

More TGSF Cotillion!

The Channel



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TGSF TransGender San Francisco is a group for all members of the Transgender Community. Transgender is used as an umbrella term that includes female and male cross dressers, transvestites, drag queens or kings, female or male impersonators, intersexed individuals, pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexuals, masculine females, feminine males, all persons whose perceived gender or anatomical sex may be incongruent with their gender expression, and all persons exhibiting gender characteristics and identities which are perceived to be androgynous.

The Channel

TGSF (TransGender San Francisco, a California 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.

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(Fiscal Year: May 1 - April 30)

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 Outreach Kara Flynn
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FROM THE EDITOR...

Embrace The Chaos!



I despair for America, hoodwinked by a re-elected President with the lowest approval ratings ever in the last half century. More than half of America thinks he's doing a lousy job, yet they returned him to office anyway. Seems the Democrats didn't get the message out that they, too, cared about "family values," and the "sanctity of life." Yet America seems content to let Dubya stumble and bumble onwards towards a mind-numbing deficit and more lives lost in far away places. I get the distinct impression that the Conservatives in this country are bound and determined to set

in concrete so much legislative junk before they pass on, that tomorrow's leaders will spend the rest of their lives undoing the idiocy in order to sensibly get on with improving the quality of everyone's lives, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Our President must be gleefully chortling his joy in private at the gullibility of the American public. He spits out just enough sound bytes to stoke the fires of intolerance and divisiveness so that America's attention is distracted away from what he and his cronies are really up to. He's not interested in helping people or promoting the general welfare. As long as Americans are more concerned with legislating discrimination into our Constitution and returning the country to a 1950's version of morality (anyone around remember the Un-American Activities Committee and good 'ol Joe McCarthy?), he can quietly continue his rape of the environment, the declining education of our children, the degradation of our civil rights and his pursuit of controlling the high price of Mid-Eastern oil.

Have you noticed the numerous efforts around the country to write into State constitutions "defense" of marriage acts, or legislation to preserve the "sanctity" of marriage? Oh that's so much more important than, say, the countless thousands of innocent lives lost caused by our heavy-handed efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, with Iran not far behind ("Never say never!" cries BushCo). Hypocrites! The breeders must preserve the sanctity of their marriages oh my yes, so that they can continue to support a 50% divorce rate and hold up such paradigms of virtue as, say, Britney Spears - who has the right to get married in Vegas on a lark and have it annulled three days later, only so she can turn around and marry a guy who had dumped his unmarried girlfriend just before she gave birth to his second child. Perfectly acceptable, wouldn't you say? Sanctity of marriage my ass. The straights have abused and will continue to abuse their marriage rights, but their so-called Christian values dictate that they defend their own immorality by never letting same-sex couples have an equal legal opportunity.

Then there's newly appointed-by-Bush Education Secretary Margaret Spellings taking time out on her second day on the job to fire off a letter to PBS CEO Pat Mitchell expressing "strong and very serious concerns" about the "Postcards From Buster" episode. Specifically that, in the episode, called "Sugartime!", the animated asthmatic little bunny visits Vermont and meets actual, real-live, not make-believe children there who have gay parents. Spellings explained in her letter, "many parents would not want their young children exposed to the life-styles portrayed in this episode." She did not say how many is "many," or cite a source for that information. But the media puppets latched on to it, and it added fuel to the fiery debate on gay marriage, stoking the Conservative's fear and ignorance while the more insidious pull-the-purse-strings blackmail underlying the message goes unnoticed. And what does PBS do? Knuckle under. With the backlash begun by a prime-time wardrobe malfunction, the FCC has everyone running scared doing headless chicken impersonations, threatening larger fines for indecency, and leaving corporate advertisers scrambling for alternative ways to continue marketing their products with sex. And if they can't sell it with sex, then they'll tug at your heartstrings with "support our troops" messages (never mind that they're dying by the dozens each week, just buy our goddamn product will ya!).

I am so glad I'm not a parent. I'd hate to have to raise a child in today's mixed-message world. I see first-hand the frustrations imposed on our teachers because of government bureaucracy, the lack of parental accountability and the funding deficits that exacerbate the problems. There seems to be plenty of money available for funding our War on Terror, but geez ya think they could channel - say maybe only 10% of that - into our school system? What a difference that might make. Have you looked at Dubya's proposed budget and discovered how he's rearing the children of America with cuts in health care, childcare, Head Start, nutrition programs, food stamps and foster care? Did those slip by you? Too busy worrying about letting those damn homosexuals have the same rights you enjoy? Oh my yes, gotta take care of that right away. The kids can wait until later.

And someone please track down that Tranny in Shreveport and turn her into our national heroine (see the short newsbyte on Page 18). What a role model! Here's a T-gal who was attacked - again by a straight man who was goaded by his buddies, so that his only response to the ridicule of his masculinity was violence, and yet this time his target fought back. Put the moron in the hospital too, and the cops shrug their shoulders and say "self defense, no charges." Right on! Now we're talkin'!

Hey I'm not advocating that everyone go out and start carrying a blade (this tranny obviously knew how to use one), but maybe the Pink Pistols - a gay gun-advocacy group - has the right idea (A Pistol in Every Purse!). Nothing like a bullet hole to make a guy think twice about his lousy sense of self-esteem. Or at least let's make more self-defense education available for our trans youth. And to that end, I direct you to Page 23. Would that Gwen Araujo had been so forewarned and as prepared.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roxy Carmichael-Hart
Up Next

So have we all rested up from the Cotillion? I am still getting letters and e-mails praising us for this event. The response is overwhelmingly positive. What is most telling is that virtually everyone who was involved in the Cotillion has asked to come back, including our wonderful MC, Lenny Broberg. Of course, there were a few naysayers but there always are differences of opinion. For example, I might be the only person on this earth who thought "Titanic" was an asinine, pompous piece of shit and I am truly amazed that there are people who didn't like "Side-ways".

We have decided to plow full speed ahead with planning for next year. We have reserved the Cowell Theatre for Saturday January 21, 2006 and our show will be called "Cotillion 2006: Hooray for Hollywood". There is an ad in the Channel. Now is the time for planning your participation and yes, for declaring as a Mr. or Ms. TGSF 2006 contestant. We'll be announcing details over the next few months. One of the improvements we plan to make is to have one host hotel at which we will have a Friday Night Dinner, A Saturday Hospitality Suite and a Sunday Brunch. That way we can provide a multitude of opportunities for socializing. Keep watching the Channel for details.

True to her word, Ms. TGSF 2005 has gotten right to work. She has already appeared at the end of the month and as I write this, she is planning on being at the February 10 Open Mike and at the February 26 Butterfly Ball. She'll also be appearing on KSAV radio with Kara on February 8. I wanted someone with some energy and passion and it certainly appears that our Jennifer is all that and more.

That being said, we did come out slightly in the red this time. That can be fixed. It was as a result of some of the things we did that did not quite work out as planned and we have a good understanding on what to do in order to eliminate this. The good news is that we paid all of our bills, are not in debt to anyone and no members of this organization was coerced into assuming any expenses. We have come out of this Cotillion in the strongest financial position in the last three years, which was a result of all of the good decisions we made during the year. And we have a lot of exciting things planned over this next year.

Up next are elections and as a result of the bylaws changes you approved last year, there are only five positions up. One is the Vice-President and I am endorsing Laura for re-election. With all that she has accomplished, we would be foolhardy to look in any other direction. The other positions include Lisa's slot on Education and again, I wholeheartedly support her election to this position. She has already jumped in with lots of ideas and has been working with the ExCom on some educational events. Tommi has not decided whether to run for re-election but if she does, she too will have my full and complete support. Kara had previously decided not to seek re-election to her Outreach post and that saddens me because she has been a valuable asset to this organization and this community and has made immense contributions. She will be around to assist and to work with us, just not as an officer.

However, all is not lost because Jennifer Kennedy, Ms. TGSF 2005, has thrown her bonnet in the ring for this important slot. Our most pressing need is our currently vacant Secretary position. In the past, because of the volume of work that this position entailed, we had a hard time filling it. We were fortunate to have Siobhán fill it. But now, since Laura has assumed oversight of the website and database, the Secretary position will largely involve taking notes at the meetings and filing the required paperwork. So this slot is open and we are looking for someone with some passion and energy to fill it.

I want to emphasize that we don't want just bodies; we want people who will come in and work with us as a team. Candidate announcement will be at the March End of Month, March 24. All intentions to run for office must be submitted to me in writing by that date, or announced at that meeting. Ballots will be sent in the April Channel. By the way, this is a good time to remind you that in order to vote, your membership dues must be in good standing.

I also want to remind you how important it is to exercise your right to vote and to have a say in the operations of this organization. In Iraq, people were willing to walk half a mile at the risk of having their heads blown off in order to vote. Here we give you a month to vote in the comfort and safety of your own home. Last year, we provided a SASE. And still only about a third of you cared enough to vote. Recently, I received two membership forms in the mail, using the SASE we provided for last year's ballot. I have to tell you that this is pretty freakin' cheap.

You'll notice that the names of Pamela, Dawnne, Alli, Anne Louise and me will not be on the ballot. That is because we were all elected for two-year terms and our positions will be on your ballot next April, 2006. And, as a reminder, the people you elect this year will be for two year terms.

The continuity on the ExCom has enabled us to begin planning all of our activities. Since the core group will be staying on, we can plan for the Cotillion and plan for Pride and don't need to wait until a new ExCom is in place. This saves several months.

Speaking of Pride, Pride month is not too far away and this year we plan a major effort. I have appointed a subcommittee led by Laura and including Lisa, Anne Louise, Jennifer Kennedy and Dawnne to develop concepts for our San Francisco Pride effort. As you know, Laura's efforts last year netted us some significant financial reward as a Pride Community Partner. This year we are looking for more volunteers to assist as safety monitors and gap monitors, as well as contingent monitors. The more people we can get to volunteer, the more of the community profits we can share.

Laura will also be taking the lead in San Jose Pride and getting that organized and Jennifer Anderson will take the lead in Santa Cruz Pride. I believe that this will be TGSF's first foray outside of the San Francisco Bay Area and it will be extremely important to have a presence in order to demonstrate that there should be no boundaries, geographic or otherwise, in order to accomplish the work that we need to do. We are planning on possibly carpooling from Carla's. So again, stay tuned for details.

Anne Louise is once again working on Unity and this will be held May 21. We plan on a lot of entertainment. Hopefully Kari Summers will be up to resuming her gigs after her surgery and we can hear Trans Central Station rock the house. Lipstick Conspiracy will probably join us as well. We are going to invite representatives from all of the gender groups to join us in this night of celebration and togetherness.

There will be lots more events happening so again, keep watching the Channel.

Personal note: I received an e-mail from an ex-girlfriend who had dissed me over a year ago. It was a short note letting me know she was thinking about me. It was a step. You look for hope wherever you can find it because hope is what keeps us going.

Another note: I and I hope everyone sends the best wishes to Kara who will be undergoing GRS this month and I know we will all support her in whatever way we can.

Grosses bisses,

Roxy

(Siobhán, just to let you know that wherever you are, you are always in my thoughts.)

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February 5, 2005

TGSF ExCom MEETING MINUTES

Present: Roxy Carmichael-Hart, Laura Marlowe, Pamela Gray, Allison Laureano, Dawnne Woodie, Kara Flynn, Tommi Watson, Anne-Louise Mortensen, Lisa Dummer. Guest: Jennifer Anderson, Jennifer Kennedy. Meeting Minutes of January 2 were approved as submitted.

President's Report

Roxy stated that someone needed to get tickets for the SF Coronation. Jennifer Kennedy, Ms. TGSF 2005, will be going to represent TGSF. The usual protocol is to send the names of participants to Coronation. Roxy said she would contact Tyler to submit the names to Coronation.

Five positions will be open in the upcoming election: Vice President, Secretary, Outreach Co-Chair, Education Co-Chair, and Social Co-Chair. The current Vice President, Education, and Social Co-Chairs intend to run again. The Ex-Com approved the idea to run an ad in the IRLM program for the March 12 Coronation.

Vice President's Report

Laura reported on the general outcome of the Cotillion. The financial status of the Cotillion was being finalized. The 2006 Cotillion is currently scheduled for Jan 21, 2006.

For Pride 2005, we will be thinking about float ideas and work on parade, float, and booth logistics. The resubmission for participation in SF Pride needs to be submitted by March 12 for a Community Partner and/or Partners in Pride. The Partners in Pride will cost \$999. The theme of SF Pride 2005 is 'Stand Up, Stand Out, Stand Proud'. TGSF will be looking to have a booth near the Trans Village. It was suggested that a sub-committee be formed to work on SF Pride. Dawnne, Alli, Laura, Pam, Jennifer K., Lisa, and Anne Louise will currently comprise the sub-committee. A budget still needs to be determined for the activity. The committee is to come up with ideas. Veronica has a black convertible Mustang that might be able to be used. Jennifer will look into trailers that are at least 25' long. San Jose Pride is June 12 with Pam following up on logistics. Santa Cruz Pride is June 5 and Jennifer A will check with the details.

Treasurer's Report

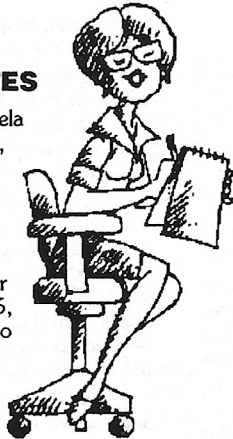
Pamela stated that there was \$3563.69 in the account. We still owe Laura \$150 and the signers \$125. Lisa donated \$1000. There was one new advertiser that Pam had information on. Lisa Dummer presented information on putting together a 2006 Transgender San Francisco calendar. The cost for 200 would be \$2,000.

Secretary's Report

Labels are needed for the ballots. Because they need to be sent out at least 30 days before the Annual meeting which is currently scheduled for 4/28, the EOM on 3/31 does not give enough time. It was suggested that the March EOM be moved up to March 24th. Channels and letters with ballots will be sent out then.

Education

The Nordstrom event scheduled for April's EOM would not work. They will be bringing assistants and clothing, and TGSF will currently look to schedule it for the April Mid-Month. Patrick Mulcahey may talk at the April or May EOM discussing religion and being transgender. The MAC event may be in April or May as well. TGSF is also looking to work outreach with FTMI and Frameline. Kara was to forward Dr. Gray information to Dawnne for a possible education seminar on breast augmentations.



Outreach

Kara reported on the limited number of callers to the hotline recently. Jennifer K and Kara will be on the radio February 8th. Alli will be working with the Frameline event. The community screening of Not In Our Town was attended by Alli, Dawnne, and Bobby.

Social

The next end of the month will be at the Cathedral Hill Hotel on Thursday, February 24th. The next mid-month is tentatively planned for Friday, March 18th at the Cathedral Hill Hotel. The mid-month will be a "piano bar" and Grace Renaud will be playing the piano. Anne Louise presented the plan and the budget for the Butterfly Ball. There was a meeting at Carla's and plans were made for the entertainment and decorations. The Budget was approved.

Anne Louise presented a copy of the "invitation letter" for Unity to the board. The committee went through the letter and made suggestions.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Sunday, March 6, 2005 in the Cathedral Hill Hotel at 1:00pm.

OUR AMBASSADORS

By Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy
Ms. TGSF 2005

As a Transgendered woman, I often feel like a warrior princess fighting the evils of bigotry and hate. Ok, maybe a bit dramatic and silly, but the reality is that I (and I think many of us) much of the time feel it is a very personal battle in the path to acceptance and equality. But a few recent incidents have made me realize that the folks who have an issue with Transgendered men and women are more often than not cowards who are not brave enough to discuss their concerns directly with us. And it has fallen to some wonderful friends and acquaintances to put things right with these folks. In a very real sense, the folks that are our friends and acquaintances are our Ambassadors - and we owe an amazing amount of gratitude to them for helping us in our struggle for acceptance within society.

This was brought home to me recently by an incident that happened on New Years Eve that I was totally unaware of when it occurred. My partner and I attended a lovely New Years party, and then to close out the night a number of us continued on with the revelry at the local bar. Note this is NOT a tranny, gay, lesbian, or anything bar - just a local bar in our small community. We all had a good time there, and closed it down and then adjourned to our beds to face our hangovers. I was very pleased; I felt I had totally passed at the bar and that there were no issues that night.

But just this last week I found out there was a guy there at the bar on New Years Eve who was making a big deal about having me there. He approached one of our party, a handsome young gentleman whom we had just met that night and started complaining that it was not right and that I should not be allowed there. My new friend closed him down immediately, telling him that I was his friend and that I have every right to be who I am and dress how I want. And the coward who would not say all this to me directly, sulked away into his little world of fear and hatred.

I just heard about this last week. I am in awe of this wonderful gesture from a new friend, who stuck up for me and in a sense voiced his support without even being asked to. I am so impressed. And I also have a new awareness of just how important our friends are in our struggle. We are not alone, and we owe them all so much - our friends, our ambassadors.

GenderQueer, Trans, & Gender Questioning Youth Group

Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center
www.defrank.org

This youth program will provide space for discussion groups, workshops and activities, specifically for genderqueer youth and their allies. We are excited to be offering this new programming, for an underserved population, even in our own community. This new group is for young people 20 and under, who identify somewhere on the gender non-conforming spectrum, who are questioning their gender identity or who are considering transitioning.

This group will meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month from 5-6pm at the DeFrank Center, which is located at 938 The Alameda, in San Jose. For more information please contact T. Aaron Hans, Program Director at 408.293.3040 ext. 112 or at progdir@defrank.org.

MID-MONTH SOCIAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

TGSF is looking for some enthusiastic and motivated people to help plan our mid-month socials.

All it takes to plan these events is for someone to call a venue that is hopefully very TG friendly and see if they would be willing to host our event. Mid-months can expect anywhere from 10-20 people.

If you would like to help with these events, please contact roxvhart72903@sbcglobal.net Thank you!



CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

By Roxy Carmichael-Hart
One Step At A Time

On Tuesday, January 25, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to include "gender expression and identity" on which a person cannot be discriminated in the use of county facilities and services. Much of the credit for this historic effort goes to Patricia Kevena Fili (whom you will remember as Contestant Number 3), Jamison Greene, Chris Daley, and many others who worked tirelessly

to assure that transgenders receive basic rights that all others enjoy. Most notable among the remarks of the supervisors were the words of Supervisor Nate Miley who condemned discrimination and intolerance. While admitting that he did not understand fully the transgender population, he nevertheless said "It's not for us to understand. It's for us to accept. We have to get along". I wanted to stand up and applaud.

I testified in favor of the resolution and I wanted to share my remarks. It is not word for word what I said because I ad-libbed a bit at the podium but it is fairly close:

Good morning President Carson and members of the Board of Supervisors:

My name is Roxy Carmichael-Hart, president of Transgender San Francisco, a nationally recognized organization that supports freedom of gender expression and identity.

As Mao Tse Tung said, the journey of a million miles begins with the first step. And today, we take a step. But we must not stop here. We must take this resolution to every city in Alameda County, to every County from Del Norte to Imperial and to every state from Hawaii to Maine.

This resolution is about justice. This resolution is about civil rights. This resolution is about dignity. This resolution is about simple human decency. It is about giving the transgendered the rights that every segment of our population enjoys – the right to work and live and play and function without discrimination or fear or threats of violence. It is about ending the climate that looks at the transgendered as a joke and as something less than human. It's about eliminating the atmosphere of violence and hate that led to the despicable, brutal, hate crime murder of Gwen Araujo which shamefully happened in this county.

MESSAGE OF HOPE

Good morning, y'all,

It is very early morning, like 1:30 AM, as I sit and write this, but I wanted to share some things that have been said to me this past evening. I am humbled and yet feel proud that perhaps one life has been affected positively, and that this one life will affect many more, and our world might be a little better place for that.

I was sitting in my usual spot in my favorite café in the Castro section of San Francisco, doing the late-night thing of reading and writing, drinking lots of iced tea, and eventually eating a little food. As I sat there, contemplating going home to try to sleep (something that is difficult much of the time), I was interrupted by a young woman that I had noticed coming in earlier to sit with some acquaintances of mine. She came over and introduced herself, and then thanked me for the message I shared a few weeks ago, on December 26th, when I spoke at my church, the Metropolitan Community Church, here in the city. She told me that she was Lesbian, but had not come out to her family, who are back in "Podunk", Missouri, where her uncle is a fundamentalist preacher.

After hearing my message that evening, she said that she had the courage to come out to her uncle, and she shared the transcript of my message with him. But this is the amazing thing: she said that after he read the transcript, the uncle called her, and told her that no matter her sexual preferences, she was family, and accepted and loved – without question. And she said that her uncle has taken my message, shared it with his congregation, and has begun to search out ways to bring understanding and acceptance to them.

I was moved to tears. To think that a simple message that God loves us all, no matter who we are, or what we are, was the catalyst that just may begin the process of tolerance and acceptance in a part of our country where we may not

be as accepted is phenomenal. I am honored, but more, I am humbled that the Holy Spirit is using my words, my influence, to reach beyond my own community. I feel so unworthy of these honors. I am nothing but the vessel that God is using at the moment to reach out to share the message of love to a world that is dying to know that love. God is the key. I am but a tool.

As I shared with this young woman last night, I am blessed by God to be that vessel. I thank the Holy Spirit for being placed in the right place at the right time to reach those needing this message of love and total acceptance. And that is what it is. It is a message of total acceptance. And the simplest way for that message to be heard is through unconditional love to be shown to those we come in contact with. We can preach the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and we can scream it and pound every pulpit in the world, and we can pound people over the heads with our Bibles until the pages are shredded and heads are bloodied, but until the world sees true love, that unconditional love of God, as it manifests itself in the way we live our lives, in the way we treat others, in the way we act, or react, when we are persecuted, we are nothing more than what is described in I Corinthians 13:1 – "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal", and no one will pay us any attention.

Rev. Jim Mitulski preached in our service last evening. He is the pastor of the MCC congregation in Los Angeles. His message came from Ezekiel 37, and the story of the valley of dry bones. The story goes that the prophet Ezekiel was directed to preach to the bones. The background was that the bones belonged to the nation of Israel, to people that may even have been friends and family of Ezekiel. The bones were the remains of the battle that led to the captivity of the Israelite nation, and they had been left

It is time that we relegated discrimination against the transgendered to the same trash heap as the signs on the drinking fountains that once said "No Colored". As the signs on the shops that once read "No Jews". As the laws which sentenced thousands of Asian-Americans to American concentration camps, one of whom you honored last week, the late Congressman Robert Matsui. As the laws which prevented a women's right to vote. From now on we ride in the front of the bus and we will ride with pride into the light.

Last week, we celebrated the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King who stood up for the rights of all to live together in peace as they chose. He was not afraid to speak up and he was not afraid to die in support of basic human dignity. Today, with your courageous action, all transgendered people will be able to proclaim "Thank God Almighty, I am free at last!" Thank you.

What was most interesting were the opponents' arguments. They somehow felt the need to reduce the entire issue to "men using the women's bathroom". Sodom and Gomorrah, they claimed. One speaker even brought up "the natural order of things". (How Hitlerian is that?). Of course the "natural order of things" was once that men went to work, women stayed home, women couldn't vote, blacks couldn't attend the same schools as whites, etc. The very arguments that the opponents used to attack us have been used since the beginning of time against every minority group that has tired to assert its basic human rights. Sometimes when you listen to the opposition, you can pick up one thing that may have some logic and merit. This time, absolutely none. Quite frankly, I was hoping that more of the opponents were going to speak. Because the more they spoke, the more asinine and pompous they sounded.

I've seen some letters to the editor in the Fremont Argus (which by the way made an editorial decision to refer to me as "who was born a man but became a woman in 2003", completely changing the author's words). These letters have continued the mindless and ignorant attacks on the transgender community – including me personally. I won't get into all of the details because to give these ignorant pieces of dung any kind of attention plays into their hands.

There was one thing that was said to which I do agree. That if this issue were put to a vote, it wouldn't have passed. That is true. If the rights of any minority group were put to a vote they wouldn't have passed. I doubt if the Bill of Rights would pass today if it were put up to a public vote. That is why the rights of minorities have to be won legislatively and in the courts. As long as we have people like Mark Leno, Supervisors Keith Carson, Nate Miley and Alice Lai-Bitker and Mayor Gavin Newsome on our side, we will keep fighting and we will keep winning. Supposedly, we are fighting in Iraq for the right of self-determination. Let's not forget that this fight begins at home.

Continued on Page 9



TGSF Events in March

Sunday / March 6 / 1:00pm

TGSF ExCOM MEETING

Note start time - come early for lunch! Cathedral Hill Hotel Restaurant, Van Ness and Geary. Please render your assistance with our upcoming elections. Better yet, volunteer to take on one of the crucial openings available on the ExCom for the next two years. This is a real opportunity for people who want to give back to their community!

Friday / March 18 / 7:30pm

TGSF FEBRUARY MID-MONTH SOCIAL

Piano Bar with Grace Renaud. . She'll have a number of songbooks and people can pick the ones they wish to sing, and she'll accompany them. Check tgsf.org for more information. Cathedral Hill Hotel Restaurant, Van Ness and Geary.

Thursday / March 24 / 7:30pm

TGSF END OF MONTH EVENT

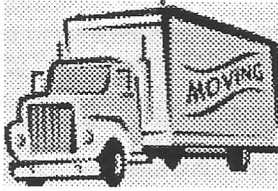
Note the early date and new location! Join Your Friends At The Cathedral Hill Hotel Restaurant, 1101 Van Ness Ave. Program begins at 9:00pm.

March's Birthdays


3/00	Jennifer Stroud	3/19	Mina Schwartz
3/01	Dusty Prentiss	3/20	Donna Freeman
3/02	Nicole Kucera	3/20	Gerl Handa
3/08	Susan Flowers	3/21	Jackie Conner
3/08	Erika Carter	3/21	Kalani Makaanani
3/08	Cheryl Sheppard	3/21	Diane Tumas
3/09	Aiyanna Eveningstar	3/22	Joyce Patterson-Rogers
3/09	Katherine Kramer	3/23	Shelly Cohen
3/11	Lucy Ann	3/27	Kathy Ann
3/13	Joan Roughgarden	3/27	Telzey Adams
3/14	Roxanna Rochette	3/27	DiDi Mau
3/14	Christianne Servat	3/28	Evette Roque LaRay
3/15	Damon Helton	3/28	Marga Meyers
3/16	Jodie Marie Buschman	3/29	Staci Maria
3/17	Michelle Cowan	3/31	Julianne Antonio

Happy Birthday To All!

**The TGSF
End Of The Month Event
Is Moving!**



**Join Your Friends at the
Cathedral Hill Hotel Restaurant**



**1101 Van Ness Ave
This Month:
Thursday, March 24 - 7:30pm
Program Starts 9:00pm
Everyone Is Welcome!**

Nails Wigs Lingerie



**CARLA'S
Salon & Boutique**

**124 Race Street
San Jose, CA 95126
(408) 298-6900**

*Serving the Cross Gender
Community's needs
with sensitive help
and understanding.*

Cosmetics Fem Fashions Shoes

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Fem Fashions
Wigs
Nails
Shoes
Cosmetics

Cosmetics
Shoes
Nails
Wigs
Fem Fashions
Lingerie
Cosmetics

Calendar - March 2005

OTHER BAY AREA GROUPS

Central City Hospitality House (CCHH)

288 Turk Street, SF. 415-749-2167. Facilitated TG discussion group every Monday, 5:00pm - 6:30pm.

Diablo Valley Girls (DVG)

Meets 1st & 3rd Monday every month. 8:00pm at Club 1220, 1220 Pine Street in Walnut Creek. Write to DVG, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885 or call 925-937-8432.

DVG Rap Group (RCC)

Meets 1st Thursday of every month, 7:00pm at Rainbow Community Center, 3024 Willow Pass Road in Concord 925-937-8432.

FTM International

Support group for Female-to-Male CDs & TSs; Holds open Informational Meetings and closed Support Meetings. Write FTM International, Inc., 160 14th Street, SF, CA 94103; 415-553-5987.

I Love It Girl Socials

Every Wednesday night at I Love It Boutique, 45979 Warm Springs Blvd., #7 in Fremont. Call Jo-An at 510-656-4738.

Mid-Peninsula TG Group (MPTG)

TGSF-sponsored support group; 7:00pm, First Wednesday of each month at Full Circle Books in Belmont, CA. Contact Laura Patterson at Laura@simcbt.com.

Pacific Ctr for Human Growth (PacCtr)

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. Mail: 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 162907, Sacramento, CA 95816 or call 916-364-7212 for meeting locations. Website: www.transgender.org/sga; email: sga@transgender.org

Santa Cruz Trans (SCT)

Bi-weekly social/support group for gender-gifted persons serving Santa Cruz and Central Coast. 1st and 3rd Tuesdays every month at The Diversity Center, 177 Walnut Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (831) 425-5422; 7:00pm

SCOUT (SCOUT)

Santa Cruz Organization for Uniting Transmen, meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Diversity Center (listed above); 7:30pm

Silicon Valley Gender Association (SVGA)

A new TG 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.

TGIF

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.

T.R.A.N.S

MTF support group meets every Wednesday afternoon 2:00 - 3:30pm at 1145 Bush Street in San Francisco.

TransVis-HWD

TransVision Social TG Women will meet at 7:00pm, 4th Friday of every month. Light refreshments and a wonderful atmosphere. Contact Tiffany at (510) 713-6690, ext. 9.

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

		1 7:00 PM SCT	2 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social 7:30 PM MPTG	3 7:00 PM DVG RCC	4 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	5
6 1:00 PM TGSF: ExCom Meeting	7 5:00 PM CCHH 7:00 PM PISSR General Meeting 8:00 PM DVG	8	9 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	10	11 7:00 PM SVGA 8:00 PM PacCtr	12 8:00 PM FWV 8:00 PM SGA
13	14 5:00 PM CCHH	15 7:00 PM SCT	16 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	17 TG Legal Clinic	18 7:00 PM TGSF Mid-Month: Piano Bar! 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	19
20	21 5:00 PM CCHH 8:00 PM DVG	22 7:30 PM SCOUT	23 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	24 7:00 PM TGSF: EOM @ Cathedral Hill	25 7:00 PM SVGA 7:00 PM TransVis-HWD 8:00 PM PacCtr	26 8:00 PM FWV 8:00 PM SGA
27	28 5:00 PM CCHH	29	30 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	31		

TGSF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership is billed annually upon enrollment: \$40 Single / \$45 Family

Special \$35 Single Membership w/ Email-Only* Delivery of CHANNEL

Please Print / Check all that apply:

New Member | Renewal Member #: _____ | with Family Member | What Year did you first join TGSF? _____

Preferred Name: _____ Birthdate (Month/Day): _____ / _____

Mailing Name: _____

Family Member's Name: _____ Birthdate (Month/Day): _____ / _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Optional: Telephone: (_____) _____ What Name should we ask for if we need to call you? _____

*Email: _____ Website URL: _____

Would you like a link from the TGSF Website to your URL? Yes No

Send Check or Money Order to: TGSF, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486, or hand to any Board Member at a TGSF Social.

May we use photos of you taken at TGSF events in our newsletter or website? Yes No

Support Your Organization!

TGSF Sustaining Memberships

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Designated Sustaining Membership Giving Levels & Recognition

GUARDIAN LEVEL: \$2500

Recognition & Benefits:

- Recognition in all TGSF Programs / Channel / Website
- Two complimentary tickets to the Cotillion
- Framed Recognition Certificate
- Original Signed Photo of Ms / Mr TGSF
- Ride on the Pride Day Parade Float
- Paid Annual Membership in TGSF

PATRON LEVEL: \$1000

Recognition & Benefits:

- Recognition in all TGSF Programs / Channel / Website
- Two complimentary tickets to the Cotillion
- Framed Recognition Certificate
- Ride on the Pride Day Parade Float
- Paid Annual Membership in TGSF

ANGEL LEVEL: \$500

Recognition & Benefits:

- Recognition in Cotillion Program
- One complimentary ticket to the Cotillion
- Framed Recognition Certificate
- Paid Annual Membership in TGSF

CENTURY LEVEL: \$250


Recognition & Benefits:

- Recognition in Cotillion Program
- Framed Recognition Certificate

MERIT LEVEL: \$100

Recognition & Benefits:

- Recognition in Cotillion Program
- Recognition Certificate

 **Clip & Mail Today!**

Make your CONTRIBUTION to TGSF Today!

Your Sustaining Membership contribution will be used to support the educational and social activities for TGSF.
Please make your contribution now!

Please indicate your level of giving:

- Guardian - \$2500 Patron - \$1000 Angel - \$500 Century - \$250 Merit - \$100

Your Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Check if you DO NOT want TGSF to acknowledge you as a Sustaining Member

Please mail this Tax Deductible Sustaining Membership Contribution Form along with your Check payable to TGSF to:

TGSF P.O. Box 426486 San Francisco, CA 94142-6486

Thank you for your support of TGSF!



Visible Man

TRAMPLING ON THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

by Jamison Green

Jamison Green offers a man's POV on life in the trans lane: opinion, advice and information from an internationally respected leader of the FTM community. His latest book, Becoming a Visible Man, has been published by Vanderbilt University Press.

People who hold the view that LGBT identity is nothing more than "behavior" want to make sure we all understand that it is bad behavior. This is called loving the sinner but hating the sin. "Gender confusion" is how they are framing transgender and transsexual "behavior," and they want us all to know that this, too, is bad behavior. Civil rights should not be based on behavior, they say — especially not on behavior that is offensive to them.

When the Illinois state legislature recently passed a bill banning adverse discrimination based on sexual orientation (which is defined to include gender identity and expression), Peter LaBarbera, Executive Director of the Illinois Family Institute, blared his frustration in an astoundingly vicious statement, saying "Under the guise of 'equality,' legislators have passed a bill that undermines the rights of anyone opposed to homosexual behavior to live out their beliefs." (Source: Christian Communication Network Media Relations Service, <http://www.earnedmedia.org/ifi0112.htm>)

To live out what beliefs? The belief that it is acceptable, if not "righteous," to prevent LGBT people from having jobs, from forming families, from offending others by exhibiting their "behavior"? Well, sir, you can believe anything you want, but what the Illinois legislature said is that no one can cause harm to another person because of her or his sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Contrary to LaBarbera's opinion, this legislation places a limit on his constituency's behavior, not on his constituency's beliefs. In fact, LaBarbera's statement makes it plain that his family wants to cause harm to our family.

I won't characterize LaBarbera's reaction as Christian, and I won't characterize it as "right." This kind of viciousness hides behind a mantle of "faith" that is supposed to exonerate believers from the effects of their hatred.

That these people have aligned themselves with the Republican Party and present themselves as the moral conscience of that entity is probably an embarrassment to some of the officeholders who accepted their donations. Through my eternal optimism, I expect that more Republicans eventually will come to shun the connection to this type of faith-based hatemongering.

I'm neither a Christian nor a Republican, but I don't automatically hate people who belong to either of those categories. Both are belief systems, ideologies, that have much to recommend them, and I don't blame people for subscribing to them.

But the democratic republic that is the ideal of the United States of America is about liberty, justice and the pursuit of happiness for all. Happiness does not extend to trampling on the rights of others to exist, to have equal access to and responsibility for the institutions of civil society.

This is yet another instance where the old argument of gay liberation — "we're just like you, we just do something different in the bedroom" — fails when confronting fundamentalist resistance. They're right: Civil rights should not be based on behavior; in a civil society, civil rights are based on the human condition.

Claiming that the only difference between gay/lesbian and straight existence is a particular behavior confined to a particular room in the house was a false portrayal of gayness and erased expression of gender variance. It failed to recognize the depth and breadth of homophobia, too, and when gay and lesbian activists and organizers realized this, they ultimately redefined their own community to be trans-inclusive.

But that old claim has given fundamentalist oppositional groups one of their strongest hooks for legislating against LGBT people: They've turned our existence into behavior that they find morally wrong. In their scheme of things, we can exist, but if we can't change our behavior, we must be punished by exclusion from the social institutions they value.

Behavior is influenced by laws and regulations that society enacts and enforces. We don't kill other people (unless the government tells us to or we do it in self-defense), we don't lie, cheat or steal (unless we think we won't get caught), et cetera. If we do those things, and get caught, the law provides for punishment, because this behavior is seen to harm society.

When we realize that a law does not serve society, we can take steps to change it. Medical marijuana laws and environmental protection laws are examples of this principle, though these are still philosophically contested areas. The laws and regulations that support civil rights are not the same thing as the civil rights themselves.

The existence of people who are different with respect to race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, disability, veteran status, et cetera — even though it may make some people uncomfortable — does not harm society. Society has come to recognize that diversity is a positive force in social structures, as in nature. Striving to make everyone the same weakens our society. Giving our diverse population room to breathe and thrive equally is the principle that laws like the recent Illinois legislation are intended to protect.

Message Of Hope...

Continued from Page 5

to dry and bleach in the sun after the Israelites had been carried off to become the slaves of the Babylonians. But the message is that, in order for the words of Ezekiel to be heard, God had to intervene. Israel is depicted as a hopeless and helpless nation. As the passage develops, there is a wind that blows, from every direction, which brings life to the bones. The picture is that of the Holy Spirit breathing new life into the bones, and the bones becoming strong and powerful again. That is what was prophesied of the nation of Israel.

And that is what we must do in our world. We must pray and reach out, sharing the love of Jesus Christ with our communities, and allow the Holy Spirit to breathe new life into those around us that we contact daily. I encourage you, each of you, to show that true love, that unconditional love, to all those around you, regardless of their acceptance of your true being. As we become known for our unconditional love, acceptance will occur. And as acceptance occurs, our world will be changed, one person at a time.

Just think, if we change the mind of just 10 people in our lifetime, and those 10 each change the minds of 10, and that follows out, the ramifications are astounding. Can it happen? Probably not that easily, but change can occur. Prayer is a start. And the courage to speak out, to share our faith in Jesus Christ and the unconditional love we have been given through the Holy Spirit will facilitate change when the world sees us as real, as serious, as honest beings.

I challenge you this morning to begin today, even right now, to share that love with your community, your world. I don't promise you success overnight, nor do I guarantee that everyone will accept you right away. What I can guarantee and promise you is that God will give you courage, will give you power in prayer, will allow you to see and experience mighty things as you live your life in tune with the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Have a glorious day.

Dawnne Woodie

In Alameda County, on the east side of the San Francisco Bay, another related debate is shaping up on the County Board of Supervisors, where local activists are working to pass a resolution that will amend current nondiscrimination policy to include gender identity as a protected class.

Finding that "discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is invidious and undermines the public welfare, and has no place in a community in which individuals respect the privacy, personal dignity and civil liberties of others," the Board of Supervisors seeks to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and further resolves "that all individuals shall have full and equal enjoyment of privileges, benefits, goods, services and facilities, including dressing and bathroom facilities, consistent with the person's gender identity."

This last item is the sticking point for some people, who believe that giving trans people the right to go to the bathroom where they feel most safe and comfortable is trampling on the rights of others. Opponents have actually implied that this opens the women's bathroom door to pedophiles and rapists!

Hate to tell you, but that door has always been open, and laws already exist to prevent pedophiles and rapists from engaging in that specific behavior. Equating pedophiles and rapists with trans people is irrational; there is no evidence to show that males who engage in those criminal activities are also transgendered or frequently dress in women's clothing to obtain access to potential victims.

As any trans person can attest, clothing is not necessarily indicative of gender identity. This logic appeals to fear, ignorance and bigotry concerning gender variance and is precisely why civil rights laws are enacted: to protect the rights and freedoms of those who are disadvantaged by false perceptions, fear or irrational bigotry.

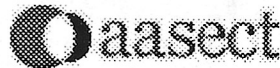
In San Francisco, where a similar principle has been in force for 10 years now, no complaints have been filed against transgendered people, nor have any criminals resorted to transgender masquerades in order to perpetrate crimes in public women's bathrooms. On the contrary, complaints have only come from transgendered people whose need and right to relieve themselves has been interfered with by abusive, self-righteous nontrans people who think existence is the same thing as behavior, and that their own uncivil behavior is morally correct.

If crusaders resort to dressing as women and invading public restrooms in a vain attempt to prove their "point," they'll be as wrong — and as criminal — as when people assault or murder those who work at family-planning clinics. These are complex issues, to be sure, but, paradoxically, I have faith that reason will prevail.

Special Events in March!

March 18th!

HEAR JAMISON GREENE, WORLD FAMOUS FTM, SPEAK IN SAN FRANCISCO AT AASECT



Submitted by **Stephen L. Braveman**
M.A., L.M.F.T., D.S.T.

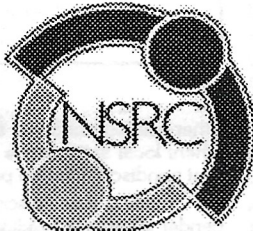
Here is a great opportunity to see Jamison Greene speak live in San Francisco!

The American Association Of Sex Educators, Counselors, And Therapists (AASECT), invites you to attend the new Northern California networking meetings. Earn CE units while meeting peers over dinner. The featured speaker will be Jamison Green, presenting Current Issues in Transgender Access to Care: Barriers and Opportunities, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Jamison Green is one of the founding activists of the transgender movement. He's also an educator, public speaker, and the author of "Becoming a Visible Man" (Vanderbilt, 2004). He serves on the boards of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (HBIIGDA), the Transgender Law & Policy Institute (TLPI), and Gender Education & Advocacy, Inc. (GEA). He writes regular columns for PlanetOut.com and American Sexuality Magazine (a publication of the National Sexuality Resource Center. Learn more at his web site, www.jamisongreen.com

AASECT is pleased to announce the **March 18, 2005** event will be supported and held at the National Sexuality Resource Center (NSRC), Human Sexuality Studies Program, San Francisco State University 2017 Mission St., # 300, San Francisco; (415) 437-5121. The Center is located across the street from 16th and Mission St. BART station. Finger food and drinks.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS OUT TO AASECT:
Robert Seelig, PO Box 5619, Berkeley, CA 94705.
AASECT and SSSS members: March 18 - \$15.00 in advance; \$25.00 at the door. The National Sexuality Resource Center (NSRC) is generously subsidizing students and seniors for the March 18, 2005 event. Students and seniors with identification will be admitted for \$15.00.



This program meets the requirements of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists. These CE's may be applied toward AASECT certification and renewal of certification. AASECT is approved to offer continuing education for LMFT and LCSW licensure requirements in California by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences under Provider Number PCE 1718.

Saturday, March 5th

SF CITADEL PRESENTS...THE QUEER PLAYGROUND

Hosted by Arielle; Doors at 8:00pm and party till 1:00am; \$20.00. SF Citadel is located at 245 8th St. between Folsom and Harrison. Visit www.sfcitadel.org.

The SF Citadel and Host Arielle present an evening full of friendly, kinky, queer fun and hot energy. Come join us for the SF Citadel's Queer Playground, a queer energy play party for those of us in the leather community of any gender or sexuality who identify as queer, lesbian, gay, fag, dyke, genderqueer, genderfucker, genderbender, differently-abled queers, queers of color, trans, MTF, FTM, bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, questioning, intersexed, trysexual ;)

We will have service submissives serving the guests and house slaves pleasuring the guests. There will also be bootblacking and a wrestling area will be provided (was highly enjoyed at the last party). Femina Potens will be there raising some money with a spanking booth.

Volunteer work shifts available for entry (service submissives, house slaves, DM's, setup, cleanup, door shifts)

**Note that House slaves require an interview for pre-approval. Service submissives require a brief a training and preferable experience or desire for service submission.

Volunteer email at MusicGeekChic@speakeasy.net. Please RSVP for this event RSVP Email to: MusicGeekChic@speakeasy.net.



Mid-Peninsula Support Group

WEDNESDAY, March 2, 2005

and continuing on the first Wednesday of each month

NEW LOCATION!

Full Circle Books

1538 El Camino Real, Belmont, CA 94002, (650) 508-9546

7:30 - 9:30 P.M.

All welcome regardless of race, age, gender, gender identification, etc.

\$1 donation will be requested but no one will be turned away.

For more details please contact Laura Patterson at Laura@simcvt.com

Please note: This is a support group.

The views expressed in this group are reflective of the attendees and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ExCom and members of TGSF.

You are encouraged to speak to your personal physician and/or therapist regarding your specific treatment and care.

March 8th!

TGSF ON THE RADIO AGAIN! KSAV.ORG

TGSF representatives Jennifer Kennedy (Ms. Transgender San Francisco 2005) and Kara Flynn (Outreach Co-Chair) will be on internet radio station KSAV (www.ksav.org).

Jennifer and Kara will be discussing some of life's issues with being a transgender women. The talk show, What's on Your Mind, is hosted by Dave White on the internet liberal radio station.

The program will run from 7:30pm (PST) until 9pm on **Tuesday, March 8**. Callers are encouraged to call in to 1-800-407-KSAV with comments and questions.

TRANVISION SOCIAL — HAYWARD

TransVision Social Transgender Women will meet at 7:00pm on the fourth Friday of every month to celebrate our survival. Come and share your journey of daily living and participate in the affirmation of our lives. For each of our journeys and our vision, let us validate, support and affirm each other and celebrate our success. There will be light refreshments and a wonderful atmosphere. Come for that good feeling. For more information, contact Tiffany at (510) 713-6690, ext. 9. Don't miss this!

Special Events in April!



April 14 - 17, 2005

at the

Doubletree Hotel, San Jose

Scheduled Speakers include:

Dr. Douglas Ousterhout • Kim Hracca
Dr. Toby Meltzer • Judy van Maasdam
Dr. Joy Diane Shaffer

www.california-dreamin.org

April 26 - 30, 2005

IFGE CONVENTION - TRANSGENDER 2005

Austin, Texas

Transgender 2005, the 19th Annual IFGE Conference on Sex and Gender will be held in Austin, Texas at the fabulous Red Lion hotel, right in the middle of everything (well, almost). Malls and great restaurants are in walking distance; we will feature

over 50 seminars and workshops on various trans subjects; have lots of free time for networking; there will be fun events and our gala (formals please) banquet on Saturday night.

This exciting event will be hosted by the Transgender Advocates of Central Texas, the Central Texas Transgender Society, and the Alpha Tau Chapter of Tri-Ess. It is being coordinated by Lisa Sheps, a member of the IFGE Board of Directors and an Austin resident and local activist.

Nobody can do anything like a Texan so we know we are going to be well fed, well entertained, and have a terrific event with great Texas barbeques, dancing and a Texas-style welcome. Registration will begin early in the week — you can check in Tuesday and enjoy all day Wednesday “on-the-town” with special sight-seeing tours, mall shopping, night-clubbing and a special welcome party.

Conference session topics will include: TG workplace issues, TG Health & Medicine, Help for Emerging CDs, Sexual Identity/Gender Identity, Trans-Youth, Parents, Religion, and Politics. There will be special programs for SOs, FtMs, and Transsexuals.

Open to all! — Transgender, Crossdresser, Transsexual, Transvestite, Female to Male, Male to Female, Significant Other, Friend, Admirer, Helping Professional, Student, or Educator.

If you have not attended a recent IFGE Conference and are not on our mailing list contact: S. Kristine James, Cioe Enterprises, P O Box 61, Easton PA, 18044-0061 or e-mail to convention@IFGE.org. Check the IFGE.org web site often to keep current on the program development, presenters and social events.



Coming in April!

OPEN HEART/OPEN MIND: A CELEBRATION OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

...is coming to Fort Mason, San Francisco in April 2005. As an organization involved in issues of interest to the LGBT community, we encourage you to check out the web site for this exciting event at www.openheartopenmind.net.

We have a terrific line up of presenters who are diverse, informative and provocative—and entertainment and fun are on the agenda as well!

Please feel free to call me at 925-788-9505 or reply by email if you have questions or want further information. We would be delighted to list your program as a community partner and would appreciate promotion of the event to your members and staff. If you would be interested in being an exhibitor at the event, you can find all the details on the web site.

**Warm regards,
Susie Baggot**

Co-Producer: Open Heart/Open Mind

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(415) 641-8890

More Special Events in April!

FTM Calendar 2005-2006

FTMI'S CALL FOR DIVERSE IMAGES OF FTMS AND THEIR LIVES

FTMI is creating an 18-month calendar (July 2005-December 2006) of DIVERSE IMAGES OF FTMS AND THEIR LIVES. The 18 entries will be selected by a panel of judges appointed by the Board of FTMI. This is an opportunity for amateur shutterbugs, aspiring and professional photographers alike to contribute to the community in a lasting way. The calendar will be available for sale from June 2005 forward.

Entry deadline is **April 15, 2005**. Photographs can be sent in as prints, through email attachments, or on a disk. Calendar pages are 11" x 8.5" (letter paper, printed landscape orientation). For the best quality, the image is printed at 300 dpi. This means that the minimum number of pixels required is 3300x2550 pixels (8.5 x 300 = 2550, 11 x 300 = 3300).

We will need a signed release of the photo for FTMI to use the image. Photographer and the subject are required to sign the release included at the end of this email, and return it to FTMI 160-14th St., SF, CA 94103, the releases will have to be in before the May 1st, or another applicant will be selected.

Include in the packet sent to Female-To-Male International the photograph, name of the photographer, a head shot of photographer, photographer signed release of photograph and name, biography of photographer, name of photo, subject signed photograph and name release form, and a \$25.00 entry fee check made out to FTM International. Photographs will not be returned without a self addressed stamped envelope. Thank you.

**The Board of FTM International
160-14th St., San Francisco, CA 94103**

Voicemail: (415) 553-5987 / Email: tstgmen@yahoo.com

Sample Release

I hereby grant Female-To-Male International the irrevocable right and permission, throughout the world, in connection with the photograph(s) that were taken of me or which I provided to Female-To-Male International, (copies of which photographs are annexed hereto and made a part), the following: the right to use and reuse, in any manner at all, said photographs, in whole or in part, modified or altered, either by themselves or in conjunction with other photographs, in any medium or form of distribution, and for any purposes whatsoever, including, without limitation, all promotional and advertising uses, and other trade purposes, as well as using my name in connection therewith, if Female-To-Male International so desires.

I hereby forever release and discharge Female-To-Male International from any and all claims, actions and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of said photographs, including, without limitation, any and all claims for invasion of privacy and libel. This release shall inure to the benefit of the assigns, licensees and legal representatives of Female-To-Male International.

Please check one:

I am over the age of eighteen years and I have read the foregoing and fully and completely understand the contents.

I represent that the subject of the photographs is a minor and that I am the parent of the minor and that I have read the foregoing and fully and completely understand the contents.

Please include the Subject/Photographer or parent/legal guardian's signature and date. Also print or type both Subject/Photographer's and/or parent/legal guardian's name, and include phone numbers and addresses.

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DIVA LAS VEGAS 2005!

Diva Las Vegas (DLV) is the name given to an annual social event for the TG community. As the name implies, it happens in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. This year's Diva Las Vegas will run from **Sunday, April 24 through Saturday, April 30**.

What's unique about Diva Las Vegas is that it's a vacation, not a convention. There are no seminars, no pageant, no keynotes, and we also skip the ubiquitous rubber chicken banquet. What we have instead is a very rich set of activities of all types.

Some of these are of particular interest to the TG community, some are of general interest, and some most definitely push the envelope!

Our featured activities include our annual limo tour of the Las Vegas Strip, Las Vegas shows, bowling, golf, Lake Mead boat cruise, slumber party, side trips (a day trip to Death Valley is planned this year) air tours, dance instruction, daily lunch (and subsequent walk off your lunch), daily happy hour, shopping excursions, garden party, and many others.

The annual Diva Las Vegas Invitational is the first regularly scheduled TG golf tournament in recorded history, we believe!

Our "Night Of The Soiled Doves" is most likely the most unusual activity that's ever happened at a TG event!

Some of our most popular activities are the large strictly social affairs such as our Welcome Celebration and the Annual Mixer.

All activities are optional, and unlike many of the other TG events, you don't pay for things you choose not to do.

Diva Las Vegas began in 1997 as a real-life meeting of those who had become acquainted over the Internet. Since then the attendance has consistently grown, mostly by word of mouth and a very good footprint on the net, and has exceeded 100 individuals the past few years.

Our attendees come from all points on the TG spectrum and then some. They range from those just peeking out of the closet to those who are post-op and fully transitioned. We don't label our attendees, everybody is welcome, including TG's of all varieties, SO's, friends, family, and even admirers.

Unlike most of the other TG events, Diva Las Vegas is not centered around a hotel. Our activities occur all over the Las Vegas area, and we have a good mix of mainstream and alternative venues.

We have a mailing list and a discussion forum for those who are interested in attending. To join the mailing list, which is militantly spam-free, just send a brief e-mail to: dlv@geekbabe.com and state that you want to receive our mailings.

You can view the DLV Discussion Forum on line at: <http://www.geekbabe.com/dlv/dlvdisc/>. If you would like more information about DLV, please look us up on the web at: <http://www.geekbabe.com/dlv/>

This includes general information, a Frequently Asked Questions list, an overview of what you can expect, a "roadmap" to get you there, and follow-up pages for all DLV years. (Be sure to note all the smiling faces!)

If you have any particular questions, please write us at: dlv@geekbabe.com

Events Horizon!

2005-2006 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED!

Several individuals have stepped forward and expressed an interest in running for the 2005-2006 Executive Committee:

Vice-President Laura Marlowe

Secretary Open

Education Lisa Rae Dummer

Outreach Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy

Social Open

These positions are for two-year terms.

All candidates for the 2005-2006 ExCom must declare their intentions in writing prior to or at the March 24, 2005 End of Month Event. Declarations must include name, e-mail address and office for which the individual is running. Any declaration which does not meet these criteria will be rejected.

Ballots will go out shortly after and will be due by 7:30 p.m. at the TGSF Annual Meeting on **Thursday, April 28, 2005**. Election results will be announced at the meeting. Ballots may be delivered on April 28, 2005 to the Cathedral Hill Hotel Restaurant, 1101 Van Ness Street (at Geary) in San Francisco. Ballots must be received by 7:30 p.m. in order to be counted.

For more information or to declare for a position, please send an e-mail to Roxy at roxyhart72903@sbcglobal.net. Please be specific in stating for which office you would like to be considered.

The Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA)

TRANSVETERANS MARCH TAKES SHAPE

This year's transgender veterans gathering in Washington, DC, will be expanded to include a stop at the new World War II Memorial. The **May 21, 2005** 'March to the Wall' will also revisit the Vietnam and Iwo Jima Memorials and culminate with the very emotional and proud experience of dedicating a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery.

"2004 marked the first ever Transgender March to the Wall," said Angela Brightfeather, event organizer and TAVA Special Projects Chairperson. "In 2005 we will be creating the Tradition for this very important event."

March organizers have selected the COMFORT INN DOWNTOWN DC/CONVENTION CENTER as event headquarters. The hotel is located at 1201 Thirteenth Street NW, Washington, DC and is near subway lines, Union Station, the White House, Capitol Hill, national museums, and other sites of interest. Information on the hotel, its amenities, its surroundings, and directions can be at www.choicehotels.com/ires/hotel/DC601. Reservations for the nights of May 20th and 21st may be made at a rate of \$109 per night plus tax by calling 202-682-5300 (Fax: 202-408-0830) and asking for the special TAVA rate. Although street parking is often possible, hotel parking is available for an additional \$27 per day.

Those attending the TAVA March events must preregister at www.tavausa.org/March05/march05.html in order to ensure a place on the chartered buses and at the Saturday dinner. Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel. TAVA will endeavor to facilitate room sharing, but each person or group must make its own hotel reservations.

"There are thousands of transgender veterans in America," said TAVA President Monica Helms. "We want them to experience what 50 of us experienced last year. It was an event of a lifetime, and the first time will be a cherished memory for life."

Event sign-in will begin at 3pm on Friday, May 19 at the hotel, followed by a reception from 7pm to 10pm.

Saturday breakfast is from 8am to 10am. The hotel offers a free continental breakfast. Participants will board the bus at 10am to visit the veterans memorials. Lunch will be on your own at the Mall. The tour will end with an afternoon wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns at a time to be determined. The bus will depart for the hotel at about 4:30pm. Cocktails will be available at a cash bar beginning at 6:30, with dinner at 7:30pm. Sunday morning will see goodbyes at breakfast with promises to meet again next year.

"The impact made by the first March to the Wall was recognized by everyone in the GLBT community," said Brightfeather. "The commitment of TAVA to the success and importance of that gathering clearly pointed out the need to make this a yearly pilgrimage and a tradition in our community. Few events in the Transgender Community have such an important and special meaning as this gathering of Transgender Veterans."

Please join TAVA and the many transgender veterans as we once again provide a chance for healing from the many wounds of war and of life. Find details and schedule updates via event links at www.tavausa.org. If you need additional information, write to Angela Brightfeather at projects@tavausa.org

The Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA) acts proactively with other concerned GLBT organizations to ensure that transsexual and transgendered veterans will receive appropriate care for medical conditions in accordance with the Veterans Health Administration Customer Service Standards promise to "treat you with courtesy and dignity ... as the first class citizen that you are." Further, TAVA will help in educating the VA and the US military on issues regarding a fair and equal treatment of transgendered and transsexual individuals. TAVA will also educate for a change in public law and policy that will help initiate this fair and equal treatment.

HEY!

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Coming May 2005!

TRANSGENDER AWARENESS WEEK

Dear TGSF:

Several San Jose State University on-campus organizations, faculty members, and students, myself included, are organizing a Transgender Awareness Week, May, 2005.

We are still at the beginning of our planning stage, but I wanted to inform the local transgender community ahead of time. One of our events will be a transgender symposium.

We have several FTM guest speakers and panelists already, but we would like MTF participants, as well. I am not in charge of this event in particular, so I do not know exactly what qualifications are necessary in order to be selected as a MTF guest speaker/panelist, but I do know that one of the selected FTMs is an author, another is with ACLU, and another produced a transgender-related documentary.

If anyone is interested in volunteering or has any comments and/or questions, please contact me as soon as possible. The best way to get a hold of me is through e-mail at glbta_sjsu@yahoo.com; specifically e-mails with catchy subject lines such as "Re: Transgender Awareness Week," "Transgender Awareness Week Volunteers," or something along those lines.

Thanks for your time and consideration! Your help is greatly appreciated.

Andrea Miller
SJSU GLBTA Secretary

Events Horizon!

Spoken Works Competition

TGVOICES IN 55 WORDS OR LESS - 2005

Transgendered Voices, Inc., a Wyoming, USA not-for-profit corporation...has organized a spoken works competition for Transgendered people of all types and nationalities.

The final date for receiving the entries is **June 1, 2005** and submissions may be sent to Transgendered Voices starting on February 1, 2005.

There will be prizes of 500 USA dollars...currently the equivalent of 22,000 Indian rupees...for the best spoken work and the most innovative spoken work...and the total number of prizes will not be limited to two prizes.

An eBook of the text of the submissions and a CD of the spoken works will be published and sold for the benefit of Renaissance Transgender Association of Pennsylvania, USA...one of the oldest and most successful transgender organizations in America.

Each year TGVoices will choose another organization from a different country to support through the sales of the eBooks and CDs of that year's competition.

Please review our website at www.TGVoices.org to learn the full details of the competition and to download the entry application. Thank you.

Elizabeth D. Jeffords - Executive Director
Transgendered Voices, Inc.
3333 East Bayaud Street - Suite 111
Denver, Colorado 80209
303-320-6630 / MyOnePenny@aol.com /
www.TGVoices.org

Test Your Mastery Of 'Rocky Horror' Trivia

This year marks the 30th anniversary of The Rocky Horror Picture Show. How much do you know about the camp film that has become a cult classic?

- (1) In the opening credits, the famous Rocky Horror red lips sing Science-Fiction Double Feature. Of the nine sci-fi classics mentioned in the song, which of the following is not mentioned?
 - A. The Day the Earth Stood Still
 - B. The Invisible Man
 - C. The Thing From Another World
 - D. King Kong
- (2) According to the original script, what is the name of Brad and Janet's hometown?
 - A. Houston
 - B. Denton
 - C. Tyler
 - D. San Angelo
- (3) Tim Curry stars as Dr. Frank N. Furter, a "sweet transvestite" from where?
 - A. The Time Warp
 - B. A Galaxy Far, Far Away
 - C. Venus
 - D. Transsexual, Transylvania
- (4) Midnight showings of The Rocky Horror Picture Show are famous for the tradition of patrons dressing up like the film's characters. Those patrons also have props they use throughout the show. Which of the following is not part of the Rocky Horror Picture Show kit?
 - A. Rice to be thrown at Ralph and Betty's wedding
 - B. Toast to be thrown when Frank proposes a toast at dinner
 - C. Roses to be tossed during the floor show performance of Rose Tint My World
 - D. Noisemakers to applaud Frank's creation speech
- (5) The Rocky Horror Picture Show has enjoyed the longest theatrical run in history. True or false?
 - A. True
 - B. False

Answers are hidden inside this issue!

NTAC Sets Lobby Days for May 2005

Transgender activists will converge on Capitol Hill on **May 18 - 20, 2005** to lobby Congress once again for passage of transgender-inclusive hate crimes and employment nondiscrimination legislation. Lobby Days 2005 is sponsored by the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC), the country's largest and most active organization advocating for the rights of transgender Americans at federal, state, and local levels.

Participants are expected from all over the country and will likely include victims of anti-transgender hate crimes and those who have personal experience with employment and other types of transgender bias and discrimination. NTAC and the National Center for Transgender Equality will help attendees arrange meetings with their senators and representatives and staff members.

Marisa Richmond, Chair of the NTAC Lobbying Committee, noted that 30 lobbyists from around the country visited 81 Senate offices and 236 House offices in April 2004 to discuss the need for transgender inclusion in pending civil rights legislation. "This effort played an important role in identifying potential supporters of transgender inclusion in ENDA and LLEEA," she said. "This information was vital to the coordinated effort by transactivists in getting HRC to adopt a new trans-inclusive policy towards ENDA. We look forward to maintaining the momentum in 2005."

One major difference in the 2005 lobbying effort is the recent decision of the Human Rights Campaign decision to support only a transgender-inclusive Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA). It is essential to have demonstrably significant numbers of concerned community activists and supporters working together to educate their elected representatives on these vital issues. The need has never been greater, and HRC support can improve our reception in Congress.

"Since 1999, NTAC has been advocating in support of equality for the transgender community," said Vanessa Edwards Foster, chair and co-founder of NTAC. "We may well be on the edge of a new era for our community, an era of unfettered accomplishment in our fight for civil rights. It's essential that NTAC and the transgender community are distinctly visible and a key part of this effort towards our equality."

NTAC will hold a plenary session for training and assignments on May 18th. The plenary will consist of a brief lobbyist training session, review of handouts to be discussed and left at each office visited, and assignments for May 19th and 20th. Participants will have the opportunity to meet and interact with many transgender and trans-supportive activists and representatives from organizations working toward fully inclusive federal hate crimes and civil rights protections and to participate in other Lobby Days events and actions to be announced.

Registration and hotel information will be linked to the NTAC website (<http://www.ntac.org>) when details become available. In the meanwhile, those with questions about joining this grassroots lobbying effort can write to lobbying@ntac.org.

As done in 2004, NTAC and the Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA) are coordinating dates for their 2005 Washington, DC spring events. The second TAVA national gathering of transgender veterans, some of whom are also NTAC members, is scheduled to begin after NTAC lobbying ends on May 20. The TAVA event will include visits to veterans memorials on the National Mall and in Arlington, VA.

You can make a difference, for yourself, your family, and your community. Join your brother and sister transgender American activists, veterans, family, friends, and supporters in speaking truth to our leaders and working for a truly equal America for us all. Your support, your voice, and your active participation will make a difference.

Founded in 1999, NTAC - the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition - is a §501(c)(4) civil rights organization working to establish and maintain the right of all transgender, intersexed, and gender-variant people to live and work without fear of violence or discrimination.

Significant Other Support East Bay

Questions or concerns about your partner's crossdressing? Please call Julie at (925) 937-8432, e-mail julie39@comcast.net or write to: Julie Freeman, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885.

CROSSING SEXUAL BOUNDARIES IN NEPAL

By Charles Haviland
BBC News, Kathmandu



Manisha (r) now works full time for the Blue Diamond Society

"When I was about 13, it came from my heart and soul, the feeling that I was different from others," says Manisha, who has the body of a man but wants to be a woman - and likes to be described as a woman.

Manisha, now 24, is what is known in Kathmandu as a "meti" or a transgender person.

"Up to the age of 18 I thought I was the only person like that in the world. I was very depressed."

That changed when Manisha began meeting similar people in the parks of the Nepalese capital. It changed even more in 2001 with the founding of the Blue Diamond Society (BDS), Nepal's only organization for sexual minorities.

The BDS has just launched a weekly newspaper, with editions in English and Nepali. The Blue Diamond Weekly will give a platform to many marginalised groups in Nepal, but seems likely to be dominated by issues affecting gay and bisexual Nepalese and the significant number who call themselves "meti" and dress up in women's clothes. An autobiographical article by Manisha filled page three of the first edition.

Manisha now works full-time for BDS, which among other things promotes AIDS awareness and condom usage among vulnerable groups. BDS's founder and director, 32-year-old Sunil Pant, explored his own sexuality while studying in Belarus.

Complex Attitudes

Returning from overseas, he wanted to discover more about Nepal's gay culture.

In Kathmandu he was surprised at the number of "MSMs" - men who have sex with men. Some identified as homosexual but many others did not, for instance those choosing metis as partners.

"The scary thing was the lack of knowledge on HIV-Aids, the low level of condom usage," he says.

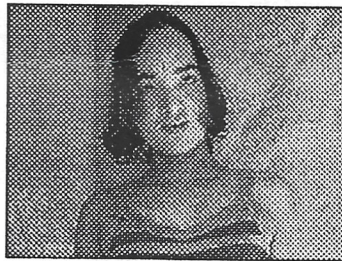
Rectifying this was his main motivation for starting the Blue Diamond Society - blue being a "gay colour" in Belarus, the diamond symbolizing compassion in Buddhism, one of Nepal's two main religions.

Nepalese attitudes to sexual diversity are complex. Sunil says most Nepalese - especially Buddhists - are tolerant in this regard. The Gurung people of western Nepal have a tradition of men called maarunis, who dance in female clothes. The tradition, he says, is also popular in the Royal Nepalese Army.

"Maarunis are recruited to perform dances to entertain within the barracks," he says, adding that they have traditionally had a role in the royal palaces too.



The Society wants to increase awareness of HIV-Aids



"I feel that inside me is the soul of a girl, I never felt I was a boy."

Manisha, Blue Diamond Society worker

"Whenever a general or minister or high-ranking officer has to go out, there will be two maarunis with a jug of water, flowers, and a maaruni standing at the gate for their good luck."

But Sunil says there is hostility, for instance from those he describes as fundamentalist Hindus. And when metis try to claim equal rights, acceptance wanes and may give way to violence. Some have been subjected to attempted murder; others, he says, to rape and arbitrary arrest.

Still Taboo

More encouragingly, after a 2003 meeting between metis, gay men and police authorities, the Inspector-General of Police issued a letter to all police stations indicating concern at the level of police violence.

Sunil Pant admits that BDS tends to be seen as a meti organization. He believes Nepalese men identifying themselves as gay are less disadvantaged, tending to have a better education and a secure job. But others point out that they still face considerable problems.

"Though homosexuality definitely exists in Nepalese society, it is still not accepted," says renowned film director Tulsi Ghimire, writing in the new weekly. While neighboring India is opening up on the subject, in Nepal it is still taboo. He dare not touch it on screen.

Prakash, a bisexual who works with BDS, agrees that attitudes to homosexuality are "not encouraging". He was happy to have an arranged marriage last year but regrets he cannot tell his wife all about his sexuality.

With marriage a social obligation, many metis and homosexuals do wed, but others - with great difficulty - tell their families they cannot. Manisha, who lives with her parents, says she is preparing to do this, as she does not want to "spoil anyone's life" by marrying.

The Blue Diamond Society has unquestionably raised the profile of these minorities in Kathmandu. Its three-story office is well-known in the neighborhood and the Society stages parades during religious festivals.

And when Manisha and a friend pose for the BBC in female clothes on the building's rooftop, builders next door scarcely bat an eyelid.



Maaruni dancers perform at army barracks and royal palaces

CHANGING THEIR SEX IN IRAN

'There is no reason why not,' one cleric says of gender reassignment surgery. In fact, Khomeini approved it four decades ago.

By Megan K. Stack, Times Staff Writer
LA Times January 25, 2005

TEHRAN - Whispering like conspirators, the two cousins hook their thumbs in their belt loops, skim cocky eyes over the women and swivel, stiff-legged from their hips, like the men they have become. Across the room, and a few steps away on the gender spectrum, a man with shaggy hair wrinkles a pug nose in the mirror and struggles to drape a silky scarf over his head in the style of Islamic womanhood.

Almost everybody here, in this sterilized waiting room at a clinic in the clanging heart of Tehran, is in the midst of changing their sex. Waiting their turn to see the doctor, they strut about in self-conscious gender rehearsal. Someone has brought cookies, sweet with honey.

"I was married. I had a wife and children," says Maria Pakgozar, a curvaceous former truck driver wearing flower barrettes and fake furs. She claims she's in her 40s but flashes an identification card giving her age as 62. "The cleric came to my house and said to my wife: 'What do you want from him? He's a woman, not a man.'"

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, gay male sex still carries the death penalty and lesbians are lashed, but hundreds of people are having their gender changed legally, bolstered by the blessings of members of the ruling Shiite clergy.

"Approval of gender changes doesn't mean approval of homosexuality. We're against homosexuality," says Mohammed Mahdi Kariminia, a cleric in the holy city of Qom and one of Iran's foremost proponents of using hormones and surgery to change sex. "But we have said that if homosexuals want to change their gender, this way is open to them."

Not that it's easy in Iran. The Islamic Republic remains a fundamentally traditional, conservative society, laced by harsh judgments and strict mores. A blizzard of clerical decrees is unlikely to make a mother eager to see her son become a woman or enlighten leery co-

Continued on Page 17

TRANSSEXUAL MARRIAGE A LEGAL CATCH-22

By Erik Stetson
Associated Press Writer

CONCORD, N.H. — Judi Howden went into her marriage knowing full well that one day her husband might become her wife. The couple stayed together — even as Howden's husband, Michael, underwent a sex-change operation that transformed him into Mikayla. That surgery also landed them in a murky area where gender and law collide. Their marriage — once between a man and a woman — is now between a woman and a woman, despite a ban on such unions in 40 states, including New Hampshire.

Their experience highlights a legal Catch-22. While states can either recognize or refuse to recognize someone's new gender following a sex change, either decision inescapably permits some form of same-sex marriage.

If the gender change is recognized, then existing, heterosexual marriages such as the Howdens' become same-sex. If recognition is denied, a de facto same-sex marriage emerges since the spouses' genders differ only on paper, not visibly. "I have no answer to it," said state Rep. Dan Itse, a Republican who supports the state's same-sex marriage ban. "We have ventured where angels fear to tread."

The federal government must decide if Mikayla Howden, a U.S. citizen born overseas, can update her birth certificate. It hasn't yet ruled, and Shannon Minter, of the National Center for Lesbian Rights in California, said the Bush administration has not been as accommodating as earlier administrations.

According to the center, four states don't permit gender updates: Tennessee, Ohio, Kansas and Texas. About half of the remaining states do. A firm policy hasn't been legally well established in the remaining states, including New Hampshire, said Minter, the center's legal director.

"Whether or not society will acknowledge our marriage, I think, is my biggest fear," Judi Howden said. "That someday, someone may pass legislation that says, 'Because you are now two females, you are no longer married.' For anyone to say that they have the right to break up a family, I don't think is right."

The Howdens' marriage clearly was legal when it began, and same-sex marriage bans cannot automatically invalidate it, Minter said, just as states don't automatically annul marriages for adultery or abuse.

But at least one conservative group would like to change that. The Rev. Louis Sheldon, founder and chairman of the Traditional Values Coalition in Washington, D.C., said marriages such as the Howdens' should be dissolved. "Absolutely," he said. "We don't want the roof to leak in any place. We must make sure that marriage is protected."

Sheldon's coalition, a lobby claiming more than 43,000 member churches, is crafting an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriages and civil unions. The Howdens, he said, have slipped through a "legal loophole."

Judi Howden may be in a legal loophole, but she said she's happy. Her household is like many across America. There are prayers at meal times and children's toys in every room. Her wedding to Michael Howden nearly four years ago — her second marriage — has produced love and another child. She said she struggled with Mikayla's emergence, but struggled even more with the idea of separating. "There was so strong of a connection for Mikayla and I," she said. "I never knew that there was such a relationship out there in the world."

Social conservatives often portray same-sex marriage as a moral issue. But Mikayla Howden called changing her gender a life-and-death decision, not a lifestyle choice. Living as a man was fundamentally wrong, she said, and nearly led her to suicide.

"What are you going to pick? You certainly hope for the point of wanting to pick life," said Mikayla Howden, who changed her name in 2003 and underwent a sex change in September. "So many of us, because of society, choose death."

Transsexuals are not the only people who have sex-change operations. Surgery also is used to treat "intersex" conditions such as improperly formed genitalia. And updating birth certificates isn't the only legal challenge facing transsexuals. State gay-marriage bans complicate such core activities as buying and inheriting property together or collecting insurance.

In 1999, a Texas appeals court upheld a ruling against a transsexual who became a woman and married a man. The court ruled the marriage an invalid union of two men, denying the transsexual money from a wrongful death settlement after her husband died.

Cases in Florida and Illinois are addressing whether transsexuals who have become men are legally fathers of children who were born through artificial insemination or adopted into their families while they were married.

And in California, a transsexual who became a woman is challenging a ruling that denied her husband citizenship because she was born male, Minter said. "The human consequences are really painful," Minter said.

For the Howdens, the responsibilities of home and raising a family — a child of their own and two from Judi Howden's previous marriage — have helped them through tough emotional times. So has open, honest communication.

"It isn't always easy, but it's the most important, even when it comes to your fears," Judi Howden said. "Because when you hold those fears inside, it doubles them."

Transsexual Marriage: Facts and figures

By The Associated Press

THE LEGAL ISSUE: Transsexuals, through a legal Catch-22, can occasionally enter into valid same-sex marriages in states that ban such unions. If a state recognizes a person's new gender after a sex change, existing, heterosexual marriages can become same-sex. Not recognizing a person's new gender permits new marriages between spouses whose genders differ only on paper, not visibly.

THE RAMIFICATIONS: States have split on the issue, meaning a post-operative transsexual can be male in one state, female in another. One state may only permit them to marry men, another only women.

THE CATEGORIES: Transsexuals, who feel their birth genders are incorrect, aren't the only people doctors treat through sex-change surgeries. The operations also treat "intersex" conditions, including improperly formed genitalia.

HOW MANY: There is no reliable estimate of the number of transsexual marriages nationwide. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington, D.C., estimates that as many as one in 12,000 adult men and one in 30,000 adult women are transsexual.

TREATMENT: Conservative and gay-rights groups differ on whether transsexuals have a physical condition requiring surgery or a mental health condition requiring only therapy. Medical research on transsexuals is continuing.



Mianne Bagger

TRANSSEXUAL GOLFER INVITED TO BRITISH OPEN

by Peter Moore
365Gay.com
London Bureau

(London) Transsexual golfer Mianne Bagger has been invited to compete in the Women's British Open, the open, at Royal Birkdale, is one

of the jewels in the crown of women's golf.

Bagger was extended the invitation following a decision by officials of the Ladies' Golf Union, the tournament's organizers, to amend a gender policy document that had stated all competitors must be female at birth.

Rules barring transsexuals from playing began falling after the International Olympic Committee announced prior to the Athens games that transsexuals would be allowed to compete.

"It has taken a considerable time to finalize the gender policy document and we are convinced that we have a document that is fair to all," said LGU chief executive officer Andy Salmon.

Last November Bagger became the first trans golfer to be invited to join the Australian Ladies Professional Golf tour after the ALPG abolished a similar rule requiring players to be female at birth.

Bagger first made golf history in February 2004 when she was allowed to play in the Australian Women's Open after that body amended its rules. (story)

Just prior to being invited to join the ALPGA tour Bagger qualified for the Ladies European Tour after that organization also announced it would follow the Olympic rules. The 37 year old Australian shot a 5-over-par 77 to tie for ninth place after four rounds in qualifying rounds at the Riva dei Tessali golf club.

But, a spot on the American Ladies Profession Golf Association has eluded Bagger. The ALPGA was to have voted late last year on her application for membership but so far she has not heard from the US organization.

The 38 year old who was born in Denmark now makes Melbourne her home. She completed her transitioning in 1995. Bagger has been playing golf since she was eight, but turned professional only in August 2003.

Changing Their Sex in Iran...

Continued from Page 15

workers who squirm at hearing their colleague's voice drop a few octaves. And the government's response is fractured, with some officials remaining opposed to sex change.

"The people our age, they all know and accept us," says Toumik Martin, a brusque 28-year-old businessman who was born a girl named Anita, leaning in close to be heard over the cacophony of ambiguous tenors bouncing off the waiting room walls. "Our problem is with the parents. They don't know how to differentiate between transsexuals, gays and lesbians."

Like their brethren around the world, these people have complicated, often sorrowful, stories. They have been cast out by their families and fired from their jobs. They have struggled to find love.

Martin, who became a man six years ago, proposed marriage to the woman he'd loved ever since they were classmates.

"She said, 'Yes, I love you, I understand you, but I don't know about my parents,'" says Martin, who has a prospering business importing vitamins from Russia.

When the couple approached the woman's parents, they were flatly rejected. "They think I'm a lesbian," Martin says. "They said, 'We won't give our daughter to a girl.' Especially her mother, she was very hard with me." His heart was broken, and the relationship faded.

When Dr. Bahrom Mir-Djalali first began performing sex-change operations 15 years ago, he endured death threats from scandalized parents. One father, he recalls, showed him a dagger and vowed to slash his throat. But slowly, he says, society has come around. He measures the shift in the fights with the families, which he says have become less drastic.

"This is an Islamic country, and very, very old-fashioned," says Mir-Djalali, a white-haired surgeon who studied sex-change procedures in Paris. "I try to tell people, 'They don't have horns, they are normal people.' But it's hard for society to accept. At least now we have a discussion about it."

Iran isn't the only Muslim society that appears to be growing more accepting of sex changes while still shunning homosexuality. A Kuwaiti court recently decreed that a 29-year-old man who had changed his gender could live legally as a woman. That decision was later overturned by a higher court, but it provoked a startling debate in a country where the subject of homosexuality remains taboo.

In Saudi Arabia, an Islamic judge backed an heir's right to keep the larger share of inheritance given to sons even though the heir had undergone surgery to become a woman. Even Al Azhar, the ancient seat of Sunni Muslim learning in Cairo, issued a fatwa, or religious edict, in the mid-1990s that approved gender changes in some cases.

But no Muslim society has tackled the question with the open-mindedness of Shiite Iran. That's probably because the father of the revolution himself, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, penned the groundbreaking fatwas that approved gender reassignment four decades ago.

Khomeini reasoned that if men or women wished so intensely to change their sex, to the point that they believed they were trapped inside the wrong body, then they should be permitted to transform that body and relieve their misery. His opinion had more to do with what isn't in the Koran than what is. Sex change isn't mentioned, Khomeini's thinking went, so there are no grounds to consider it banned.

"There is no reason why not," says Kariminia, the cleric. "Each human being is the owner of his body, and therefore he can make changes."

Before Khomeini, some Islamic edicts had approved sex changes for hermaphrodites, but nobody had given carte blanche for sex reassignment without medical deformities. To this day, some Shiite clerics argue against operating on healthy bodies.

But in a low stone house in the twisting alleys of Qom, Kariminia is writing his doctoral thesis on transgender law. His writings tease out the work of Khomeini, tackling legal questions such as: If a married woman wishes to become a man, must she first get permission from her husband? Must a man seek permission from his wife?

"Islam has recognized the rights of transgender. We can't say to anybody that they must be a man or a woman," Kariminia says. "But do you think just because they don't have legal or Islamic problems, their problems are solved? I certainly do not."

Iran's acceptance of sex-reassignment operations raises the specter that gays and lesbians may be able to find a place for themselves here only by changing their gender. Some transgender patients complain that lesbians and gays are exploiting the surgery to create a legal way to sleep with their preferred partners.

Mir-Djalali, a kinetic man with an irrepressible enthusiasm for spelling out the more delicate details of the surgeries, says that in 15 years he's transformed about 320 men into women, and 70 women into men.

He is careful to point out that those were only half of the would-be patients who came to his office. He disqualified the others after they were examined by a panel of three psychiatrists.

The psychiatric team tries to sort out homosexuality from gender disorder by asking a series of questions. A man hoping to become a woman, for example, is asked whether he has dreamed of removing his penis. Gay men recoil at the idea, the doctor says, but transgender men are eager at the suggestion.

"They say, 'Yes, yes, yes, I've always dreamed of it,'" Mir-Djalali says.

But the screening is the only restriction in Iran's relatively lax system. In most countries where sex-change operations are performed, doctors urge their patients to live for some time in the guise of their preferred gender before taking any drastic measures.

But in Iran, there's no waiting period. After passing the psychological screening, the patients are hustled into treatment. After all, in the interim they are considered gay, and therefore outlaws.

"By the time they come to me, they've made up their minds," Mir-Djalali says. "They've already worn makeup and women's dresses. They don't need to try."

The 25 years since the revolution have been an era of turmoil and liberation for Iran's transgender community. Despite the tolerance contained in Khomeini's fatwas, many suffered bitterly when he came to power, caught in revolutionary purges meant to turn Iran into a pure Islamic republic.

"Twenty years ago, we were living in secret and with fear," says Maryam Khatoun Molkara, 54, one of the elder stateswomen of the transgender movement. "I wanted to become a woman and also do something for the others."

Today Molkara lives in a second-floor walk-up in a dingy part of Tehran, where she receives her visitors in a cramped sitting room with pink walls and baffling layers of mirrors. There are books of religion and poetry and paintings of Ali, cousin of the prophet Muhammad and a revered figure among Shiites, and his trusty sword, Zulfiqar.

In the chaotic early days of the revolution, Molkara was taunted and harassed by overzealous mobs. So many transgendered people were rounded up by the regime that a special jail wing was built for them. Molkara grew depressed. "I wanted to die," she says, waves of perfume wafting from her muuu.

Instead, she appealed to the government, working her way up the chain of clerics until she spoke with Khomeini's brother. It was he who took her to see Khomeini himself. That same day, Molkara won the right to live as a woman. On Khomeini's orders, the clerics gave her a chador and registered her as a woman in the government directories.

"It was like heaven," she remembers dreamily. "I was born again."

But it was only the beginning of Molkara's fight. She recently teamed up with sympathetic Iranian officials, including the head of the Special Court of Clergy and the vice president for women's affairs, to form an organization devoted to transgender rights. At her prodding, a government-linked Islamic charity named after Khomeini recently agreed to provide loans to pay for the surgeries.

Still, Molkara is not satisfied. She doesn't like the government-issue identity card that spells out her former life as a man. She doesn't like the hardliners who've threatened her. One official even sneered that she'd tricked Khomeini, she says. In short, she is hoping to push transgenders even further into the Iranian mainstream.

"Nobody ever asks why a dog is a dog," she says. "And yet they always have to explain that I was once a man."

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THE RIDDLE OF GENDER

Masculine And Feminine Roles Don't Seem So Fixed Anymore, As Author Deborah Rudacille Finds In Her Study Of The World Of Transgendered People.

**By Abigail Tucker
Baltimore Sun Staff**



Author Deborah Rudacille

(Sun photo by
Karl Merton Ferron)

Identity is infinitely flexible, but the English language is not, and Deborah Rudacille felt its limits when writing her new book, *The Riddle of Gender*. The Baltimore author had to use words that assign gender regardless of chromosomal or psychological subtleties, the shopworn "he" and "she" - except when one transwoman insisted on being called a "sie."

And except, of course, whenever a more common genderless term cropped up. The pronoun "I" is perhaps the most important word in the book, and not just because it skirts grammatical technicalities. "I" is the vector for the human voice, the subject of the anguished personal stories that, more than clinical definitions and social theories, are the heart of Rudacille's book about those who feel compelled to change genders.

Usually when "I" appears in *The Riddle of Gender* (Pantheon Books, 384 pages, \$26), somebody else besides the author is speaking, whether it's an American GI who in the 1950s was castrated in order to "become a woman," or a bearded Stanford neurobiologist who was born a girl. Quoted at length, these and other transpeople explain the pain of inhabiting a body at odds with its impulses. But sometimes, and often between the lines, Rudacille speaks, too.

Don't get her wrong: The 46-year-old Dundalk native is today and always was "a plain old white woman," although someone at a recent transgender event misidentified "the chick with the wild red hair" as a masquerading man. And one of her three children does refer to his mother as "The Queen of the Transsexuals." He's kidding, though.

Or is he? Over several years of researching the book, a history of transgender science and activism that comes out this month, Rudacille infiltrated the transgender world, where men and women transform themselves through various means - hormonal, surgical, cosmetic - into members of the "opposite sex."

Rudacille frequented cross-dresser support group meetings and shelters for transgender youth, acutely conscious of the ill will some members of the transcommunity bore her. More cases of mistaken identity ensued: At least one transperson suspected she was in league with Jerry Springer.

Especially in the beginning of the project, "I was grilled, I was really interrogated," said Rudacille, a science writer who also works for several medical publications produced by the Johns Hopkins University. "Trans- people have not always been served well by journalists."

Which is one reason why she decided to let individuals speak for themselves, bridging the book's chapters with intimate question-and-answer-style interviews. These conversations with transgender historians, actors and activists help animate the book's academic portions. "I didn't want it just to be me, my voice, telling these stories," Rudacille said. "The voices of the people come through."

As a science writer, Rudacille is a mere "translator," she said. She views her task as making the scientific history of the transgender movement - which she traces to the first decades of the 20th century - comprehensible to the general public, who are not familiar with gene theory or queer rhetoric. A regular contributor to publications like the Institute for Cell Engineering's newsletter, she's used to this kind of cut-and-dry work.

But, in *The Riddle of Gender*, Rudacille does more than translate, occasionally contributing her own "regular" voice to the colorful chorus. "Science writers don't usually inject themselves into the story," said Dana Beyer, a former ophthalmic surgeon in Chevy Chase who had surgery to become a woman and was interviewed by Rudacille for the book. But, writing as a woman who had no prior contact with the transgender world, Rudacille "is kind of like a tour guide for people who would find this stuff completely strange."

"She's not coming at it from an advocacy position," Beyer said. "She's coming at it as a woman who wanted to educate herself," and ended up learning about both the transgender community and herself.

"I love her voice," Beyer said. The opening words of the first chapter are Rudacille's, and she goes on to include personal anecdotes about what she learned writing the book, and how she now regards her own gender as a precarious balance, not a static trait.

Getting Personal

Her book editor goaded her into including these private epiphanies, but they occurred naturally. After all, the book's inspiration was intensely personal, stemming from her sense of bewilderment when a lesbian friend announced about five years ago that she planned to become a man. Confusion sharpened into concern when a transwoman, Tacy Ranta, was murdered near a bar about a mile from Rudacille's Arcadia home. "I used to go to that bar," she said. "Friendly place, \$1 Guinnesses. Then one day I picked up the newspaper."

Even though she worked for Johns Hopkins, once the epicenter of sex reassignment procedures, the transgendered realm was completely alien to Rudacille, whose last book was about the ethics of animal research. "Initially I was just as stupid as the next guy," she said.

She set to work interviewing, traveling as far as California, and reading everything she could get her hands on, from histories that discussed Chevalier d'Eon, an 18th-century French aristocrat notorious for switching sex roles, to dated scientific tracts about endocrinology experiments that once shaped the world's understanding of gender.

She also read memoirs. Better than any other source, autobiographies like Daphne Scholinski's *The Last Time I Wore a Dress* and Jan Morris' *Conundrum* articulated the sense of loneliness that many transgendered people feel.

Unexpectedly, their anguish resonated with Rudacille. She could hear in their prose echoes of the achingly difficult transitions of her own traditional life - marriage, divorce, single motherhood, empty nesting - and a sense of not belonging. "I'm one of those protean sort of people," she said. "There are times in life when you almost feel yourself shucking off your old self."

In Search Of Identity

She also started to scrutinize her own gender identity, which isn't as stable as she thought. For one thing, she realized she was a cross-dresser, at least by the standards of a century ago, when blue jeans would have been considered a bizarre wardrobe choice for a "female-bodied" person. Reading the gender theories of Magnus Hirschfeld, a pioneering scientist in the field, Rudacille reflected that she didn't qualify as a "womanly woman" in his view - that instead, her mixture of personality traits straddled the border between genders.

"Under his system, I would be an 'intermediary,'" she said. "The very attributes that enabled the writing of *The Riddle of Gender* - aggression and empathy, analytical ability and sensitivity - are 'transgendered.'"

Rudacille's next project is *Roots of Steel*, a personal history of the Dundalk steel industry. Dundalk is hardly a trans-gendered haven, she said - her mother, who still lives there, begged Rudacille not to dedicate *The Riddle of Gender* to her - but the books are in some ways related. Not only will *Roots of Steel* develop the personal tone that Rudacille discovered in *The Riddle of Gender*, but it will also explore similar transitional tensions, like Rudacille's uncomfortable sense of having switched from blue-collar culture to the middle class, truly belonging in neither.

Writing *The Riddle of Gender* helped her identify this internal struggle. "I guess I've always been betwixt and between," she said.

Dance Confusion Results in Severe Stabbing

SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) — Police in Shreveport say a man's critical stab wounds resulted from his anger over learning that a person he had danced with at a club was not a woman but man dressed in drag.

Ronald Jones, age unavailable, was in critical condition in LSU Hospital in Shreveport after being stabbed in the neck with a pocketknife early Thursday, Shreveport police said.

Jones had been dancing with a person he thought was a woman when friends began teasing him about dancing with a transvestite, police said. Jones later followed the dance partner and another person outside and confronted them, police said.

Thomas Duncantel, age and address unavailable, stabbed Jones during the ensuing fight, police said. No arrests were made because police believe the stabbing was in self-defense.

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ALAMEDA COUNTY BANS GENDER-ID BIAS

Supervisors Approve Anti-Discrimination Policy As Foes Raise Concern Over Restroom Use, 'Natural Law'

By Michelle Maitre, Oakland Tribune Staff Writer

OAKLAND — Alameda County supervisors voted 4-0 Tuesday to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity following a passionate public hearing that illustrated deep divisions over issues involving transgenders and other gender-variant individuals.

The board's new policy applies to county employment, services and the use of facilities in county buildings. It prohibits discrimination based on a person's "gender-related" identity, appearance or behavior, "whether or not stereotypically associated with a person's assigned sex at birth."

Opponents argued the board was wading into a troublesome area by opening restrooms to members of the opposite gender. Others raised issues of "natural law" and allusions to the biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in urging a "no" vote. "You are holding fire to your bosom, and it will burn you," said Desiree Furrell of San Leandro.

"I appreciate the effort to make some people feel better," said Catherine Norman of Fremont, who added "bathrooms are about biology, not perceived gender. So many women will feel intimidated and harassed, you would be exposing this county to a class-action lawsuit."

Proponents said the policy deals with basic civil rights protections. They invoked the name of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and slain transgender teen Gwen Araujo of Newark in urging a "yes" vote. Prosecutors say Araujo, who was born a male but lived as a woman, was killed when the teen's biological gender became known.

"This resolution is about justice, this resolution is about civil rights, this resolution is about simple human dignity. It's about ending an atmosphere of looking at transgenders as something less than human," said Roxy Carmichael-Hart, president of Transgender San Francisco, who transitioned from man to woman in 2003.

Marcus Arana of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, which enforces San Francisco's 10-year-old ordinance banning discrimination based on gender identity, said he hasn't investigated any complaints about transgenders entering restrooms to prey on women and children.

Supervisor Nate Miley also discounted some opponents' concerns, saying issues raised over bathroom rights were a "red herring." "To me, it just smacks of discrimination and of people's own hatred of other people's lifestyles," Miley said. "We just need to be tolerant of everybody and not be judgmental. It's not for us to judge."

Miley said he doesn't understand why some people want to change their gender, "but it's not for me to understand. What is for me to do is make sure everyone is safe from discrimination."

Supervisor Keith Carson worked with members of the transgender community in crafting the resolution, which he said will bring county policies in line with existing state law. County policies, which already prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, haven't been updated since 1990, he said.

Supervisor Scott Haggerty expressed concern that the county's new policy is stronger than the state law. Despite his misgivings, Haggerty voted in favor of the change.

Arana praised the supervisors' vote. "Hate is not a local value of Alameda County, and (the resolution) reiterates Alameda County's commitment to protecting county employees and facilities from discrimination," Arana said.

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TRANSSEXUAL DENIED CUSTODY OF HIS CHILD

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Chicago, Illinois) The Illinois Court of Appeals has ruled that a transsexual male has no right to custody of his 10 year old son. The court said that Sterling Simmons, a 46 year old female to male transsexual legally wasn't a man when he married Jennifer Simmons.

Sterling Simmons is in the process of transitioning. He has had his birth certificate changed to reflect his male gender, but doctors said he still has a vagina and breasts.

The court had heard that Jennifer Simons had the boy through in vitro fertilization and the child was raised by both Simmons. When the couple split up Sterling Simmons filed for custody and boy declared he wanted to live with his father..

In 2003 a Cook County judge ruled that because he still had female genitalia under he was still legally female. Because Illinois doesn't recognize same-sex marriages, the court ruled, their marriage wasn't valid, and that Sterling Simmons could not claim custodial rights.

The Appeals court ruling upholds the lower court decision which allows some visitation.

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WOMAN GETS 5 YEARS FOR SILICONE DEATH Christopher Curtis, PlanetOut Network

A court sentenced a Georgia transgender woman to five years in prison on Monday after she plead guilty to manslaughter charges in the death of a woman who suffered complications after a "pumping party."

"Pumping parties" are underground events in which women — many of them transgender — pump industrial-grade silicone into each other to create more-feminine features. Unlike medical-grade silicone, industrial-grade silicone is not sterile, and it can leak and cause infections when injected.

Police believe Myasha Thomas injected the 23-year-old victim's face and chest with industrial-grade silicone on Dec. 10, 2003, in Albany, Ga. After the injection, the woman — who was also transgender and whom police identify only by her birth name, Andre Jeter — fell into a coma. A month later Jeter died from multi-organ and respiratory failure.

Police arrested Thomas in March of 2004 along with accomplices. The Dougherty County Court listed her legal name as Stephen Thomas. On the Thursday following Thomas' guilty plea, WALB-TV reported she had been sentenced to five years in prison and 10 years probation for felony involuntary manslaughter.

Three women await trial on conspiracy charges. Chief Assistant District Attorney Greg Edwards told the Associated Press (AP) the three gave rides to the pumping parties and helped Thomas perform the injections. Thomas would return the favor by giving her accomplices free injections instead of charging her regular fee of \$300 to \$400. Edwards told the AP on Friday that the plea was appropriate because there was no intent to kill.

Gwen Smith, a board member of Gender Education and Advocacy Inc., shared mixed emotions with the PlanetOut Network. "On one hand it's nice that the issue of silicone injection is being treated very severely. On the other hand I wonder if the sentence had to do with silicone injection or the gender expression of the person involved."

Mara Keisling, executive director for the National Center for Transgender Equality, did not believe Thomas' sentence would address the real problem facing transgender people. "The whole silicone-pumping public-health problem is going to continue as long as transgender people face the kind of discrimination we face, the kind of poverty we face and the lack of health care we face. It's very, very dangerous, but it's obvious why it happens."

When the PlanetOut Network first reported the story last year, Dallas Denny, board member of Gender Education & Advocacy Inc., warned that silicone injections are not just a problem among transgender people. "It happens a lot in Asian communities," she said. "It's becoming common with HIV-positive gay men who are trying to reduce the appearance of sunken cheeks or a sunken chest. It's common in the drag community, and sex workers who are trying to improve their marketability."

Denny said that once the injection was performed, the silicone could migrate. "If someone gets it in their chest, it can move to their ankles," she explained. "Removal is difficult," she said. "In terms of getting silicone out, several plastic surgeons have told me it's nearly impossible. Once you get it done, it permeates the tissue. You're pretty much stuck with it."

NATIONAL CANADIAN TRANS ORGANIZATION IS FORMING

Hello there. My name is Tami Starlight, Activist in Vancouver. I have been given the site www.trans-canada.org. It was started by a number of Canadian trans folks in central Canada.

It has been dormant for over a year. Still the site is up and the domain payments have been kept up by a central Canada trans woman who was part of the original planning group.

We are now seeking trans folks from each region of Canada to participate in helping with the creation of this organization.

The working group link is: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/transcanadaworkinggroup/>. The idea is to have a number of regional representatives compiling trans info for their respective regions and have 2 representatives for each region. The regional delegates, or directors if you will, will also provide advocacy for their region.

This is totally a work in progress. This is a framework in which to build upon. There are some in the Canadian trans community who agree with me that it is about time there was a united national trans community. We hope you share this perception. If not please forward to someone you think might want to be involved.

For Unity of Community!

Tami Starlight

GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNOUNCES NEXT MAIN EXHIBIT

"Sporting Life: LGBT Athletics and Cultural Change from the 1960s-2004"

SAN FRANCISCO - The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society and Museum (GLBTHS) announces that its new exhibit, launching **April 2**, will be Sporting Life: LGBT Athletics and Cultural Change from the 1960s-2004.

Sporting Life will tell the story of Bay Area LGBT sports, starting with the first bowling and softball games versus the police, which led to lesbian and gay bar softball leagues of the 1970s. In 1982 and 1986, San Francisco launched the now-global Gay Games. The Games inspired a proliferation of LGBT teams during the next two decades in practically every athletic endeavor. Today, over 4,000 openly LGBT people participate annually in Bay Area sporting events, breaking records, defying age, ability, and gender stereotypes, and inspiring others.

"Sporting Life celebrates those who have come out and played over the past four decades," said Historical Society Executive Director Terence Kissack. "Since the 1960s, gay people have gathered around everything from bowling to sailing. In the process, they've built communities."

"We've already received some fascinating items that document the roots and tremendous growth of the LGBT athletics movement," said Guest Curator and "Sports Complex" columnist Jim Provenzano. He calls for past and present jocks of all genders, in professional and amateur athletics, to come forward with diverse memories, images, and ephemera. Those with stories or items to share can contact Provenzano at sportinglife_sf@yahoo.com or by calling 415.777.5455.

"We are pleased to have received a grant from the California Council for the Humanities to support the exhibit," said Exhibit Director Don Romesburg. "Now we're inviting our community to pitch in financially, so we can honor Sporting Life's inspiring and entertaining stories about the ways we've played and lived in the most dynamic way, reaching the widest audiences."

The GLBT Historical Society's mission is to increase public understanding, appreciation, and affirmation of the history and culture of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and other sexual minority individuals and communities. For more information about the GLBTHS, call 415.777.5455 or visit www.glbthistory.org.

Cop Fired For Marrying TS Must Be Rehired Court Rules

by The Associated Press

(Lima) Peru's top court has ordered the national police to rehire an officer kicked off the force in 1996 for failing to ask permission before marrying a transsexual.

The decision was announced in a statement Wednesday by the Constitutional Tribunal. The statement said the national police must rehire former officer Jose Antonio Alvarez because under Peru's constitution, people cannot be singled out because of their sexuality.

The police charged that Alvarez had shown a "lack of obedience" and had harmed the institution's honor by marrying a transsexual. Her identity was not revealed in the court decision.

The tribunal said its ruling "did not support in any way" members of the national police practicing "heterosexual or homosexual" conduct inside police facilities. "What is judged unconstitutional is that, interfering in a sphere of human freedom, a sexual choice and preference of a person is considered illegitimate and from there susceptible to sanction," the court ruled.

Alvarez, who argued that he did not know his bride was born biologically male and had undergone sex reassignment when he married her. His attorney, David Dominguez, told Lima's Channel 2 news that it was Alvarez's estranged, pregnant girlfriend who told police about his bride's past.

The marriage was later annulled and Alvarez got back together with his girlfriend. They had a second baby together, Channel 2 reported.

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Assets

Cash	4252.03
Decorations	1000.00
Beverages	200.00
Total	5452.03

Liabilities and Equity

Accounts Payable	
ASL for Cotillion	125.00
Contestant Food Tray	150.00
Total	375.00

Statement of TGSF Income

Revenues

Memberships	120.00
Donations	1238.00
Donation for Piano Rental.....	650.00
Advertising	25.00
Cotillion Ticket Sales	1317.64
Misc.	769.50
Total	4120.14

Expenses

Channel	250.00
Phone	49.40
ASL	125.00
Cotillion Food	2048.32
Piano Rental	650.00
Cotillion Awards	123.63
Misc.	432.88
Total	3679.23

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DON'T DECIDE MY SEX FOR ME

By Vivian Abu Raad

Ha'aretz (Israel)

Contributed by Cecilia Barzyk

When 'H.' was born, her male genitalia were underdeveloped, a syndrome known as intersex. When she was 11, the doctors decided to turn her into a woman. She hopes others can decide their gender for themselves, "Congratulations, it's a girl," the parents were told. That was 30 years ago, and at the time, no one, not even the doctors, imagined that the newborn was not exactly a girl, that chromosomally, she was a boy, born with underdeveloped male and female genitalia.

H. was born to an Arab family from the center of the country that raised her as a girl. When she was two, her mother noticed that her daughter's genitalia were different from those of all the other little girls and took her to the doctor to be examined. "Your daughter is not exactly a girl or a boy," the doctors told H.'s concerned parents. An X-ray, they explained, showed internal testicles inside the abdomen. The parents did not know what to do with the diagnosis.

"My mother cried a great deal and went into a deep depression," recalls H. "They did not understand how it was possible to be neither a girl nor a boy. So what was I? At meetings with doctors, Mother always asked the same question: Was I a girl or boy?"

The doctors referred H. to a hospital in the north that treats similar cases, and there she began a long series of treatments and tests that lasted 18 years. H. had to go there with her parents once a month for intrusive and often humiliating tests.

"They would undress me, measure my sex organs and sometimes take photographs," recalls H. "I felt unprotected. I didn't understand when I was supposed to get undressed and who was allowed to undress me. For the doctors I was an intriguing phenomenon, which everyone wanted to see and touch. I recall one examination when I lay naked on a bed in the emergency room, with lots of doctors all around, all looking and touching. One kept saying, 'I don't feel any testicles.' But I didn't understand."

The phenomenon that aroused such interest is called intersex, which means "between sexes." According to Professor Ze'ev Hochberg, an endocrinologist at Meyer's Children's Hospital, Rambam Medical Center, Haifa, H. suffered from a genetic syndrome that affects the enzyme responsible for turning testosterone into dihydrotestosterone (DHT), which is responsible for the development and growth of the male genitalia in the male fetus. Because H., while still in the uterus, lacked DHT, her male genitalia were not formed, which is why everyone thought she was a girl when she was born.

This phenomenon was already known in ancient Greece, which called such individuals "hermaphrodites," from the names of two gods - Hermes, a male and Aphrodite, a female. Nevertheless, because it is such a rare phenomenon, the doctors did not immediately realize what was involved when H. was born.

Today, says Hochberg, there are four large families in the world that carry the gene for the syndrome, but that marriage within the extended family increases the risk of having a child with the syndrome. In Israel, marriage among cousins is relatively prevalent among Muslims, and consequently, there are more cases of hermaphrodites among Muslims than among Jews or Christians.

Family Secret

When H. turned 11, following consultation with their physician, her parents decided to turn her into a girl, that is, to remove the testicles and reduce the size of her clitoris so that she would look female. They did not share the decision with their daughter and it appears that her parents neither understood nor wanted to understand the full implications of H.'s condition. "In fact, all they wanted was for the matter to be over as soon as possible," she says.

H.'s parents, who believed that after the operation the problem would be solved, decided to discontinue the visits to the hospital. But their family practitioner convinced them to go back in order to continue treatment.

Over the years, the entire matter became increasingly more difficult and humiliating. H. explains: "They were the same tests and the same touching, but I was no longer a little girl. I had grown up."

At first, it was not difficult to hide. The treating physician prescribed estrogen therapy so that she would develop as a woman, and as a result of the treatment, she grew breasts, her voice became higher and her face remained free of hair. But when she did not begin to menstruate like her friends, H. realized that something was wrong, that she was different. Her mother, who noticed her distress, explained that she would never menstruate or marry or be able to have children like her sisters.

H. felt that the world of women was closed to her. For years, she refrained from entering into any kind of romantic relationship with boys or young men her age. "Every time my sisters talked about marriage, I was outside the conversation," she says. "I felt defective."

Because of the syndrome she suffered from was a terrible family secret, H. was forbidden to tell her friends about what she was going through, and she remained alone with the confusion and shame.

"I would tell myself that I am a woman, but that because fate had dealt me certain defects, I had no menstruation and no uterus." But the question of gender identity remained unresolved for her. The estrogen she was taking in high doses did not really help her feel more feminine, she says. "I always felt like a fake, and I asked myself how it was that I was a woman if my breasts were merely the result of some hormone injections."

Prof. Hochberg maintains that if H.'s testicles had not been surgically removed, a penis would have grown as a result of the enzyme that becomes active during puberty. Her female organs would have become male organs and she would have become a boy and lived as a man.

She herself only discovered this recently, from information she found on the Internet. "Sometimes I mourn the man I could have been," says H. Sometimes she puts on men's clothing "not in order to be a man," she says, "just to restore to myself control and the freedom of choice that was taken from me."

But then, during adolescence as well as afterward, her parents, who were unable to live with the fact that their daughter was not like other girls, urged her to dress and behave like a girl. Because she has masculine facial features, it has happened that people mistake her for a man. Then she is lectured by her parents about how she should wear jewelry and makeup and let her hair grow long. "Each time it happened, I wanted the earth to swallow me alive, and it has happened many times," says H.

Times Change

Today, a great deal more is understood regarding the emotional implications of the syndrome, and the physicians that treat families and children suffering from it try to support them more, provide them with more information regarding treatment possibilities and the decision.

Prof. Hochberg says that there are three approaches regarding the treatment of these babies. One says that what counts are the chromosomes, that if the baby is born with the male XY chromosome (as in H.'s case), the child should be raised as a boy. This approach, he says, is not really accepted these days.

A second approach, which is more popular, is to turn all of them into girls for reasons of surgical convenience. "Surgically, it is easier to create a woman than a man," explains Hochberg. "It is impossible to create a penis and much easier to create a vagina, which is why it is better for the baby to be a girl than a boy."

The third approach, which comes from the patients themselves, is that the choice should be left in the hands of the child - that is, to wait. Hochberg completely rules out this approach out, saying, "It is almost impossible to grow up for 20 years without a clearly defined sexual identity."

When H. reached the age of 15, it appeared to her and her family that they had found the perfect solution: "The idea was that I would enter a convent and become a nun," relates H. "After all, under the habit, no one could see what I had, and behind the closed doors of the convent, I would be remote and protected from the world's prying eyes."

And so, at the age of 18, contrary to the advice of her physician, she discontinued all treatments. Her doctor proposed continuing to the next step of her treatment and creating for her a vagina. She refused. She went to Europe and joined a convent. The attempt failed.

"The whole time, I was worried that I would run out of estrogen and be unable to get any more," she recalls. "The nuns didn't know about my condition and I lived in great fear that someone would find out that I wasn't really a woman."

She returned to Israel after three months. "When I came back to Israel, I felt lost," she says. "I didn't have any direction or goal." She began to work at odd jobs and signed up to study theology in the university. At the age of 29, after completing her studies successfully, she decided to immigrate to Britain.

"I thought that people abroad were more liberal and that there I had a chance of becoming part of a couple without too many explanations and in the hope that I would be accepted the way I am," she explains.

This trip too ended sooner than expected. "I realized that the strangeness that I feel is not really connected to a particular country, but that it comes from the feeling I have inside me," she says. And with this insight, she decided to gain a deeper understanding of her condition and create a change in her life.

The Secret Comes Out

She set out on her journey of self-discovery in the hospital in which she had been treated as a child, where she asked to see her medical records. The file, she was told, was on the way to the incinerator, and only after she insisted was it found. H. managed to photocopy it before it was destroyed. "I returned home and for an entire week read it dozens of times," she says. Armed with clinical terminology, she continued her Internet searches and was stunned to find an ocean of information and explanations.

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KILLING GWEN

Gwen Araujo's secret led to her murder and made her a civil-rights martyr



Sylvia Guerrero holds a photo of her slain daughter

By Bob Moser
Rolling Stone

She looked like the perfect complement to another night of getting wasted. Model-thin, with sultry eyes and pouty lips, Gwen Araujo carried herself a lot like her idol, Gwen Stefani. Plus, she wanted it. Jay Cazares and Mike Magidson could tell that in a second.

It was nearing the end of summer in Newark, California, an old salt-mining town thirty-five miles southeast of San Francisco that has sprawled into a Silicon Valley suburb. The two friends, dropouts from Newark Memorial High, had interrupted their twice-weekly game of dominoes to make a beer run. And there she was, all alone. "Need a ride?" they hollered out the window of Mike's truck. "I want to party," she told them.

She lied about her age, saying she was nineteen. She lied about her name, calling herself Lida. But as soon as they got back to the party house — a cramped, dingy tract home that their friend Jose Merel shared with his two brothers — everybody knew she meant it about wanting to party. Humble as the house was, with its dorm-room atmosphere and stale-beer stench, the place was famous for its blowouts. Lida spent the rest of the night flirting with the guys, brushing up against them, firing them up. When they went out to the garage to smoke some weed, she gave them power hits. Lips on lips, lungs to lungs. Oh, yeah — she definitely wanted it.

The only question was who would do her first. Jay, Mike and Jose had been tight for years. Girls came and went, babies were born, jobs were lost, but nothing came between "the Three Stooges," as Jay called them. They took genuine pride in being drunk, stoned and stupid. On April 20th, the Stooges joined the rest of America's most dedicated potheads in a national daylong weedathon. Thursdays were always bar nights, when they would drop \$100 apiece on long-neck Coronas and shots of Patron. "We got a high tolerance," Jay boasted.

Jay thought Lida was hot, but he wasn't going to have sex with her. The quietest and steadiest of the Stooges at twenty-two, he was already juggling two sideline squeezes while working construction jobs to support his girlfriend, Lisa, the mother of his two kids. That left Mike and Jose — "Dumb and Dumber," Jay called them. Mike was a hyperactive white kid who got busted for public drunkenness and meandered from one lousy job to the next: a classic gangsta wanna-be, always listening to rap and talking a mile a minute. Jose — like Mike an ex-jock from Newark High — was training as an electrician to support his own out-of-wedlock baby.

That night, after fooling around with Lida, the Stooges went outside to smoke and take stock. There was no question she was hot — almost too hot, the way she was hanging on to everybody, talking at the top of her lungs. "I've never met a girl like that," Jay said.

Jaron Nabors, a sweet-faced, foul-mouthed college student who'd been hanging out at the Merel house, took a drag on his cigarette and considered what Jay had said. Suddenly, a weird thought popped into his mind. "Could this be a dude?" he asked.

He said it like a joke, but it got Jay going. "Hey, Mike," he hollered. "Come over here, dude — you know about this kind of stuff." Seems there'd been this story going around about Mike getting tricked by a girl in San Francisco. Said she was a girl but turned out to be a guy. So now they were all laughing at Mike. And the next minute, they were all laughing over what Jaron had said about Lida, because — nah, no way. A dude could never look that hot, right?

Three years before, at age fourteen, she had chosen Thanksgiving dinner to make an announcement to her family: From now on, the boy they knew as Edward Araujo Jr. would be living as a girl named Gwen. There were forty-some cousins to come out to, not to mention aunts and uncles and elderly relatives who believed in rosaries and mortal sin. Sure, they all knew Eddie had grown up playing dolls with his sister Pearl and getting chased home from school by kids hurling rocks and slurs. But here was Gwen, ta-dum, hair growing out, eyebrows in a perfect arch like her mom's, lipstick parting into the kind of smile that was often missing from Eddie's repertoire.

"It turned out to be a beautiful moment," recalls David Guerrero, an uncle who helped his sister Sylvia raise her four children after she divorced Edward Araujo Sr. "Everybody was hugging. Even older members of the family were OK with it." Gwen's mom was especially cool about it: She and her new daughter went shopping for clothes, did their hair and makeup together, even talked about how big Gwen's new breasts should be.

But kids and teachers at school were not OK with it. Gwen spent the next two years getting taunted and bullied and punished for using the girls' bathroom before she finally dropped out. If school didn't want her, fine. The hell with Newark, where people were always staring, whispering, calling her a freak. She'd get a job, save up for beauty school and have surgery to complete her transformation. Then she'd head for Hollywood, where nobody would bat an eye at her — not unless they wanted her. "I'm going to do makeup for movie stars," she told her mother. "I don't know if I'm even going to have time for you — you're going to have to call my secretary."

Gwen applied for a couple of jobs, one at Starbucks and the other at a grocery store, but both times her applications were mysteriously "lost." "She knew why it was happening," her mother says. "She knew." So Gwen threw her energy into what was left: parties, boys and makeup. She tried new looks, new personalities. Magenta hair, green hair, spiked

hair, flowing hair. Her head swam with the Gwen Stefani lyrics she was addicted to:

*Magic's in the makeup
But I want to be the real thing.*

After she met the Three Stooges, in the summer of 2002, Gwen became a welcome fixture at the Merel house. It wasn't long before Mike, Jose and Jose's brother Paul all had sex with her — always with her clothes on. She found ways to get to house parties all over the Bay Area, introducing herself sometimes as Gwen, sometimes Wendy, sometimes Lida. She was out of control, mouthier than ever, drinking and partying and God knew what else on a daily basis. Early one morning, her mom picked her up in an alleyway after some drunk guys found out she was a boy and cut her with a broken beer bottle. Sylvia, terrified, cried all the way home. "You need to be honest about who you are," she told Gwen. "I'm so worried about what's going to happen to you. My worst fear is that I'm going to wind up going into a morgue and identifying your body."

But Gwen didn't listen. Fooling around gave her what she needed most. "If you can make men want you, that means somebody is finally accepting you as legitimate, as a woman," says Danielle Castro, a transgendered friend of the family. "That becomes the most important thing in the world. You're not going to risk it by saying, 'Oh, by the way, I've got a dick.' Not when you're seventeen. But it's a dangerous game."

Very dangerous. More transgendered people are killed in hate crimes every year than all the other major targets combined — including blacks, Jews, Hispanics, lesbians and gay men. Most often, the victims are young transgendered women killed by men who've had sex with them. Sometimes the killers discover they've been misled and freak out. "They feel they had to do what they did," says forensic psychologist Karen Franklin, who interviews hate-crime perpetrators. "They feel tricked. Their masculinity has been betrayed. They've had sex with a man!"

Other times the killers know they're having sex with a girl who's still a guy, at least in the anatomy department. "A lot of times, these murderers can't handle their own desires," says Shawna Virago, a transgender activist who works with Community United Against Violence, an anti-hate group in San Francisco. "They turn their anger on the victim rather than the society that is making them feel stigmatized by their own desires. And when they do, it gets ugly."

The stooges enjoyed having Lida around — who wouldn't? She was always doing stuff to get them worked up. One night she broke up their domino game by throwing the tiles all over the place, getting up on the table and rubbing herself while she danced. Paul's girlfriend, Nicole Brown, decided to egg her on. "Take your top off if you're gonna do that," she told Lida. The guys agreed, of course. "Yeah, we'll give you money if you take your top off," they whooped. Pissed off, Lida hopped down off the table and backhanded Nicole "pretty damn hard," Lida recalled. It escalated from there, with the two girls in a full-scale fistfight. Lida, petite as she was, surprisingly held her own. "Nicole was hurt," Jay said. "Her hair was fucked up and she had blood on her."

The guys didn't think much about it until a few days later, when Lida was off somewhere else. Mike started bragging about how she'd given him a blow job a couple of nights before. How she'd pulled her pants down but refused to take them all the way off. How she wanted him to do her from behind — that way — because she was having her period.

Jaron started giving Mike a hard time about how gross that was, anal sex. But then Jose chimed in. It turned out that Lida had told him the same thing, done the same thing, maybe two weeks before. A period couldn't last that long, could it?

They started comparing notes. How come Lida always wanted it from behind? Why wouldn't she let them touch her breasts? Weren't her hands kind of rough for a girl? Didn't she always wear something over her neck, like maybe she was covering up an Adam's apple? And what about that fight with Nicole? Lida fought like — well, a guy.

This called for a blunt. They trooped off to the garage and lit up. For such a tight group of guys, this was a major mind-fuck. "It's like a fraternity," says Barrie Thorne, a sociologist at the University of California at Berkeley. "You get guys who are invested in being straight but whose bond includes physical and emotional closeness, a lot of homoerotic overtones. They police each other's masculinity." Being together was the one thing the Stooges could count on in their lives — and being together was all about being guys, drinking and smoking and fucking and telling dumb jokes. If Lida wasn't straight, did that mean that they weren't straight? And if they weren't straight, what were they?

Mike could laugh about the whole thing, but Jose couldn't let it rest. He had no patience with gays. God, what if this meant he was gay, too? Seeing Jose's discomfort, Mike couldn't resist needling him, rattling off all the reasons it seemed like Lida was a guy.

"You don't know for sure," Jaron pointed out. But Jose was getting worked up. He glared at Mike. "Do you want to be gay?" he asked. It was like a schoolyard taunt, daring Jose to do something. "The question becomes: How do you prove you're straight?" says Thorne. "One way is to take action your friends can see. You get a kind of catharsis through violence against the person who's caused your masculinity to be called into question."

Between drags, Jaron was giving the matter some serious thought. They all agreed that if someone did this to a killer, that person would "get

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smoked." Jaron was always talking like that, trying to sound like a mobster instead of an econ major. But later, recounting the conversation in a letter to his girlfriend, Jaron reported that the guys knew what they were going to do if Lida turned out to be a guy. "We went off on a Tony Soprano-type plan to kill the bitch and get rid of the body," Jaron wrote.

It was still on their minds when they got together again a few nights later, on the first Thursday in October. As usual, the guys spent bar night cruising the local clubs, getting shitfaced. Jay and Jose started out by shooting pool and downing a twelve-pack. Then they picked up Mike and Jaron and headed to the Elephant Bar, an upscale joint with a jungle decor. Then came Club Mangos, a down-and-dirty dance joint in a run-down strip mall where they knew the bartenders. After they closed the place down at 2 a.m., they headed back to the Merel house to wind down with a couple more beers, a joint or two — and maybe Lida. Jose said she'd called the house earlier and would probably be over. "Good," Mike said. "We can finally ask her about it. We won't have to guess anymore."

When they drove up to the Merel house, Lida was standing out front under a eucalyptus tree, smoking a cigarette with Nicole, high as a kite. Earlier that day, after doing some crystal meth and downing a couple of forty-ounce beers, she had decided to cut loose. In the past, to avoid detection, she had duct-taped her underwear to conceal her anatomy when she hit the party circuit. But that night was Gwen Stefani's birthday, so she decided to celebrate by squeezing into a revealing denim miniskirt and heading for the faded yellow house on Saint Matthew Drive.

The guys swaggered inside, cracked open some beers and sat down to dominoes in the cramped dining room. Lida pulled up a chair, squeezed in between Mike and Jose and started giving them the usual grief: "Are you playing dominoes again? Why can't I ever play?"

All of a sudden, Jose pushed back his chair, stood up behind her and felt the front of her neck. "What the hell are you doing?" Lida asked.

"We want to know why you want everybody to fuck you in the ass," Jose said, already starting to seethe. She looked up at him, startled. "Jose, how can you ask me that?"

According to Jaron, who would recall the night in vivid detail, the other guys jumped in. "Just answer the question," they advised Lida. "You're cool to have around, and we just want to know."

They had never seen Lida at a loss for words. She stared into space for several long moments before she finally protested, "No, no, no, no, no — I'm not." By then, Mike had slid his hand between her legs, saying, "Just let me feel it and everything will be chill." But Lida clamped both her hands down on her lap. "No," she said. "I'm not going to let you molest me."

Mike pulled back. "Look," he suggested. "Let's go in the bathroom and you can show me." OK, Lida said. But she made a break for the front door, saying she needed a cigarette first. Jaron blocked her way. "You've got to do this first," he instructed her.

Mike took Lida into the little guest bathroom near the front door. After the lock clicked, the rest of the guys sat around the table, talking about how this might be a dude after all. A real girl would have answered the question quick and easy, right? Why had Lida hesitated so long?

"I swear, if it's a man, I'll kill him," Jose hissed. "If it's a dude, she's not leaving — he's not leaving." Finally Mike emerged. "Same old shit," he reported. "She won't let me feel." The guys decided that Nicole might have more luck, being a woman, so she and Mike went back in the bathroom. Jose stalked outside to take a piss. A minute later, Mike came out again. "I didn't feel balls," he said, "but I felt two pairs of underwear. That's a man. That's got to be a man. I don't know what I'm going to do."

"Just be calm and think clear," Jaron told him. "Whatever you do, don't make a mess." Mike got behind him and put a chokehold on Jaron's skinny neck. "What about this?" he asked. "Can you breathe?" Jaron could only shake his head no. Suddenly, they heard a scream. Nicole came busting out of the bathroom, yelling, "This is a fucking man!"

Lida bolted toward the front door, but Mike caught her, pinned her to the carpet, yanked up her skirt, peeled back her underwear. "Fucking balls," he spat. "Right there — fucking balls." He let Lida stand up and got behind her, putting a chokehold on her.

Jose stunned his friends by starting to cry. "I can't be gay," he repeated over and over again. "I can't be fucking gay." Nicole tried to console him. "Any girl you meet after this, it won't make a difference," she told him, putting her hands on his shoulders. "You still look like the football player I knew you as."

Mike had Lida down on the carpet again, his legs locked around hers, his meaty forearm clamping down on her Adam's apple. Jay pulled him off and Lida struggled to her knees. "Please don't," she gasped. "I have a family."

Jose ran to the kitchen and grabbed a can of food. When he came back into the living room, he reared back and pounded Lida over the head with it. She crumpled against the wall, blood welling up on the crown of her head. Jose ran out again, came back this time with a frying pan. Mike propped Lida up while Jose swung and connected, square on her forehead.

Nicole decided to leave. Jay and Jaron got into Mike's truck. "They're going to kill that bitch," Jay said. The two friends drove to the house where Jay lived with his parents. Tiptoeing into the pitch-black storage shed, they used their lighters to locate three shovels and a pick. Ten minutes later, they were back at the party house.

Lida was sitting on the couch by then, hands in her lap, blood streaking down her face. Jose was bitching about the blood, how it was getting everywhere, how he was going to have to clean it up. "Get off the couch," he ordered Lida. She did as she was told, standing up against the wall while Jose furiously scrubbed blood off the cushions. Mike came in from the garage and asked Jaron for his ten-inch hunting knife. A minute later he was back with an armful of white rope.

"Enough is enough," Jaron thought. It seemed like this had been going on for a couple of hours, and sooner or later Lida would start yelling and wake the neighbors. "Knock the bitch out," he said.

Mike dropped the rope and punched Lida in the face, once, twice. She fell limp, slid down the wall, landed ass-first with a muffled thud. Perfect position for Mike to kneel her a couple of more times, right in the face. The second time, Jaron heard Lida's head snap back into the wall, leaving a puckered dent in the plaster.

Mike picked up the rope and wrapped it around her wrists four or five times. He did the same thing with her ankles. Seeing that her blood was getting everywhere, Jay fetched a comforter. They wrapped Lida in it. She wasn't putting up a fight anymore. Her legs jutted out the bottom of the blanket, below her smooth brown calves, but the rest of her was bundled up well enough for Mike, Jay and Jaron to hoist her up and cart her out to the garage. Jose kept scrubbing the couch and crying.

In the garage, where they first tasted Lida's lips just a couple of months before, broken crap was strewn everywhere. There was a washer and dryer, an old refrigerator and a beat-up car buried under a pile of junk. The guys dumped Lida on a piece of carpet near the back door. Mike grabbed a loose end of the rope with his bloody hands, pulled it around her neck and twisted, hard.

Stephanie Baumann, one of Gwen's best friends, was in first-period economics when she got the news. "This girl in my group was telling another girl, 'I heard Gwen was missing.' And the other girl goes, 'Gwen?' The first girl says, 'She used to be Eddie in junior high.' I'm like, 'What?' I ran to the drama room and cried and cried. I was supposed to be rehearsing The Laramie Project that afternoon, but I couldn't do it. I couldn't deal."

Newark was already buzzing about the high school drama department's decision to stage the famous play about the hate-fueled murder of Matthew Shepard. "People were saying, 'Why don't you stick with The Fantasticks?'" recalls drama teacher Barbara Williams. "Nobody in Newark needed to see such things, they said. Partly because of our proximity to San Francisco, people like to assume that the town is a model of tolerance."

Stephanie loved the idea of the play, partly because of Gwen. They'd gotten tight back in seventh grade, when Gwen was still Eddie. "He was basically the class clown, I guess you'd say — always cracking jokes, very sarcastic," Stephanie recalls. "In eighth grade, he gave me a ring. He wanted us to be best friends. It's a silver ring with these bubbles on it. I've never taken it off. And that's when he told me his, I guess you'd say, sexual preference." Just before Gwen disappeared, the two friends had scored tickets to see their idol, Gwen Stefani, in concert. "God, we couldn't wait," Stephanie says.

Now rumors were flying around town, repeated in the hallways at school and the aisles at Big Lots: A girl got butt-fucked at this three-day sex party, but then they found out it was a guy and killed her. Yeah, and twenty-five people were there, and they hung her up in the garage and beat her like a pinata. The Stooges just kept partying like nothing had happened. On October 4th, the night after Gwen disappeared, they were back at it at the Merel house. "What happened to Lida?" Nicole asked Jay when she arrived that night. "You don't want to know," he said.

But Jaron didn't know how to keep his mouth shut. Earlier that day, smoking a joint with his friend Adam Hewson, he had laid out the details of the murder. A week later, when Adam came over and brought up the subject again, Jaron was quick to incriminate himself. He never suspected that Adam was wearing a wireless mike, courtesy of the police. It turned out that Adam had repeated Jaron's story to a roommate — and word eventually got back to someone who happened to be related by marriage to one of Gwen's forty-some cousins. Her family ran down addresses, phone numbers and license plates, then handed the evidence over to the cops.

The next day, Jaron found himself back on Interstate 880, pointing the way northeast to Silver Fork, a rocky, remote campground in the mountains near Lake Tahoe. On the way, he retraced for the cops what happened after they killed Lida. How the four of them piled into Mike's truck, the body flung in back along with the shovels and pick. How they headed for Silver Fork because they had gone there as kids, and because Jay heard there was only one sheriff patrolling the whole vast wilderness up there. How they drove the four hours in near-total silence, making sure not to exceed the speed limit, until they finally climbed into the mountains and hung a right — right here — at Silver Fork Road. How they bumped farther and farther into the woods, until they were almost lost amid the cedar trees. How they fell into perfect sync as they dug a makeshift grave, everything quiet except for the wind and the whoosh of the nearby river. How you could hear Lida's body thud on the ground when they dragged it out of the back of the truck and flung it in the grave. How Jose broke the silence, saying, "I could kick her a couple more times, shit makes me so mad." How they threw rocks on top of the body and heaved a hollow tree trunk over the grave to make it look more natural. How, realizing that they were hungry, they hit the drive-through at the first McDonald's they spotted, just down the mountain in Placerville.

By the time her mutilated body was extracted from the rocks and dirt of Silver Fork, Gwen Araujo had already been transformed into a civil-rights martyr. Young and beautiful and murdered just outside the capital of queer America, she made the perfect poster child for a transgender-rights movement just beginning to gain recognition. In Newark, almost a thousand people attended her open-coffin funeral. "We



Remember Gwen Araujo!



Gwen Amber Rose Araujo (1985 - 2002)

...A transgender teenager from Newark, CA was murdered at a party by a group of men upon discovery of her transgender status. Twenty months after Gwen Araujo's death the jury deadlocked on whether her attackers were guilty of first or second-degree murder. According to Alameda County District Attorney's Office, none of the jurors were willing to settle for the lesser offense of manslaughter — despite efforts by defense attorneys in the case to argue that Gwen's killers were somehow justified because she did not disclose her transgender identity to them. The prosecutor already has stated that he will re-try the three defendants, Michael Magidson, Jose Merel, and Jason Cazares, for murder.

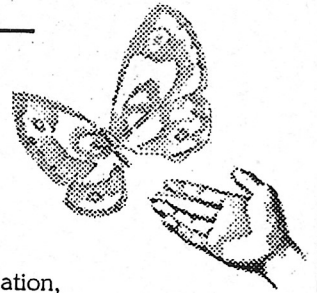


Make Your Money Count!

To contribute to Gwen's family directly: **Gwen Araujo Memorial Fund**, Bank Of America, Any BofA branch location, Acct# 10598-05854

To support transgender education work: **Gwen Araujo Transgender Education Fund** c/o Horizons Foundation, 870 Market St. Suite, 728 San Francisco, CA 94102 (415) 398 - 2333 / www.horizonsfoundation.org

Thank you!



Killing Gwen...

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had to put a turtleneck on her because the rope marks on her neck were all the way up to her chin," her mother recalls. In San Francisco, her death inspired a shrine honoring transgender victims of violence — including two more Bay Area residents who were murdered before Gwen's case went to trial. Activists sold Gwen T-shirts and CDs and raised money for a memorial fund. "She's become a sort of queer saint in the folk religion of my people," says Patrick Califia, a transgendered activist and author.

But in Newark, even Gwen's mourners weren't sure it was quite so simple. Joe Magdalena, a Newark High senior who wore angel wings to Gwen's funeral, says he can relate to the Three Stooges. "I could never see myself doing what those boys did," he says. "But I can kind of see from their mind-set, their homophobia, what they were doing." They thought having sex with Gwen made them gay — "and in their world, that'd basically be death. That's the way they look at it."

The Stooges went on trial for first-degree murder last April. All three pleaded not guilty. For the first time, though, the three friends parted company. Jay, claiming it was "not my trip," insisted he was innocent of everything except helping to bury the body. Mike and Jose didn't deny that they had killed Gwen but claimed there was no premeditation involved — they just snapped because she deceived them. Their "deception defense" incensed many civil-rights advocates, who were reminded of the controversial "gay panic defense" used for years by the killers of gay men. "Nobody says they didn't have a right to be angry when they found out she had male anatomy," says Christopher Daley, co-director of the Transgender Law Center in San Francisco. "But does that mean they had a right to beat her and kill her?" Gwen's mother is even more blunt. "Murder is murder," Sylvia says. "A child is a child. This is an issue of humanity."

At the trial, Jaron pleaded guilty to manslaughter and testified against his friends in return for a reduced sentence of eleven years. Much of his grisly testimony was backed up by Nicole Brown and Jose's brothers Paul and Manny. The only one of the Stooges to take the stand was Jay, who might have been better off remaining silent. Far from showing remorse, he grinned and guffawed while describing his drunken capers with Jose and Mike. Asked to describe the murder, he offered a vague, cartoonish version that portrayed himself as Lida's protector and accused Jaron and Nicole of joining in the assault.

When the trial finally wrapped up in June, most of the jurors believed Jaron — and firmly discounted the deception defense. But after nine days of deliberations, they couldn't decide whether the murder was premeditated — whether there actually was a Sopranos-like plan to kill Gwen — or whether it was just a sudden, drunken frenzy of violence. With the jury hopelessly deadlocked over whether to convict for first-degree murder, the judge declared a mistrial. Mike and Jose will remain locked up until the retrial, slated for May; Jay's family sprung him last August on a \$1 million bond.

Their victim did get one ruling in her favor, though. After Gwen died, her mother had asked a court to legally change her daughter's name. The day after the murder trial ended, the new name became official. "Edward Araujo Jr." was finally who she wanted to be: Gwen Amber Rose Araujo. Gwen even got something most daughters can only dream about: an apology from her mom. "It is one of my regrets," Sylvia says now, "that I didn't call my daughter Gwen more when she was alive."

Only in death did Gwen Araujo get what she wanted the most: acceptance and attention. Everybody's attention. "She loved the spotlight," says her uncle David Guerrero. "I guess she's got it now."

Don't Decide My Sex For Me...

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Only then, she says, "I felt that something inside was set free. I realized that there are other people like me and that I am not all alone in the world. I decided to write to them and share what I was going through with them."

That was when she discovered that she had in fact been born with a male chromosome. The discovery triggered an outburst of renewed anger with the doctors, who even after she grew up did not bother to give her the information that could have made things easier for her and did not think to recommend emotional support for her and her family. She went to the doctor who had treated her throughout her childhood. "I had a lot of questions," she says, "but I felt that he was afraid of my questions, perhaps afraid that I would sue him."

Her journey of self-discovery continued with psychological treatment. "During our first session, I sat and cried," she recalls. "It was the first time that I felt that I could cry and talk about it without it hurting someone."

Her important discovery in her treatment was that she was afraid of being a woman, largely because of her masculine appearance. "I was afraid that if I groomed and took care of myself, I would be viewed by society as an effeminate homosexual," she explains.

At a certain stage, she decided to share her experiences with some of her friends. "There were different responses, but most supported me, and one even said that I was now more special to her," she says. When she told her parents about it, they accepted the fact that others now knew the secret the family had worked so hard to hide very badly.

Today, H. chooses for herself when and how to come out of the closet. She says that she feels pride in her gender identity. "In the more liberal places in Israel, I introduce myself as an intersexual, and that is the most appropriate designation for me," she says. Only in the less tolerant Arab society does she still introduce herself as a woman, and hopes for better times.

In order to prevent other children from going through what she did, H. has established a support group in Israel where those that have an intersexual gender identity can receive information and emotional support.

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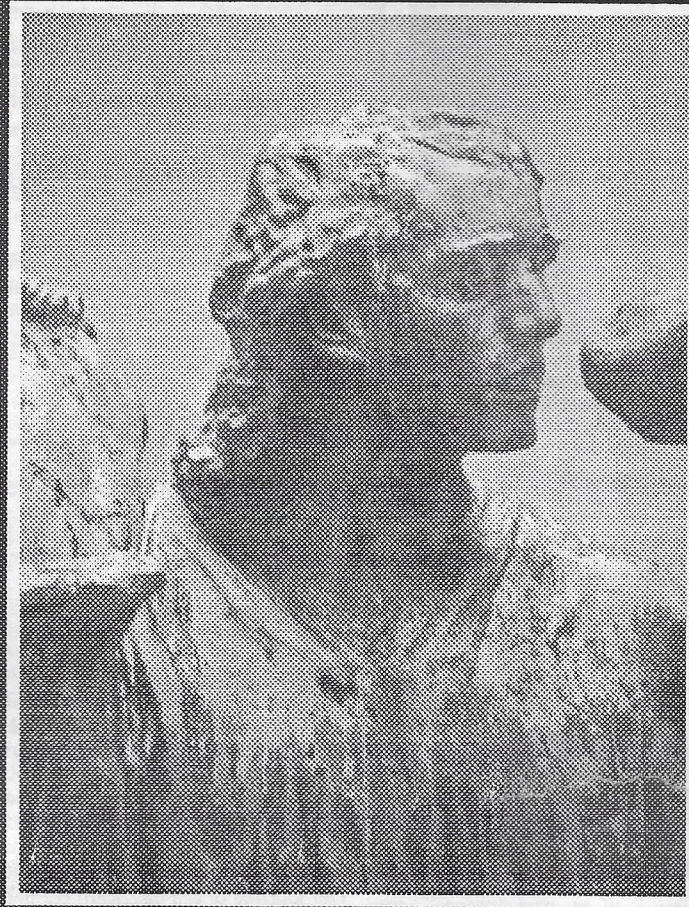
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