, San Francisco. Founded in 1993, AFP's mission is to empower lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families and their members, to help them increase their self-esteem, and enhance their quality of life. Please come to learn and share information about a subject that is so important for nearly all of us! [Preview: Our November seminar will focus on Transgender Dating Issues.] Upstairs at Kimo's, Polk & Pine Streets, SF. Donations Appreciated.

**New Members
since September Issue:**

**Michelle Amber Reno
Lynnea Stuart
Welcome!**

Corrections

In the September issue of The Channel (page 9), the article entitled "SF TG Activists Produce TV Show," it should be noted that the program will air *bi-monthly* (not monthly).

They also need a studio audience at the third Saturday taping. Please call Kitty Kastro for info: 415-224-1189. The director's name should be spelled *Dina Boyer*.

Now Available!

1999 RESOURCE GUIDE

The 1998-99 TGSF Resource Guide is now available at cost to all TGSF members. You can bring \$3.00 to the next social or we can mail it to you for \$3.00 + \$1.50 postage. If you are a service listed in the guide you can get copies for \$5.00 each plus postage. The Resource Guide will be available to everyone else for \$10.00 each.

The 1999 TGSF Resource Guide is your one source for virtually all the Transgender Resources in the Greater Bay Area (From San Jose to Sacramento to Santa Rosa to San Francisco). The Guide covers where to go to have a good time on the town, where to shop, where to get services like Make-up, Electrolysis and Beauty Salons, as well as where to stay in the San Francisco area (and Russian River Resort Area). You can also locate professional services such as Doctors, Psychologists, Lawyers, Voice Therapists and others. The Guide also contains information on other Gender Information and Education Groups. If you are going to visit the San Francisco area - This is the guide to have!

If you would like a guide by mail you can send a check for \$4.50 (per copy) to: TGSF, Resource Guide, P.O. Box 426486, San Francisco, CA. 94142-6486. Please be sure to indicate on the check that it is for the Resource Guide.

Calendar of Events - October 1999

OTHER GROUPS

Pacific Center for Human Growth

A counseling oriented growth center sponsors all-inclusive gender support groups on every Friday at 8:00pm, 2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley. 510-548-8283

Rainbow Gender Association (RGA)

Meets 1st and 3rd Friday of the month 8:00pm at the New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Drive, San Jose. Write to RGA, PO Box 700730, San Jose, CA 95170 or call 408-984-4044.

Sacramento Gender Association (SGA)

Blue Rose Chapter meets 8:00pm the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month in Sacramento. Write PO Box 215456, Sacramento, CA 95821-1456 or call 916-482-7SGA (7742) for meeting locations.

Diablo Valley Girls (DVG)

Meets 1st and 3rd Monday of every month. 8:00pm at Just Rewards Nightclub, 2520 Camino Diablo in Walnut Creek. Write to DVG, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885 or call 925-937-8432.

DVG Rap Group (RCC)

Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month, 7:00pm at Rainbow Community Center, 2637 Pleasant Hill Road (@ Taylor Blvd.) in Pleasant Hill. For more information call 925-937-8432.

FTM

A support group for Female-to-Male cross dressers and transsexuals; Holds open Informational Meetings and closed Support Meetings. Write FTM International, Inc., 1360 Mission Street, Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94103 or call 415-553-5987.

TGIF (TransGenderism Is Fun)

A social group for transgenders. Meets one Saturday each month at a private home in Santa Rosa for a potluck social from 4:00pm until early evening. Space is limited - Reservations Recommended! Call Diane or Anne at 707-544-1540.

Silicon Valley Gender Association (SVGA)

A new transgender support group meets at the Billy De Frank Community Center in San Jose on the 2nd and 4th Friday of every month from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. For more information, call 408-293-2429.

Far West Women (FWW)

A support group for TGs affiliated with the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance in Humboldt County. Meets every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month at 8:00pm in the GLBTA Center at Fourth and "D" Streets in Eureka. For information call the Center at 707-445-9760.

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

					1 8:00 PM PacCtr: Rap 8:00 PM RGA	2
3	4 8:00 PM DVG	5	6	7 7:00 PM DVG (RCC)	8 7:00 PM SVGA 8:00 PM PacCtr: Rap 8:00 PM TGSF: Library / Poker Night	9 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
10 3:00 PM TGSF: ExCom Meeting	11	12 8:00 PM TGSF: MidMonth- Trannyshack	13 7:00 PM TransBay	14	15 8:00 PM PacCtr: Rap 8:00 PM RGA	16
17	18 8:00 PM DVG	19	20	21 7:00 PM DVG (RCC)	22 7:00 PM SVGA 8:00 PM PacCtr: Rap	23 6:00 PM TGSF: Halloween Party 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
24	25	26	27	28	29 8:00 PM PacCtr: Rap	30 1:00 PM TGSF: EduCom Seminar
31						

TGSF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Full Year Membership May 1 - April 30

Please Print / Check all that apply:

New Member Renewal Member # _____ with Family Member

Member Birth Date ____ / ____ / ____ Family Member Birth Date ____ / ____

Preferred Name: _____

Mailing Name: _____

Family Member's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How did you hear about TGSF? _____

Your Email address: _____

I am enclosing a Check or Money order for:

\$30.00 Full Year Membership (Renewals)

\$40.00 Full Year Family Membership (Renewals; Note only one copy of the Channel will be sent to this address).

Pro Rate \$ _____ beginning Month: _____

New Members only; See Chart at right)

Send Check or Money Order to
TGSF
PO Box 426486
San Francisco, CA
94142-6486

IF PAID IN	THEN SINGLE PAY	THEN FAMILY PAY
MAY	30	40
JUN	27.5	37
JUL	25	33
AUG	22.5	30
SEP	20	27
OCT	17.5	23
NOV	15	20
DEC	12.5	17
JAN	10	13
FEB	7.5	10
MAR	5	7
APR	2.5	3

Our Readers Respond...

WE STILL NEED VOLUNTEERS!

We still need volunteers for the Halloween Party!

Of course the best way to make this a memorable experience is to volunteer to help. We need volunteers in a few different categories:

Food Preparation - 12 noon until the party starts the day of the event; **Decorations** - It takes about 4 hours, plan to start at 2pm; **Bar Tending** - We would like to run 3 shifts of 1.5 hours each; **Cleanup** - About 1 hour after the party and a few hours the next day

If you are interested in one or more of these positions, please give Debbie or me a call (707) 824-0860 or email us nicole@tgforum.com and let us know. Remember in order to make this a great event we need your help.



DEAR TGSF,

(This was addressed to me, personally it seems - Ed.)

I direct this letter to your attention, as you have been a strong advocate in trying to get more involvement from the membership.

Several years ago I joined the organization. After much agonizing I decided to make my way to a meeting. As I'm sure you know this was a very BIG step for me. I found the experience less than satisfying, as the people were quite unfriendly and very cliquish. It was an awful experience as I felt the uninvited guest.

So, for several years now I've paid my dues and received the monthly newsletter. After reading several of your columns with prodding to get involved, I decided to try again. I attended the end of Aug. social at the Blue Muse. The experience was more disastrous to me than the first time.

NOBODY greeted me and initiated any conversation. I am well aware that conversation is a two way street. However, since I'm the new person, I would think the welcoming would come from the hosts.

I had dinner alone in the front room of the restaurant. After dinner I entered the back of the restaurant and seated myself waiting for the fashion show. There was a lot of activity around me, meeting and greeting but none included me. When your Janis started to hand out nametags to be filled in she skipped over me, I really did feel as though I was invisible.

Your social chair Nicole (recognition from photos) must have passed me at least 20 times without any recognition. I guess the focus of the fashion show was so intense that a friendly hello was too difficult. I debated on whether to write this note as the damage has already been done and is irreparable.

I would like you to know that you've lost out on several fronts, as I was very seriously thinking of getting involved... My expertise in organizational, finance and solid business acumen might have added another dimension to what currently is. The norm.

The decision to write this letter is to let you know if others have been treated as I, then your goal of increased membership and more involvement by the membership will not be realized. You can put this in the monthly newsletter, if you so choose. What is most important is that this find it's way to the appropriate people.

You need to practice what you preach.

Sincerely
Michelle Gordon

DEAR TGSF,

I would like to second Chris Silver's ideas in July's issue of the *Channel*. I had a very nervous outing last month (my first) to the mid-month social. I was totally nervous and scared. I probably was the first one there, I didn't know? I asked the bartender and he didn't really say much. I was almost ready to leave. I still didn't really feel comfortable, although I met a few nice people. We all will have to do more to draw these people out of their shells and closets. I know from my own experience, I would love to have a sister to help me make those first steps.

Sincerely,
Angela Paige

ARE YOU A VETERAN?

Are you aware that there is a gender discussion group every Monday afternoon at the Ft. Miley Veteran's Center in San Francisco? The group is open to all TS, TV, and TG's who are qualified veterans. If you are interested and wish further information, contact Lorraine Hall at: Quiche4520@aol.com or call 510-523-9952.

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- 1) Ovals, good nipples, 2 breasts/box; \$245/pr, ppd. (cloth covers available \$10/pr, ppd.)
- 2) Tear Drop, firm nipples, matte finish; \$205/pr, ppd.
- 3) Adhesive Strips. Designed for Ovals. Use on any form. 3 or more each time, each form. Actually react with skin; \$5/dozen ppd.

New Products (e.g., Nipples, Giant Forms...) soon!


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Our Readers Respond...

DEAR TGSF.....FRIENDS,

As many of you may know, I have been unable to participate in TGSF activities for the last several weeks, including my duties as a member of the Executive Committee. In the case of the former, I feel I have become totally disconnected from the organization and miss the comfort of being with others with whom I share a common bond. In regard my inability to carry out the function of Outreach Co-chair, I feel a profound sense of sorrow that I have let the organization down. But rather than continue in this "maybe things will change next month mode" I think it best for TGSF that I resign my office and let Telzey, and others who might be so inclined, to coordinate the activities of Outreach. I apologize for having to do this but feel it is best for both the organization and, at this point of my life and transition, myself.

In life, timing is everything. At the time it was suggested I run for the office of Outreach, I was still living off my savings, had an enormous amount of free time and anticipated that I would soon find employment which would be somewhat consistent with positions I had had in my former life. If that had happened, I would have been able to have invested the time and energy necessary to get more involved in TGSF and enthusiastically carry out the functions of Outreach. But that's not how this chapter of my life was to be written. I did find employment, but not the type which I had anticipated. As I believe many of you know, my new career is that of a "night cabbie" on the streets of San Francisco. I drive a taxi five or six nights per week, from 4 PM until 2 AM. Including transportation to and from the cab yard, preparation, paperwork and other functions associated with the job, I am spending about 12 hours per day at, or preparing for, work. For those of you who have lost your mathematical abilities due to a hormonal imbalance, that translates to between 60 and 70 hours per week.....every week. If you add a reasonable amount for sleep (which doesn't always happen) and the time it takes to get ready for work (for some of us.....a daunting task), I have absolutely zero time for anything else. Maybe one of these days things will change but, for now at least, my life is what it is.

It is interesting to note though that I do sincerely enjoy the work. Every night is an adventure, every passenger is a challenge and every new experience is another step in my transition into this new woman that I am becoming. Curiously, I seem to be having more than my fair share of "interesting" things happening to me every week, way more. Some have been humorous and others not so funny; some heart-warming and others heart-wrenching; some wonderful and others tragic. And then there are the ones which are a bit scary. Take the time when.....oops sorry, you'll have to wait for the movie. There are a many really wonderful things about this job that are truly inspirational. I get the opportunity to watch transgender folks all over this City carrying on with their lives.....in the Financial District, the Mission, South of Market, Pacific Heights, the Castro and the Marina, in addition to those ladies fighting for survival in the Tenderloin. I also have the privilege, not as often as I would like, to help those in our City who need just a touch of kindness in their seemingly hopeless daily existence. In fact, I have found that when something demoralizing happens to me during a given shift, the only thing that helps me get back on my feet is to seek out someone less fortunate than I and lend them a hand or a ride to one of the shelters or a cup of hot coffee or maybe just a smile. I know, it's selfish on my part because I do it to make me feel better but one has to do what one has to do.

I also have the privilege of taking our message to the people of San Francisco. I have very few illusions that I pass, at least not all the time. So it is my job to show my passengers, and others with whom I interact, that one can be transsexual and still be human. I think that those in our Community who devote their lives to fighting for the rights of our transgender population by doing volunteer work, participating in open activism, facilitating support groups and lobbying our government officials are very brave and honorable people.....and we all owe them a debt of gratitude. But I also believe it is important that more and more of us just go out and integrate into the world.....out from under the "gender bubble". If we can attach a face, a name or a positive experience to the mystical term of transsexual, then maybe one of these days society will start seeing us as "normal" people, merely trying to live our lives in the way nature intended it to be lived. Maybe someday, just maybe, we'll be able to walk down the street without getting those "knowing smiles" or disgusting glares or hearing just a portion of some hurtful conversation being carried on behind our backs.

Again, I want to apologize for not being able to meet my obligations to TGSF. I was flattered by everyone's initial vote of confidence and I am really sorry that I can't do what I fully intended to do at the time of my selection. I wish everyone in the organization well and hope that sometime in the very near future I will have the time and energy to become re-involved in the group. I owe a great deal to TGSF and many individual members for what they have done for me.....to a certain extent, I owe my life. That's a debt I will carry with me forever.

As always.....warm regards,

Theresa Sparks

p.s. I'll still probably surface from time-to-time with my political commentaries, the periodic vigil or demonstration or a random thought or story from the "streets of San Francisco", so stay tuned.

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TGSF FINANCIAL REPORTS

August 1 through August 31, 1999

TGSF Balance Sheet

As of 8/31/99

ASSETS

Cash and Bank Accounts	
TGSF	14859.07
TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts	14859.07
Other Assets	
Computers	0.00
Event Equipment	1200.00
Office Supplies	50.00
TOTAL Other Assets	1250.00
TOTAL ASSETS	16109.07

LIABILITIES

Other Liabilities	
Insurance	0.00
Taxes	109.69
Utilities	138.23
TOTAL Other Liabilities	247.92
TOTAL LIABILITIES	247.92
OVERALL TOTAL	15861.15

TGSF Cash Flow Report

8/1/99 through 8/31/99

INFLOWS

Advertising Income	225.00
Donations	70.00
Honorariums	50.00
Meeting Donations	89.00
Memberships	284.50
Other Inc, Bus:	
Resource Guides	20.50
TOTAL Other Inc, Bus	20.50
Ticket Sales	450.00
TOTAL INFLOWS	1,189.00

OUTFLOWS

Advertising	65.00
Corporate Information Fees	10.00
Equipment Operation	1,295.00
Equipment Rental	974.00
Event Supplies	70.00
Honorariums Paid	75.00
Miscellaneous, Bus	3.00
Office	26.48
Postage and Delivery	457.25
Printing and Reproduction	195.53
Rent Paid	50.00
Review Expenses	9.27
Supplies, Bus	-2.00
Tickets Purchased	250.00
Transportation	33.55
Utilities, Bus:	
Telephone, Bus	21.40
TOTAL Utilities, Bus	21.40
Uncategorized Outflows	26.60

TOTAL OUTFLOWS 3,560.08

OVERALL TOTAL -2,371.08

TGSF Net Income and Expense by Function

8/1/99 Through 8/31/99

Cotillion	-1,884.00
Donations	20.00
Educational	-84.00
Membership	334.50
Newsletter	-406.67
Operations	-346.36
Outreach	50.00
Parade	-70.00
Resource Guides	-5.95
Social	48.00
Unclassified Transactions	-26.60
OVERALL TOTAL	-2,371.08

Notes to Financial Statements

Membership Revenue on statements for periods prior to May 1, 1999 includes all income which was otherwise uncategorized. Beginning with May 1, 1999 it includes only revenue received as membership payments.

The Asset values for Decorations, Food Service, and Office Supplies have been carried forward from the April 30, 1999 Balance Sheet. There is no documentation supporting these values, and no procedure to depreciate or otherwise adjust them.

The Liability values for Taxes and Utilities have been carried forward from the April 30, 1999 Balance Sheet. There is no documentation supporting these values, and no record of them being paid. The previously reported liability of \$1512.00 for Insurance was paid in December 1998. Previous financial statements will be restated to reflect this.

Email TGSF:

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AUGUST - SEPTEMBER SOCIALS IN REVIEW

By Nicole and Debbie

The month of August finished off with the TGSF End of Month social on the 26th. As is our usual we met at the Blue Muse and once again Jo An from the "I Love It" Consignment Boutique in Fremont provided all the outfits for our fashion show. And what a show it was!! Eight models strutted their stuff through the rooms at the Blue Muse and out onto Gough Street. Tianna, Roxanne, Stephanie Ann, Aiyanna, Janis, and myself were among the 8 models displaying a wide variety of wonderful fashions. I must admit that I bought the outfit I liked the best during my fitting for the event at I Love It. I wanted several of the other ones that I modeled but my finances allowed you girls to have a chance at them. There was quite a good size crowd, with a number of visitors. Debbie and I were able to talk to the gals from Southern California, and one gal from Washington.

While we had not planned to attend this event, as it approached we realized that it was on a holiday weekend, hence I did not have to teach. So on September 4th we attended the Imperial Star Empire Coronation. Our organization was well represented with over 10 members in attendance, including Serena in her first role as Miss TGSF. There were a number of performances from various members of the court system. Before the night was gone Tianna, Debbie and I departed and headed back to San Francisco. First we had to get something to eat so we stopped my the Mason Street Cafe, we have visited this cafe near the square before and were treated well. This time Tianna entered the ladies room in a formal outfit and emerged in a short, short dancing outfit. I wonder if they will remember us? We had dinner and proceeded to a new club in the SoMa (South of Market) area Club Soul. Wow what an experience!! To start with Tianna is the resident Diva so we were all comp'd in (usually \$10 a person), when we got inside there were 2 dance floors in two different rooms, 2 bars and a much better bathroom arrangement than the G-spot. We danced until around 2:00am, even though this club remains open until 3:00am. It was a great time, this venue is a must see venue. Club Soul is at 1190 Folsom near 8th street, it is open on Saturdays from 9:00pm to 3:00am.

We actually went to another sort of event the next day, Sunday the 5th. Krystal from SGA and Grand Duchess of the Sacramento court gave us a flyer for what I thought was an event happening the following day in Sacramento. We of course drove to Sacramento the next day before reading the flyer in detail. Once there we discovered we were off by a week, but we decided to have dinner at Joseph's anyway. We thought we would be the only TG people there (which is not a problem, Joseph's is always friendly to us) but we had hardly ordered when Krystal came in with a friend (who's name I should know since I have met her several times, but I can't remember it). We all ended up having dinner and then heading over to Faces for a few hours of dancing. This was the first time the crowd was light enough for us to dance on the stainless steel stage (we are not usually there on a Sunday). Humm, Dancing 2 nights in a row at top notch venues, I know it's a dirty job, but someone has to do it :-)

The September Mid Month took place on the 8th at Josie's Cabaret & Juice Joint. We had originally thought that nothing would be happening however Ron ended up scheduling a show for that night. As a result Debbie and I were able to go see a show which was quite entertaining. Our evening started at the Metro across the street (Market) from Josie's (right next to the parking structure which we were able to use with no problem). At the Metro we had some delicious Chinese food, I highly recommend the Tangerine beef. Then as the lightning lit up the sky we crossed market to see the show. Lulu and Janis were in the front room and decided not to see the show, we went right in using our \$2 discount and took seats on the balcony (the room was packed). The show was a gay soap called the Deboce Triangle. Wednesday was the first of 4 nights of this show. It really was quite entertaining and if it play's again I would recommend seeing it. After the show ended we joined the girls in the front room, a few more girls showed up including Roxanne, Telzey and Jennifer. After some discussion of current events with the girls, Debbie and I headed for home.

JUDGES ORDER FINANCING OF SRS

Written by Arthur S. Leonard
From the Lesbian & Gay New York Newspaper
Provided by Jerry McCracken

The US Medicaid program and the British National health service must pay for sex-reassignment surgery for persons eligible to participate in their programs, according to July court rulings in the two countries.

The US ruling by Federal District Judge Mark W. Bennett, issued on July 14th in the case of Smith v. Rasmussen, found that a blanket ban on funding sex-change operations by the IOWA Medicaid program violates federal standards, which require the state programs provide funding for medically necessary procedures.

Similarly, in England, the court of Appeal ruling on July 29th upheld a trial courts decision last December that refusing to pay for sex-reassignment surgery for three male to female transsexuals, identified in court papers only as A, D, and G. the service was violating its mandate to provide necessary medical procedures for all the participants.

In both cases, public authorities had contended that sex change operations should be viewed, essentially, as elective surgery, not necessary for the health of the individual, and as experimental, controversial procedures on which the government should not be required to expend scarce health care resources.

Bennett's decision, contained in a lengthy written opinion that rejected all of Iowa's contentions, concerned a female to male transsexual who had actually progressed through all but the very last stage of sex reassignment procedures: the operation to create an artificial penis.

"John Smith," who had exhibited severe discomfort with his female identity since early childhood had been living as a man for many years, had undergone hormone therapy, and submitted to surgery to reduce his breast and reshape his body to accord with the male physique. Some of the procedures had been funded by Iowa's Medicaid, as they could be rationalized as treatment for other conditions, including the effects of a severe auto accident in which Smith was involved in years ago and which has forced him to live on disability insurance payments.

However the state balked at paying for the creation of a penis. (Freudians could have a field day analyzing the motivations behind this one) The State argued that sex-reassignment is experimental and controversial, but Bennett found that these arguments were really pretexts for a political decision that was not supported by medical evidence. A US appeals court ruled in 1980 that IOWA Medicaid had to pay for a sex-change operation, finding the state program adopted a ban without following proper procedures. IOWA officials subsequently went through an elaborate investigation to adopt a new ban which Bennett found was essentially a sham procedure with politically foreordained result.

Continued on Page 18

HEY!

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Up to 40 words only \$10.00. Send text of ad and Check or Money Order to TGSF's PO Box, ATTN: Editor. Reach out and come out!

FIRST TIME OUT

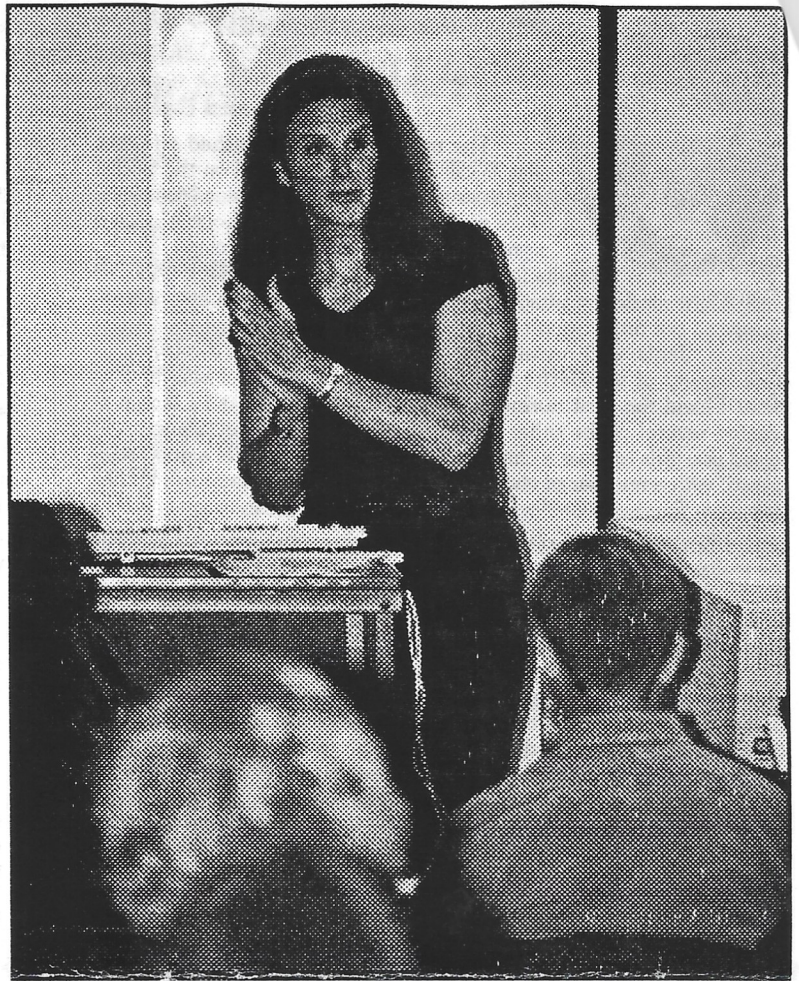
by Nicole Cook

A few months ago I told the story of coming out to people at one of the places where I do consulting work. As some of you know, I also teach college and as it turned out, I would end up transitioning at the college first. I am now teaching at the College of Marin as Nicole, but I thought you may be interested in hearing about the events leading up to my first days teaching.

At about the same time that I was telling people about myself in my consulting job, I broke the news to the department chair at the college. He indicated that he was OK with my being Nicole, and has called me Nicole ever since. The day after I told the department chair, I received a call at work from the dean of the school of business. She had called me just to let me know she was completely supportive of my teaching as Nicole. So at this point everything was going great. The next time I was at school I began to tell the other instructors that I saw regularly. All of them seem to take the news with a "It's cool with me attitude". I began to wonder how many transsexuals were teaching there. As the summer session neared its conclusion I decided it was time for some student feedback on the subject, so I gave both of my web site design classes an extra credit assignment. All they had to do was find my other Geocities site. They knew about my skydiving site and my only other Geocities site is my Nicole site. I gave them a few hints. The first one was: Consider the way I look, notice anything that is unusual draw a conclusion and use that to find the site. I gave them clues that helped a lot if they made it as far as West Hollywood (the gay, lesbian, transgendered neighborhood in Geocities). One student found the site in less than a day, unfortunately, none of the other students found the site. So on the last day of class, when it was too late to get the extra credit, I gave all the students the URL. I did not receive any bad comments, but I did receive a number of responses from several girls in my class indicating how good I looked as Nicole. All in all it was a very favorable experience.

Almost as soon as the summer session ended, the fall semester was gearing up to start. The first event I was to attend as Nicole was the instructors department staff meeting. I decided to wear my black skirt and maroon camisole/cardigan top. Debbie decided to go with me since we were going somewhere else after the meeting. We arrived early and I talked to some of the people that I knew would be OK with the new me. After about 30 min. I went into the room where the other instructors were gathering, some of these people I did not even know. Much to my surprise, my entry or presence did not seem to cause any disruption at all. Most of the people continued in their pre-meeting discussions. There were a few instructors that I did know but I had not told about my change. They did not seem to be paying any attention to me at all. At first I thought, Humm.. they must have a problem with me as Nicole. Later I found out that they did not even recognize me. They thought I was a new female instructor. The meeting went well and I even ended up in a few discussions after the meeting on topics related to what I was teaching.

The first day of class came on a Tuesday night. I did not know what to expect but I was ready to make the step. It would be the first time I had made money as Nicole without working from home. I arrived early again so I could set up the classroom. As I set the equipment up the students began arriving. Several of them had the common first day of class questions. The class began and I had more students than could fit in the class. I was worried about how long I could maintain my "no bass" voice and even if I could teach without using the deep side of my voice, in prior classes I relied on



Nicole Teaches!

my lower voice range to project into the class. Well my concerns began to abate as I made my way through the roll and started into the first nights lecture. By mid class I was quite comfortable. My estimate was that several of the students have not (even now) figured out that I am not a genetic female, several suspect but are not sure and several have already figured it out and think it is cool to have a TG instructor. Again no negative experiences. At the end of the first class, two of my students from former classes came up to tell me how good I looked. As you can see this was getting tougher by the minute.

The following Saturday I had another class. In this class, Debbie came along to take a few pictures of me teaching. With any luck one of the pictures is on the page with this article. The Saturday class was no different than the Tuesday class. By the end of the class I felt completely comfortable teaching as my true self in front of the class. Since the first week I have taught several more classes, in each case I have had no problem with my new identity. In almost every class I have someone comment positively on my makeup, hair or outfit. The event that had been holding me back from becoming Nicole full time was finally over and I felt great. By the way I do not own any male clothes any more, in fact as I did my last 5 work days as my former self I tossed the clothes in the garbage or in the Goodwill bag when I got home each day. I always felt there was a giant chasm between where I was and where I wanted to be and for the longest time I did not know how to get across so I will end this article saying: this is Nicole reporting from the other side of the chasm, it's great over here come on over.

AROUND THE BAY IN A DAY

By Nicole

I have heard a number of our members talking about traveling as their femme self on public transit. Is it safe? Could problems arise? Well Debbie and I decided to test several forms of public transit out all in one day. We needed to deliver the TGSF 1999 Halloween tickets to our 3 vendors. So we planned a route using public transit to get to each one. This article can also allow you to use our planning to get to each of these TG friendly locations.

Since we live in the north bay our trip began at the Larkspur ferry terminal. We parked the car and headed for the boat. In the waiting area, I actually saw someone I knew as my former self, however he did not recognize me, which seems to be the case most of the time. We paid the \$3.00 per person and boarded the Golden Gate Transit Ferry "San Francisco" one of the older boats, and we were off. Almost everyone on the boat is caught up in their own little world. Some are working, some are studying, but almost everyone is doing something to pass the time. I even spoke to a few people at the snack bar and in the ladies room, but if someone even read me, I was not aware of it.

After about 1 hour we arrived at the San Francisco Ferry terminal at the Embarcadero and Market. As we left we grabbed a few Muni transfer tickets so we would not have to pay for the next leg of our journey. We departed the ferry terminal and made our way to the Muni rail/ BART station one block up Market. Our first task was to deliver the Halloween tickets to the Piedmont in the Haight district, so we jumped on the N line and took it up to the Cole-Carl stop. After departing the train in the Haight we walked to the Piedmont, which was somewhere between a five and ten minute walk. We walked down Cole to Haight, turned right and walked until we crossed Ashbury and Piedmont was on the left. While in the Haight it was kind of neat how the people were talking to us. Both Debbie and I had someone complement us on our clothes (and we were both dressed quite casually). The people at the piedmont were very friendly and we asked about the missing part to my Halloween costume. They did not have one but we perused the other outfits for a moment before we left.

We returned to the N line the way we had come, stopping to pet this big dog. This is always a good thing to do, because as a tall girl, big dogs make me look shorter. We got on the N line going back to the Embarcadero. Since we had a return ticket from the ferry transfer machine and our original ticket had not expired yet we were able to take the N line all the way to the Cal Train station without paying any additional fares. We departed the N line at 4th and King, which is right at the Cal Train station. We walked over and purchased 2 tickets (\$4.00 per person) for San Jose. We had cut the timing close here and within 2 minutes after boarding the train we were off, heading for Carla's in San Jose. The Cal Train ride was a unique experience. We sat up on top so we had a better view. For most of the ride I was reading a book and I would occasionally look up and see what was going by. Debbie was taking in the passing scenery to music on the headphones. After about 1 hour we arrived at the San Jose Cal Train station. After a quick stop at the ladies room in the station we walked over to Carla's. Since a number of people have asked, I timed this walk. It takes exactly 8 min. to walk from the San Jose Cal train station to Carla's. In other words it is real close.

We spent a few minutes with Carla while we delivered her tickets. Then we were off again heading for our next destination. We started to walk back to the Cal Train station and decided to try the Arena Gardens restaurant on the corner of Stockton and The Alameda. I would not recommend it. Some of the food was OK, and some of it was not palatable. It also took them a long time to make the food which put us behind schedule. We left the Arena restaurant wishing we had stopped at McDonalds and returned to the Cal Train station. From the Cal Train station we boarded a VTA express bus (route 180) which runs between the San Jose

Cal Train station and the Fremont BART station. We each bought a \$2.00 VTA bus ticket and boarded the bus. It took a little over a half hour to get to the Fremont BART station, and the VTA bus was very nice, sort of like the Golden Gate Transit Commuter busses, with nice upholstery and clean with air conditioning.

Once at the Fremont BART station we needed to change to a different bus. We still needed to deliver tickets to Jo An at the I Luv It Consignment Boutique in the Niles district. After asking the BART info desk where the AC transit busses were we went around the station to the back. We had recovered the time we lost at the restaurant because we built in some buffer in our itinerary. But the AC transit lines don't actually run on the schedule so we waited for a while watching the construction workers pour concrete to expand the bus terminal. After about a half hour, bus number 26 showed up, we each purchased a \$1.25 ticket and boarded the bus. It took about 40 minutes for the bus to wind it's way to Niles & J Street about 30 yards from I Luv It. We got off the bus and headed over to Jo An's Boutique.

We delivered the tickets to Jo-An and I asked her about the missing part to my Halloween costume. She reached behind me and pulled out 2 of them. I could not believe it!! We were worried about how close it was getting to Halloween and I still did not have this hard to find garment, and then almost like magic I was set. We stayed long enough to get Debbie a costume and then we were off again to catch the bus. We walked back over to the bus station with plenty of time, but due to a combination of my changing the schedule a bit and the AC transit lines problem with staying on schedule, it was about 40 minutes before the next bus arrived. We had planned to go to the Union City BART station which was closer, but gave up waiting for that bus and returned to the Fremont BART station. Bus 26 runs between the Fremont and Union City BART stations.

After another 40 min. ride on AC transit we arrived at the BART station and headed for the train. We did not have to buy any tickets because we had over \$20 in BART tickets already. We almost got on the wrong train heading for Richmond, but we figured out what we had done and moved over to the other track. Within 20 minutes the next BART arrived and we boarded. Much like the other trains, everyone is pretty much concentrating on a book or newspaper. As the BART train returned to San Francisco we watched the sun set. Less than an hour after we boarded we arrived at the Embarcadero station. We were a bit behind and ended up almost running to the ferry terminal. After a quick ticket purchase we boarded the Golden Gate Ferry "Del Norte" the new fast boat. The boat was packed. We boarded at 7:35pm so we were with the last of the commuters. We ended up sharing a table with someone who was working on their laptop. It was dark outside so their was not a lot to look at. I ended up doing some people watching from time to time and noticed a few people would occasionally look my way. It did not think they were reading me, I think they were just not use to seeing a 6'2" girl on the boat. The fast boat made the trip back in just over 30 min. and our trek had almost come to an end. We disembarked from the ferry and decided to go across the street and have dinner at the Good Earth Restaurant at Larkspur landing. Debbie likes to go here and we had been here several times before and they were always nice.

So there you have it, a way to get to 3 TG friendly venues and a circle of public transit travel around the bay. We felt comfortable on all the legs of the journey and if this article goes out before the Halloween party, you can use our planning to get your ticket. We did all the up front planning on the Internet and we were able to find all the route's, fares and even maps on line at www.transitinfo.org which connects you to all the transit organizations in the bay area. We did our trip on a weekday so even if we got off schedule there was another bus or train to keep us moving, weekends may not be that accommodating so you may want to check. If Debbie gets her way our next review will be about the Amtrak trip to Las Vegas :-)

"BETTER THAN CHOCOLATE"

Review and Commentary by Andrea Drane

Ask any therapist, and they will tell you that sex is the primary reason why we leave home. In this movie, Maggie certainly did, and found Kim. But what do you do when your mother unexpectedly announces that she is moving in with you—and you haven't told her that you are lesbian or that your roommate is your lover? "Better Than Chocolate" unfolds as a wonderfully twisted romantic comedy that goes beyond the stereotypes we so often see in GLBT movies, and shows us what it means to live an alternate lifestyle—warts and all.

The movie has its share of quirky supporting characters, but none quite so endearing as Maggie's friend Judith—a transsexual with a lesbian orientation, who also happens to be in love with Maggie's boss. Perhaps taking a cue from Richard Spence ("Different for Girls"), director Anne Wheeler cast Peter Outerbridge in the role (you may have seen him in the 1996 sci-fi thriller "Escape From Mars"). His appearance lends authenticity to the film, especially when you consider that most of us pass on our demeanor, and not on our looks. Judith's perseverance, sense of humor, and "not one step backward" attitude does girl like us proud. It's not often that we find transgender heroines in films, and even less often that we find them struggling with issues so close to our own hearts—rejection by family, occasional ridicule, threats of violence, and the eternal quest for love.

Most of us worry about losing our families because of our gender identity, and many of us do. Judith is no exception, and takes hope in the fact that her parents have bought her a condo. Alas, her dreams of them visiting her are shattered when she realizes the gift is nothing more than a "get lost" present. While I consider myself very fortunate that most of my family tolerates my occasional visits, I also share Judith's sense of loss, since I know that none of them will be coming to visit me.

Our struggle with gender identity is one of being seen clearly. When Judith performs at the local lesbian club, she sings "I'm Not a Fucking Drag Queen." The lyrics' message is clear—a demand to be seen for who and what she is.

"I'm not a fucking drag queen
I won't let you forget it
When you sneer 'good day' - Sir!
You stab me all the way through
My tender transgender heart"

The depth of Judith's character and her unwillingness to compromise who she is really come through when another woman challenges her in the restroom with taunts of "Are you sure you are in the right room — SIR?" and then physical assaults her. It's a very scary scene, especially since it occurs in a gay club. Warts and all indeed! Still, Judith comes through with her dignity and self-respect intact, and I truly admire her character for that.

Judith's pursuit of Maggie's reluctant boss (and her asking Maggie's mother for advice) contrasts wonderfully with the certainty of Maggie and Kim's attraction, but she triumphs in the end, and I am enough of a sentimentalist that I would have been very disappointed if she hadn't. I also have to confess that it gives me hope for my own romantic pursuits.

"Better Than Chocolate" certainly warmed this straight girl's tender transgender heart, and I give it both thumbs up!

*"I'm Not a Fucking Drag Queen" written by Star Maris and published by Ting Publishing (SOCAN). Soundtrack album available on Will Records (WIL-33666).

Confessions of a Straight Girl - Chapter 11

"HONEST SHERIFF — IT WAS HIM OR ME!"

by Andrea Drane

Not long ago, I was talking to a TS friend who has a young daughter. I asked her, "What does your daughter say when people ask her about her father?" My friend replied, "She tells them that he's dead. It's true you know—I killed him." At first, I was so shocked by her answer that I was completely speechless. The more I thought about it, though, the more I knew that she was right.

When we don't live as who we really are, life quickly becomes not worth living. Suicide is all too common in our community, and I have certainly heard its siren call. A major factor in my decision to transition was my realization that one way or another—through loneliness and isolation, high-risk adventure, or other self-destructive behavior—I was going to die well before my time, and not regret doing so. In the end, you could say that I killed the me that others had always known so that I might live—an open-and-shut case of self-defense, plain and simple.

Transition places such demands upon ourselves that we frequently overlook the demands it places on those around us. Millie Brown's *True Selves...* presents our point of view to family and friends; *Mom I Need to Be a Girl* presents the family and friend's point of view to us. This book by "Just Evelyn" chronicles how her son Daniel became her daughter Danielle, and should be required reading for everyone contemplating transition. A particularly poignant section relates Danielle's brother's reaction. There, he says, "I feel like my brother has died, and I don't know who this new person is." I remember my father expressing a similar sentiment, but he didn't phrase it quite so politely.

For ourselves, transition is about shedding the behaviors, mannerisms, and costumes that we have adopted to meet society's expectations and keep ourselves safe. For our family and friends, transition is about watching someone they care for vanish overnight. Where we look in the mirror and see ourselves clearly for perhaps the first time, our family and friends look at us and see a total stranger. We need to be aware of this viewpoint, and recognize it as a grief process—both on their part and on ours. No matter how much we gain by living as who we are, we always lose a little of the good that we were.

"Honest, Sheriff—it was him or me." Yes, it does sound flip-pant, but it's the literal truth...

Significant Other Support - East Bay

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Phyllabuster

POTENTIAL FOR ANOTHER CORBETT, "CHROMOSOMES = SEX" RULING IN TEXAS

by Phyllis Randolph Frye

Currently in San Antonio, Texas, the 4th Texas Court of Appeals is deciding whether or not, the completed and legal transsexuals in Texas have actually changed their sex. If they decide no, as in the Corbett case in England, and as the State of Ohio has also ruled and legislated, then all formerly completed and legal transsexuals in Texas who have followed their doctor's advice, followed the Benjamin Standards and gone through all of the legal hurdles, will have done it all for naught.

If the 4th Texas Appeals Court, and subsequently if the Texas Supreme Court, says that chromosomes = sex, then we will have an interesting situation. Texas will have lots of XY folks running around with neovaginas, breasts, female hormones and female names but be legally MALE, and lots of other XX folks running around with phalloplasty or metaoidioplasty, breast reduction surgery, hysterectomy, facial hair, male hormones, male pattern baldness and male names but be legally FEMALE.

And of course and as usual, the intersexed with XXX, XXY, XXXY, XYY, XYYY, XYYYY and XO will mostly be ignored again, and continue to be surgically altered at birth without their consent by patronizing men who are without any knowledge of the infant's brain sex and with a coin-toss, 50-50, chance of getting it correct. Is the 4th Texas Appeals Court also going to determine the legal sex of the XXX, XXY, XXXY, XYY, XYYY, XYYYY and XO's?

How has this come about? In a nutshell, Ms. Littleton, an MTF, had genital surgery and her legal changes about 20 years ago. About 10 years ago, Ms. Littleton married Mr. Littleton with his full knowledge of his bride's completed TG past. Two years ago Mr. Littleton died from an alleged medical malpractice. In order to keep the jury from hearing the evidence of the alleged medical malpractice that is alleged to have killed Mr. Littleton, the doctor's insurance company argued at pre-trial hearings that Ms. Littleton has no standing to sue, since she is XY, neovaginaed and breasted but still legally MALE and cannot be married to another same-sex XY male.

The conservative trial court judge bought the chromosome argument and threw Ms. Littleton's male neovagina and breasts out of court. Now the whole thing is being argued in appeal. I haven't made a public statement on this matter yet because from what I have read, Ms. Littleton has a very capable attorney who has made some good arguments.

But I think it is incumbent upon us all to be prepared in the event the 4th Texas Appeals Court rules against Ms. Littleton and all the MTF and FTM completed and formerly legal Texas transsexuals and says that XY vagina possessors are MALE and XX penis possessors are FEMALE and may or may not rule on the legal sex of the XXX, XXY, XXXY, XYY, XYYY, XYYYY and XO's.

1. First we should have a parade. I'd like to invite all of you XY folks who have grown your breasts to come on down and let's have a sidewalk parade, very peaceful of course, but just not wear tops. What are they going to do, arrest us? If they 4th Court says us XY breast growers are Male, then by golly, let's give those hooters some sunshine, honey.

If the XX breast growers want to mix in to see if anyone can tell the difference in XX hooters and XY hooters, it should be interesting. Oh, and you folks in Ohio should already be sunbath-

ing without a top. You need not wait for us in Texas to get judicial permission.

2. We need to invite all of our friends from other states (and other nations, if you can get a visa) to come get married in Texas. Just imagine. If you are an XX with a neopenis and you turn on to guys, you could then come to Texas, find the XY gay man or XY bisexual man of your dreams and get a marriage license and have a LEGAL marriage — all courtesy of the 4th Texas Appeals Court. Or if you are an XY with a neovagina and you turn on to women, you could then come to Texas, find the XX lesbian or XX bisexual woman of your dreams and get a marriage license and have a LEGAL marriage — all courtesy of the 4th Texas Appeals Court.

Wow, if you are bisexual and TS, you can just bring your XX neopenis or your XY neovagina into the Lone Star State and get married all you want to whomever you wish. If you think I am being facetious, there is already a case in Ohio supporting such a marriage license application. So, if the 4th Court does not establish Corbett in Texas, go to Ohio and do the same thing. For that matter, go to Ohio and get that same-sex marriage now, don't wait for us in Texas. Not to pick on Ohio, I think that Tennessee, New York, Florida and a few other states do not change the birth certificate. So do these same things in those states as well. Let's party!!!!

3. We will need to request some movement within the prisons and the jails of course. Unfortunately, like all populations, some transgendered folks do go to prison. Under the new Corbett styled, chromosomes = sex, standard, if that comes to be, the XY vagina possessors can set up shop in the male prisons and the XX penis possessors can demand a women's facility. And let us demand that they also place us by XXX, XXY, XXXY, XYY, XYYY, XYYYY and XO as appropriate. I trust that the Ohio, Tennessee, Florida and other prisons are also coming into compliance.

4. Just think about employment discrimination. If XY neovagina possessors remain legal males and XX neopenis possessors remain legal females, we can invite all of our friends to come to Texas where transsexuals can sue for job discrimination under Title VII and not be blocked by the Ulane trio of cases. Remember those cases said that TS folks could not sue under sex discrimination because discrimination against TS folks was change-of-sex discrimination. If the 4th Texas Appeals Court adopts Corbett, guess what? We can sue the hell out of the bastards that fire us. We will have changed sex without changing sex. Sounds good to me.

So if you do not live in Texas and have run into job discrimination for being TS, get you suitcase packed and ready in case Corbett gets adopted in Texas and you get sudden job protection under Title VII. I trust that you Ohio-law XY neovaginaed males and XX neopenised females (and New York, Tennessee, Florida and other states) are trotting down to your EEOC right now and demanding that the law be applied equally.

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NEW ONLINE SO LIST!

New online mailing list for wives and SOs of crossdressers and men who consider themselves to be transgendered; no topic off limits. Attitudes range from complete acceptance to really struggling. Open to women only—no crossdressers please! Women need a place where they can feel safe to discuss these issues. Write to Jenni at www.aluckywife@aol.com and explain a little about your situation.

TEEN TRANSSEXUALS

Written by Maria Russo

(c) 1999, Salon Magazine

Provided by Brenda Lana Smith R.af D. (Brenda-Lana@blsmith.freeserve.co.uk)

Ina's story may be unusual but it's no longer guaranteed to shock. During an isolated childhood in rural Oklahoma, Ina knew she was a girl from her early years, even though her body seemed to be a boy's. "It was always clear to me that this boy identity and body were incorrect." She remembers a childhood spent "tending to my inner awareness of myself and avoiding other people a lot of the time."

Then puberty hit: "That was the hardest. My own body was staging a mutiny, even." At 16, after an eating disorder had brought her to several psychiatrists, Ina finally confessed her secret. The doctor gave her a book about gay and lesbian youth, which Ina found devastating. Having finally worked up the courage to talk about it, she was still misunderstood. She soon found another doctor who explained the particulars of "transitioning" from one sex to the other. But he wouldn't help her. Eighteen is the accepted age for beginning to transition, and she was just shy of 17. Synthetic hormones, the first step to altering the course of sexual development, became her holy grail. "I knew I couldn't be happy letting my body masculinize on and on. And so at 17 I graduated from high school and found hormones on the street."

Things turned out OK for Ina: She's now 24, post-op and a graduate student in American studies living in a small Oklahoma city. But the years she endured living as a burgeoning adult in the wrong body still seem like an unnecessary burden added to an already painful existence.

If Ina were 17 today and near a big city, she'd probably be able to find a doctor willing to make her an exception to the 18-year-old threshold for hormones. The treatment protocol of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, the standard-bearing organization for transgender medicine, allows exceptions in cases of "clear maturity." At the very least, Ina would be prescribed hormone blockers, which would stop the path of testosterone without giving the feminizing effects of estrogen. This way, in case she changed her mind, permanent alterations wouldn't have taken place. (Estrogen produces breast and hip development, while testosterone brings facial and chest hair and increased muscle mass.)

No one compiles official statistics on transgender youth, but those who work with them agree that their numbers are rising. In the last year, for example, the number of transgender people under 22 in the "gender reassignment" program at New York's Michael Callen-Audre Lorde Community Health Center has tripled. Partly this is the result of increased access to information. A kid today with "gender dysphoria," the catch-all term for disconnect between body and gender identity, will likely know about transsexualism from puberty or younger. Eighteen-year-old Christian, a college freshman in western Pennsylvania who was born female but is just starting to live as a male, is a typical example. At 16, after learning from the Jerry Springer show that there was a name for the way he felt, he "went online and looked up anything and everything about transsexuals." To his astonishment he found chat rooms filled with "people just like me." Recently he met his first fellow transsexual in person — a 21-year-old he'd met in a chat room, who lives two hours away and has introduced him to a group of trans guys who meet regularly.

As more young transsexuals push to begin transitioning at a younger age, the social workers and medical providers who work with them are confronting a new frontier in gender ethics. What's the best way to help kids who say they want to switch sexes? Should

we make them wait as long as possible, to be sure their decisions are not simply adolescent rebellion? Or take them at their word and let them begin hormones during puberty? "Every day, I feel torn between wanting to empower my patients and wanting to be sure not to harm them," says Jayne Jordan, a physician assistant in the Callen-Lorde Center's transgender medicine program.

Ina and Christian are part of a new generation of transsexuals who are taking their fate into their own hands and changing the face of gender shifting. Transgender pioneers like Renee Richards, whose sex change in 1975 made headlines around the world, had navigated the mental health system for years before transitioning. While those agonizing years (or decades) were full of suffering, they also guaranteed that the decision to transition was not a whim or an act of passing rebellion.

But adolescents are, well, adolescent. Adults often have difficulty interpreting their behavior. A teenage would-be transsexual's anguish and determination may look like standard-issue rebellion in an extreme version. Now that tattooing and piercing have lost their shock value, couldn't transsexualism turn out to be the ultimate way to etch defiance onto one's body? There's the nightmarish prospect of a teenager going through with a sex change and deciding later that it was a mistake. Jayne Jordan knows of one such case — a biological male who identified as female and had taken estrogen from age 16. He had breast implants and was surgically castrated, then decided he wanted to go back to being male. He had the implants removed — but since he has no testicles, he'll be taking testosterone for the rest of his life.

So at what age should children wield the power to change their sex? It's one thing to experiment with homosexuality; people can always change their minds later on. But by law a minor cannot undergo any voluntary medical procedure without parental consent, except STD-related care, contraception and (in some states) abortion. There are ways around this; an emancipated minor, or someone who claimed she would be abused if she confronted her parents, can make medical decisions independently. Should there be laws preventing all minors from putting themselves through sex reassignment? Should more be done to stop transgender kids from getting hormones illegally?

Ina acknowledges the potential for mixed-up teenagers to do themselves harm, but she maintains that for the most part, slowing the transition process for minors serves mainly to make the adults involved more comfortable. It is true, after all, that sex-changing hormones have a mood-stabilizing, antidepressant effect on transgender people, who have astronomical suicide rates. Given such high stakes, Ina assails the belief that "there's nothing you can do but endure puberty until you're all grown, and if you don't kill yourself by then, knock wood, many opportunities will magically become available and you'll have a lovely life."

The very turbulence of adolescence should make transitioning a more natural concept, she says. The "normal" life passages from boy to man, girl to woman, she argues, "are also gender transitions, and just as disruptive and traumatic as the transgender experience." Why let puberty run its course knowing that it will require several expensive surgeries, not to mention electrolysis, to undo it?

Ironically, Ina's position faces some unlikely opposition. Gay and lesbian advocates, who have been at the forefront of the transgender rights movement, often find it troubling to think that people may choose transsexualism as an alternative to being gay. As a lesbian, Jayne Jordan says, "it crosses my mind a lot that some of my patients may choose sex changes out of internalized homophobia."

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Some gay advocates argue that in a society in which gender roles were not policed with such vehemence, transgender teens would not feel the need to transition at all. These activists seem hopeful that sex changes will become a relic of a less enlightened era, that transgender people — and everyone else — will be able to live in the bodies assigned them by nature and inhabit whatever gender feels right at any given moment. Some transgender youth do say they're comfortable in an ambiguous, sliding place in the gender spectrum. Twenty-one-year-old Angelica, for example, only does hormones. "I don't fully identify as female, but rather a feminine androgynous male — no surgery for me."

Perhaps even more troubling than these ideological issues is the fact that many of the teenagers who show up on the doorsteps of sex-change organizations are street kids. Lost, broke and helpless, they may be looking for a magical escape from their loneliness and poverty as well as their gender alienation. "Some young male-to-female patients actually believe they'll be able to get pregnant," says Jordan. Often, she says, transgender street kids come in thinking all their problems will go away and they'll be accepted as women or men. She has to explain that they'll probably face discrimination their whole lives.

But as compelling as it may be to think of eliminating the need for sex reassignment, many transgender people just want to get safely to the other side of the gender dichotomy. As Ina puts it, "at a certain point I just wanted to take off my costume and go home." Far from making a political statement or changing the world, she simply yearned to feel comfort and pleasure in her body. "I thought I would never have that," Ina says. "Many times I still don't. But there are certain things about the physical body that are rewarding, and I can say, OK, yes, this was worth the pain I had to go through to get here."

The more I talk to transsexuals about what adolescence was like for them, the more my own transformation from scraggly tomboy to woman comes back to me. But as I watched my body turn into something new and strange, I found social roles and cultural images that I could use to create a future version of myself. What would it feel like to grow up without those images? Or with images that seemed everyday to become more distant as your body develops? As Ina and I talked over the course of several weeks, I began to believe that our routes to womanhood followed parallel roads. Mine, of course, was paved and well lit; I was spared the most excruciating and dangerous aspects of her journey.

If gay people have shown how preconceived gender and sexual categories don't correspond to human multiplicity, transsexuals have something else to teach us: Beginning in adolescence, we put together a sexual and gender identity that is part body, part behavior, part inner sense of our outer roles.

And while the youngest transsexuals challenge us with the most difficult ethical questions, the very flexibility of their youth may well shift our cultural understanding of transsexualism. Twenty-one-year-old Elizabeth, for example, has a life no one would envy — but her self-possession and her comfort making her own rules make her future look surprisingly promising.

Two years ago, after a blowup with her family in Compton, Calif., when she told them she'd decided to become a woman, Elizabeth escaped to New York City and ended up on the street. She's been living at Covenant House, Manhattan's homeless youth center, ever since. Her stories of the struggles of the last few years

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Maybe the HRC will do an amicus brief in favor of the insurance company to keep me and Sarah DePalma and Tere Frederickson and other Texas folks from continually pushing so hard to get TG's and gender variant LGB's covered by ENDA.

5. Barney Frank's restroom problem for keeping TG folks out of ENDA would also disappear. Maybe Massachusetts will be next. XY neovagina possessors will be able to demand, a judicially-created MALE-use of the urinals and of the men's showers. The other men will sure like that. And XX neopenis possessors will have full access to the women's room. Just think, they can comb their beards and mustaches in the mirrors while there other XX sisters apply a little lip stick and powder.

With some luck, the XXX, XXY, XXXY, XYY, XYYY, XYYYY and XO's could enter restrooms and showers previously denied them based on their altered-without-consent-at-birth genitals, and make new friends in the potty!

In all, we might start getting cleaner restrooms with stall doors that actually work and lock. Another upshot is that the women's rooms might have lines as short as those to the men's.

So in all it looks pretty good for Texas which ever way the 4th Texas Appeals Court goes. Besides, if Ms. Littleton is declared an XY neovagina possessing male, and her marriage is declared void, and her entire life is left in shambles and the lives of other MTF's and MTF's in her situation find their entire lives also left in shambles and all intersexuals in Texas are in limbo as to their legal sex status, then the conservative trial judge won't have to bother some jury panel with having to hear the facts of whether a medical malpractice might have caused someone's death.

With tongue firmly in cheek,
I remain,
your Phyllabuster

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- 1022 Marilyn Thureau
- 1025 Dahlia Peters
- 1026 Janet Bowman
- 1028 Gwen Bajorek
- 1029 Jenine Johnson

Many Happy Returns of the Day!

Teen Transsexuals...

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— from life as a gay teenage boy with a macho father to her days hustling on the street, negotiating tricks with predatory old men — are not pretty.

Yet Elizabeth seems deeply resilient, determined to find her own dignified way despite her life's tumult. She doesn't buy the "woman born in a man's body" model of transsexualism. Rather, she describes her choice in pragmatic terms. "I decided I'd rather be a woman than an effeminate man," she says. "People are really hard on men who don't live up to the male image." Seemingly unaware that her decision might look like a last-ditch escape from a life of not measuring up, Elizabeth doesn't couch her life story in mystical inevitability or psychological excavation. She's not all that interested in figuring out why she turned out this way; she simply knows that becoming a woman was the right decision.

Elizabeth concedes that there's more to being a woman than she had anticipated. Men don't always treat her with the respect she thinks a woman is due. She worries a lot more now about how she looks, how she smells, how she walks. She still faces indignities every day — people making disparaging comments about her body or refusing to refer to her with feminine pronouns. "It's more personal now when they're cruel," she says. They're making fun of Elizabeth's most intimate hopes, ridiculing the self she is busy creating.

But she's wary of seeming to try too hard. Passing is a huge deal to most transsexuals, and in their quest to be taken as "real" women, Elizabeth says, many trannies overdo things. "I don't wear much makeup" she says proudly. In the low light of Tiffany's, a West Village diner where we had dinner, she looks lovely, with large brown liquid eyes and luminous olive skin.

In the dim light, the shadow of her facial hair barely shows, but she comments on it anyway. "I really hate that I have to shave. What man wants to wake up next to a woman with a 5 o'clock shadow?" Surgery to redo her genitals is still a faraway, expensive dream, but so far she's "happy with the results of the estrogen."

Three months after our first meeting, Elizabeth's life has improved. She has a new job as an assistant at a Chelsea hair salon with a boss who accepts her. Her mother has since made up with her and given her a new middle name. "I'm now Elizabeth Marie," she says with a smile — still trying it on. Every once in a while, she says, the wind in her newly shoulder-length hair or an admiring look from a man will give her a little wave of ecstasy. "For the first time in my life," she says, "I feel peaceful inside a lot of the time."

It will always be difficult to figure out where laws and medical protocols should end and an individual's life — and sexual identity — must be left to shape itself. At a certain point, rules must melt away. As Elizabeth's newly forged version of transsexualism suggests, all people can ultimately become their own genders, the product of their own dreams. The night before we first met, Elizabeth dreamed she walked into her room at Covenant House and there was a big cocoon hanging over her bed. As she watched, it opened up and she floated out, naked, her body perfect, beautiful, female.

Judges Order Financing...

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Bennett also scorned the expert testimony the state provided in support of its argument that the surgery is experimental. Finding that the psychiatrist the state presented had no credentials to testify about the efficacy of such procedures in addressing the problem of gender dysphoria suffered by pre operative transsexuals. Bennett found that the competent evidence Smith had presented through his own psychiatrist, a university professor who has assisted literally thousands of transsexuals, showed that in appropriate cases sex-reassignment surgery is necessary and effective treatment for transsexuals whose condition is too severe to yield to psychotherapy. Expressing a similar view, Lord Justice Auld for the British Court of Appeal that the North West Lancashire health Authority's refusal to pay for sex reassignment surgery was unlawful, and that the Authority had denied the proper treatment of a recognized illness, "gender identity dysphoria."

According to Auld's decision, as summarized in the July 30th issue of THE INDEPENDENT, a London newspaper, the authority's major error was in treating transsexualism as an attitude or state of mind which doesn't warrant medical treatment.

In the IOWA case, Bennett commented that officials had spent more money fighting this case than it would have cost to provide coverage for the treatments for the small number of people who might request it. Similarly, the attorney for the three plaintiffs in the British case estimated that the government had spent 200,000 pounds in litigating the case, an amount that would have funded 20 sex-change operations.

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