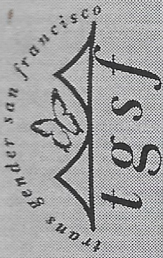


From Stonewall to Family Values



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.

ExCom 2005 - 2006 Officers

(Fiscal Year: May 1 - April 30)

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 Vice President Laura Marlowe
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Fine Print

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

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

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Editor Ayme Michelle Kantz
 Advertising Dawnne Woodie
 Contributing Photographers, this Issue: Eric Larson
 and "Gwen"

Ad Rates

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

Personal ads from TGSF members: \$10 for up to 40 words per issue. We will not accept ads with a sexual objective. Ad deadlines are the 15th of every month. Send ad copy and check or money order to TGSF, Advertising Dept., PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486. **Please support our advertisers, and tell them you saw their ad in The Channel!**

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FROM THE EDITOR...



Have you ever wanted to give up on something? Just walk away and say fuggedaboutit? I'm sure many of you have suffered from burnout. Job burnout. Relationship burnout. Transmission burnout. You just want to throw up your hands, reach for the vodka bottle and throw in the towel. Stick a fork in me, I'm done.

Well, I kinda feel that way about being the gal that cranks the house organ. And I mean that in an entirely non-Freudian way. I find myself becoming disinterested, disconnected, disenfranchised...even disembodied (must be the vodka).

I could keep plunkin' along if needs be, cruise control operating within normal parameters. Yet I'll take a deep breath and wonder, why? Why have you done this month in, month out - for seven years? For the glory? For the recognition? For the money?

Gaack!...(sorry, that was my cat yorking up a hairball)...where have you heard *that* before? Yeah this newsletter can be a pain in the ass, and yes it involves double-digit hours of my time each month. But I do this job because I've always wanted *The Channel* to be something we could pass around to our family, our friends, our neighbors, the inquisitive, the novice, our service providers, our clergy, and say here, read this, check this out, this is what I'm about, this is what's going on in my community, this is what's happening to transnics in our country, these are the issues faced by transnics all around the world.

And in this age of 3-dub instant access ("www"), it's true that the intrepid TGSF tranny with a computer and a modem can certainly read and learn what he/she wants to know long before the hard copy of *The Channel* arrives in his/her mailbox. Where do you think I get a lot of my material anyway?

So why do we even need a newsletter? Is it a touchy-feely kind of thing? Do you like the Channel, in all its 300-dpi black and white photocopied glory, or not? (Though I'll admit, the color PDF version available online is much more engaging).

Getting your opinion in the past has been like pulling teeth. Yes we've tried polls and surveys - even postage prepaid envelopes! - yet still we can't get any good feedback from you. Is it too much trouble to ask you to send an email to an ExCom member or me? Scribble a few lines to the PO Box and spring for a lousy 37 cents? Pick up the phone and leave a message on the hotline?

What do you want out of this newsletter? What do you like about it? What do you hate about it? Tell us!

For that matter, what do you expect from the Editor of this rag? Should the Editor be a voting member of the Board (and beholden to them as such)? Or should the Editor remain your independent "watch-dog?" Should the Editor even have a soapbox to stand on?

OK, the million-dollar question: Do you want me to continue as your Editor? Over the years, I've consistently stuck up for "the little guy" in my column. Do you think I'm a blasphemous subversive liberal and it's time get someone more conservative? Or is it simply time to move the Elder aside, and bring in a more youthful perspective?

You know, it's funny sometimes how despite our best intentions, we never seem to learn from our past. Those of us who remember our history, or who research and document our history (of which these humble volumes are but a part) - those at least have a leg-up on a chance at avoiding previous mistakes. But those who discount or ignore our history are certainly fated to repeat it.

I bring that up because I went back to June of 1998 (when I began as Editor), to begin re-creating PDFs of back issues of *The Channel*, so that TGSF can post them online in the member's area of the website. In opening and converting that old file, I was blindsided with an epiphany (one of those cast-iron therapy moments), and I had to laugh at the irony...and at myself.

I began to read my debut article as Editor, and wouldn't you know it, the first words out of my mouth were vile rantings and slathering ravings about the state of ETVC's finances, and ExCom spending too much of the club's volunteer hours and money on the Cotillion.

I guess some things will never change.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roxy Carmichael-Hart

Standing Proud

I have a 500 word limit on my column this month so I will need to pick and chose my words carefully.

Didn't I tell you that it would be magnificent? Wasn't our whole

Pride effort something special? I understated it. Over one million people saw our magnificent float and knew what we stood for. They found out that transgenders are people. We helped lead the fight for gender equality and civil rights. And more and more, trans folks are coming out, feeling freer than ever to express themselves. That doesn't mean the fight is over; it means that it has just begun.

I am so proud of all of the individuals who helped on Pride weekend. Whether it was building the float, marching in the trans march, acting as a safety monitor, an accessibility monitor and of course, a contingent monitor, I give you all my gratitude and thanks. You should all be proud and gratified at the work you did.

Because of my word limit I can't properly thank everyone. But one thing about our float stood out. While many of the floats were professional jobs, preformed by professional float builders at a cost of thousands of dollars, our float was built by people who sacrificed sleep and vacations and family time – all because of the commitment that they wanted to give to our community – because they believed in what we were doing. They were driven by their desire to do something good and to show what our community stood for. I felt more a part of this float than any of the four that I have been a part of, with the exception of the first. I connected with the message and it meant something to me. As Dawnne and I walked down Market Street, we chatted a bit about our experience and how we were so pleased to be a part of something so meaningful.

So now that Pride is over for another year, we turn our time and attention to the Cotillion. No doubt you have seen our beautiful advertising cards and soon you will see posters. Tickets will likely be on sale by the time you get this. We'll have co-MCs this year – Lenny Broberg and Donna Sachet. I have also started to line up the talent and to research the movies and music of the era. There will be lots of surprises. I will be working closely with our production team on all of the details. We can use performers and helpers and all kinds of people to get involved so if you want to be a part of something spectacular, please let me know. And of course, we need contestants. I have several candidates for Ms. TGSF 2006 but I would like some guys to step forward.

We have a Bogie and Bacall night scheduled for August 6 at the Hotel Bijou. See details elsewhere.

And because I have a 500 word limit, I will need to stop in mid sent-

ExCom Profile

UNOFFICIAL TRANNY DOSSIER

NAME: BRIEL, Katra Deanna Aphrodite
POSITION: Co-Chair, Social Committee, TGSF ExCom

EXPERIENCE: 22 _ years, US Army – Corps of Engineers, 14 Years Administration, Payroll and Personnel, 8 Years Operations and Facility Security



Like many of those in our community, she started questioning her Gender Identity in her formative years. Having spent most of her life in denial and shame, hiding her true self and burying herself in work, relationship and recreation, Katra finally emerged onto the scene and accepted herself in the fall of 2003/ spring of 2004. When she finally made a plan, made some inquiries on-line and some purchases at local stores throughout the Sacramento and San Francisco areas, Katra was ready to emerge from her delicate cocoon. And as the opportunity presented itself, she was ready to make her bold, yet stupid move. Alone, unsupervised and having no real idea what the hell she was doing, Katra made her way to San Francisco, changed and did her make-up in her car in a parking garage, walked out and picked up some final items that were left on lay-a-way. Fear gripped her heart, yet she managed to overcome that right until she first stepped onto Mission Street – and the wind took her hair! A very nice lady immediately told her that it was OK and told Katra how to properly wear her hair. The day was consumed with wandering the city in wonder and amazement and no one stared or was unkind. She then went to dinner at The Hard Rock at Fisherman's Wharf, where fear once again took over as she entered and saw all the people in that establishment, quickly turned and fled in terror. But the need for sustenance overcame that fear and she found another, less busy restaurant and proceeded to dine on a nice pasta salad while watching the sun set on the Golden Gate, and the tears flowed. Happiness at last, her true self found. Then the insidious and very stupid part of the plan took effect and she found her way to yes, the dreaded Power Exchange! And like some semi wild child, 14 year old on her first unsupervised date, she proceeded to be stupid. That was June 19th, 2004, the rest is history and a long journey in a short time between there and here.

My point here is that I am new to accepting myself and this life and I am moving forward. At that time and technically while I write this, I am STILL on active duty in the US Army. By the time you read this, I will have been retired, or within a day or two of that. I am still like that 14 year old in many respects, naïve and inexperienced in many things. I view that as my strength as I learn from the many mistakes I made and will continue to do so. And I hope to put my Military Experiences to good use and help serve this community which has shown me so much kindness, love and respect! I can never repay all that many of you have done for me, but I give my heart felt thanks and hope to serve you well in the future!

Love, Katra!



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Readers Respond

Dear TGSF:

[I WAS] ALMOST KILLED 6-26-05

by Terry

Last Sunday Noon I was almost killed when a parade float trailer came within a few inches of knocking me down and running over me with its dual wheels. I was not injured, just scared.

This happened near the end of the San Francisco Pride Parade as the TGSF and Barely Legal Productions (RHPS) floats neared Mission Street after turning onto 8th Street (contingents 41 and 40). I was a surplus wheel monitor on the TGSF float — I had taken the training, but they had more than enough monitors, so I walked informally alongside the float.

In order to take close-up photos of the Rocky Horror Picture Show cast in their costumes on the RHPS float, I walked backwards alongside their float just ahead of its flatbed trailer and opposite to the rear wheels of the double-cab pickup truck pulling the trailer. Looking through the viewfinder of my camera I took a couple of pictures and lowered my camera — only then did I notice the leading edge of the moving trailer inches in front of me (the trailer was wider than the truck pulling it).

If the trailer had knocked me down as a walked backwards, I would have been on the ground directly in the path of the right-side dual wheels of the single axle trailer.

MY BAD, BUT NEITHER RHPS NOR TGSF WHEEL MONITORS REACTED TO THE DANGER I WAS IN OR MENTIONED IT LATER. I was easily visible above the low back of the pickup, but all ignored me even though both floats were still moving.

A few minutes later I summarized the above for a Safety Monitor, but I'm not sure I really got her attention. I've been a Wheel Monitor four times and a Safety Monitor once.

Conclusions

(1) WHEEL MONITORS MUST STAY ON DUTY UNTIL THEIR VEHICLES COME TO A PERMANENT STOP. As Yogi Berra said, "It ain't over 'til it's over."

(2) WATCH OUT FOR PEOPLE TAKING PICTURES OR MOVIES. They can't watch for danger through a viewfinder. Keep them away from the line of moving vehicles.

(3) WHEEL MONITORS SHOULD NOT WALK IN THE PATH OF A WIDER PART OF THEIR FLOAT that's behind them. WE NEED LEADING EDGE MONITORS.

(4) Safety people are in more danger than spectators or participants, as a general rule. In the 1980s and 90s I used to operate a ropes course in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Staff on other ropes courses warned me that staff is injured more than participants. On my own course, the only injuries needing outside medical attention hit my two most senior instructors.

DEAR TGSF:

By Jennifer Kennedy, Ms. TGSF 2005

Pride 2005 is now a memory, and I think most everyone involved in the huge amount of effort around the TGSF float for the Pride parade, the TGSF booth, monitor volunteering, and the many other busy activities have finally just recently caught up on sleep after those many sleep deprived hours of effort. What an effort, and in the end, I am quite proud of what we all achieved and of everyone involved is hard work. We won a design award for our concept, validating our concept and message that we worked towards - congrats to the folks designing our float. And overall, the whole Pride effort had many successes, and adding in the Trans march on Friday night, it was quite a moving weekend!

With the TGSF parade float and contingent, we wanted to make a statement, that we as a community are not the caricature of the Drag Queen exhibitionist of our past that most of the public still thinks of us as, but rather contributing members of society that work alongside everyone else and lead everyday lives like everyone else. That we are lawyers, doctors, law enforcement officers, public officials, software engineers, and a myriad other occupations. That we are part of everyday life and expect the rights and privileges that any other law abiding members of society are afforded. That we are no longer the queens of Stonewall (where the LGBT civil rights movement started), we are now part of the picket fence (a symbol for the American dream). We really were trying to make a cohesive statement, not the usual mish mosh of personal statements mixing in everyone's personal tastes and lifestyle alternatives, but a statement about our community, where our civil rights efforts started, and how we are now actively part of everyone's world in every walk of life and not just some alternative lifestyle backwater better left hidden away in the closet.

Being on the float, I was not able to get out into the crowd during the parade and get people's reactions. But second hand, I have heard some amazing stories, even to the point of LGBT members (many with children) being brought to tears by the message we were presenting. It was a bit complex for a float in a noisy parade, but it did apparently resonate with the crowd and we accomplished what we set out to do. My partner rode on the float at my side, to show that indeed relationships and families can survive and blossom with a transgender partner and the difficulties of transition - most folks only know about the failures, as most successful relationships are fairly stealth and have disappeared into the world at large (and I don't blame them!). This is definitely a highlight of my time as Ms. Transgender San Francisco!

The Trans march was quite wonderful, though I wish that folks would have taken more time and effort to show their support for the politicians and speakers at the end of the march, which had unfortunately turned into social hour by that time. And the Trans altar, quite moving. And the list goes on.. Though there were issues, the results of the Pride weekend are definitely an effort to learn from, to move forward from, and to use as a catalyst for moving our cause forward (and yes there is a cause that we need to care about, we should not forget that).

DEAR MEMBER,

Christine Aramburu RN

If you are now or were previously a part of a couple that includes a M2F individual and a genetic female, you may be eligible to participate in this study.

My name is Christine Aramburu. The principal investigator is Deborah Ballard-Reisch. We are faculty at the University of Nevada, and are conducting this study. Contact information is provided below.

Issues involving transmen and transwomen and their families have been stigmatized and understudied for too long. It is my sincere wish to make progress for the TS community by highlighting some of these issues. But I need your unique and valuable voice to help make this progress possible.

I am seeking couples or former couples that include M2F individuals and their female partners to participate in a study examining relationships. M2Fs may be pre-op, post-op, or non-operative. Listed below are inclusion and exclusion criteria:

1. Participants must be between 21-80 years of age.
2. The female participant must be a biological female (i.e. natal female).
3. The male-to-female participant must be a natal male. Transitioning to female does not exclude the individual from being eligible to participate.
4. The participants must be, or must have been, in a committed relationship with each other.

5. The duration of the relationship must be, or have been, a minimum of one year.
6. The natal female participant must have been aware of her partner's transsexualism during the relationship.
7. Participants may be of any race and ethnic background.
8. Participants may be of any socioeconomic status.
9. Pregnant women may not participate.
10. Self-identified female-to-male transsexual individuals may not participate.
11. Participants who live outside Nevada, California, Utah, or the Pacific Northwest states will not be interviewed.

The study includes a questionnaire and the option to participate in a follow-up in-person interview. Individuals may choose to participate with the questionnaire only. The questionnaire includes questions on relationship satisfaction and relationship maintenance. The questionnaire includes 28 questions and takes about 20 minutes to complete. Each member of a couple is asked to complete the questionnaire separately. Questionnaires will be mailed and return envelopes will be provided.

Interviews will be in-person and each member of the couple will be interviewed separately. Interviews will take approximately two hours.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me at (775) 219-6990, or Christine Aramburu, Orvis School of Nursing / 134, University of Nevada, Reno, Reno, Nevada 89557. Every precaution will be taken to preserve confidentiality. No identifying information will be included in the questionnaire. Participation is entirely voluntary, and inquiring more about the study puts you in no obligation to participate.



TGSF Events in August

Saturday / August 6 / 7:30pm

TGSF MOVIE NIGHT

See Events Page for all the details!

Sunday / August 7 / Begins 1:00pm

TGSF ExCOM MEETING

Will be held at the The Cathedral Hill Hotel, 1101 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94109

Thursday / August 11 / . Begins 7:30pm

TGSF MID-MONTH SOCIAL

Program TBA. Check www.tgsf.org for details. Held at the The Cathedral Hill Hotel, 1101 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94109

Saturday / August 13 / 6:30pm

CARLA'S MONTHLY DINNER

Location TBD. Check www.carlas.com for details.

Thursday / August 25 / Begins 7:00pm

TGSF END-OF-MONTH SOCIAL

Program TBA. Check www.tgsf.org for details. Held at the The Cathedral Hill Hotel, 1101 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94109

Saturday / August 27th / 4:00-10:00pm

CARLA'S BEACH BLANKET BINGO PARTY

At Carla's Salon and Boutique, 124 Race Street, San Jose, CA 95126. Visit www.carlas.com for more details.

Monday / August 29 / Time TBD

DIABLO VALLEY GIRLS FIFTH MONDAY DINNER

RSVP required. For more information or to RSVP, email Sara at sararoberts180@yahoo.com or call the DVG hotline at (925) 937-8432.

Coming in September!

Saturday / September 3 / 4:00pm

DVG BBQ SERIES CONTINUES!

The last two BBQ's have been great fun! Lots of food, the "Wacky Castaways Bar," a no-pressure/no-hassle atmosphere, and terrific views of Mt. Diablo. You (and a guest) MUST RSVP to get location and directions. If you RSVP, please commit to bringing a dish to share, as well as anything you want to grill for yourself. Dance on the deck, smoke 'em if you've got 'em, and bring a suit and a towel if you want to use the hot tub. Volunteers for set-up and clean-up are needed. Call **925-937-8432** to RSVP.

EAST BAY TRANSGENDER AA

Genderqueer, Transgendered, Transsexual, Twin-Spirited, LGBT. Speaker/Discussion/Meditation/Readings of AA approved literature. **Weekly - THURSDAYS - 8-9 PM.** 3989 Howe Street (Mandana House one block from Kaiser off Broadway), in Oakland, CA 94611.

August's Birthdays

08/01	Jenifer Kilarr	08/16	Casey Cole
08/02	Elizabeth Jeffords	08/16	Gail Stern
08/03	Angel Louise Grant	08/16	John Gulino
08/03	Kendra Blewitt	08/16	Tina Benez
08/03	Marla Selby	08/21	Erin Marie Tucker
08/03	Lisa Dummer	08/23	Yvonne Galileo
08/04	Anne Hart	08/27	Lulu Blau
08/07	Deborah Bolle	08/27	Sabrina Evans
08/13	Susan Seger	08/27	Louise Balk
08/13	Grace Kwan	08/29	Leia Chen
		08/31	Darcy Leopard

Happy Birthday To All!

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with sensitive help
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Calendar - August 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@simcvt.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 5:00 PM CCHH 7:00 PM PISSR General Meeting 8:00 PM DVG	2 7:00 PM SCT	3 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social 7:30 PM MPTG	4 7:00 PM DVG-RCC	5 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	6 7:30 PM TGSF Movie Night!
7 1:30 PM TGSF: ExCom Meeting	8 5:00 PM CCHH	9	10 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	11 7:30 PM TGSF Mid-Month!	12 7:00 PM SVGA 8:00 PM PacCtr	13 6:30 PM Carla's Monthly Dinner 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
14	15 5:00 PM CCHH 8:00 PM DVG	16 7:00 PM SCT	17 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	18 TG Legal Clinic	19 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	20
21	22 5:00 PM CCHH	23 7:30 PM SCOUT	24 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	25 7:00 PM TGSF: EOM	26 7:00 PM SVGA 7:00 PM TransVis-HWD 8:00 PM PacCtr	27 4:00 PM Carla's Beach Blanket Bingo Party! 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
28	29 5:00 PM CCHH DVG 5th Monday Dinner!	30	31 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social			

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

May we use photos of you taken at TGSF events in our newsletter or website? 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.

Support Your Organization!

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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
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Recognition & Benefits:

Recognition in Cotillion Program
One complimentary ticket to the Cotillion
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Thank you for your support of TGSF!

Takin' Care of Biz...

TGSF FINANCIAL REPORT

As of July 20, 2005

Assets

Cash	3879.49
Decorations	1000.00
Beverages	200.00
Total	5079.49

Liabilities and Equity

Accounts Payable	0.00
Total	0.00

Statement of TGSF Income Revenues

Revenues

Memberships	960.000
Advertising	70.00
Donations	435.50
Total	1465.50

Expenses

Channel	234.00
Phone	152.53
Post Office Box	70.00
Total	456.53

Net Income 1008.97

PISSR

People In Search of Safe Restrooms

PISSR is committed to establishing gender-neutral bathrooms. We believe that all people, regardless of their gender identification or presentation, have the right to access safe and dignified restroom facilities without fear of harassment, judgment, or violence. General meetings are always the first Monday of the month; 7 pm at 870 Market Street (Flood Building), 4th floor in San Francisco.

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TGSF DONATIONS

*Our Friends Who Give
as of July 20, 2005*

Ayme Kantz \$10.00

Bless You and Thank You for Caring!

CONTACT TGSF!

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*Submissions can be made online directly.
Cancelling mistakes or for other problems,
please contact the Webmistress.*

WE ARE NOT ALONE

The issue of how to improve member involvement is not unique to TGSF or to other gender organizations. Presented for you is an article in the July "Flipside" published by the Gulf Gender Alliance in New Orleans. Their editor, Cindi R., has graciously agreed to let us reprint the article. See if you can relate to what is being said

Is GGA Passé?

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Last month we discussed how Transgenderism has become "hot" in today's culture, with more openness being reported, and, to some extent, it seems an inkling of acceptance.

Is this also why support groups such as GGA are struggling? Is this why *Renaissance* is not the thriving national organization it once was? Perhaps.

From one person's perspective (mine), it seems as though GGA might be suffering because its members — both present and former — are not. Simply put, there isn't as much of a need for some people to seek out the benefits an organization such as GGA has to offer.

And what exactly are those benefits? Over the past few months we have repeatedly asked for your feedback, and with the exception of a few "usual suspects" the response has been alarmingly quiet.

GGA's financial resources are dwindling, along with its membership. I wouldn't presume to suggest a death knell rings for the group — there will always be those who enjoy the social gathering, and will attend the monthly meetings. But the facts are that — again, with the exception of the "usual suspects" — there is an alarmingly high blasé attitude that seems to have become prevalent amongst the vast majority of GGA members.

So what will it take to rouse you? What would it take to get you to send an email to <board@gga.org> or perhaps a letter to our PO box. Or maybe we should alter our meetings. Would quarterly events be more to your liking rather than monthly meetings?

The lack of member participation means the progress (or lack thereof) with GGA rests solely in the hands of the afore-mentioned "usual suspects." If you don't like what is happening, speak up! If GGA is doing exactly what you want it to do (monthly social meetings, newsletters, occasional participation in community GBLT events, and support of national and regional GBLT efforts), then SPEAK UP! We can't possibly know what's on your mind unless we hear from you.

So this is the last time I'm going to rant on this subject. If you haven't told us what's wrong with GGA — or if you haven't told us nothing is wrong with GGA, then you are part of the problem instead of being part of the solution.

This issue features some "companion" stories — four articles, two each on the same subject. One is about a family dealing with Transgenderism, and the other is about Transgendered people in the workplace.

What's missing from this month's issue is our Resource Guide, the first issue of which was published in March. We have many entries that have been updated, and would love to publish it, but our coffers are currently a little too lean to do so. We will publish it as soon as we can.

Epilogue

Last night I attended a meeting of my WTS group and we dealt with, you guessed it, member involvement. We mailed out 200 surveys asking for feedback. We received 21 responses. So we have either made everyone content, everyone pissed off, or everyone indifferent. How do you tailor your organization when 90% of the members don't respond?

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CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

By Roxy Carmichael-Hart

What is Pride About?

I'm back. Miss me? Yes I have used up four of my 500 words.

In my President's Report, I touched on the fabulous TGSF Pride effort. Given the space and word limits, I could not really get into any of the personal stories which touched me.

Except for my first parade, this float meant more to me than the others we have had, which in no way diminishes the efforts of those who worked on those floats. But this time we had a message with which I related. We told a story. The float was not about showcasing any one person. Our Ms. TGSF insisted on that. She wanted to showcase our community. But didn't she look beautiful, standing proudly with her partner, Chris. Two people, in love, not afraid to show it.

Victoria Secret, who is a well known performer and used to crowds, portrayed a drag queen on our float and looked elegant. She was giddy with excitement and thanked us. Regina, a newcomer, offered her phone number and wanted to get involved. Jodie also took her first ride and was happy with excitement. Kara and Anne Louise, two people I miss on the ExCom, also played very classy drag queens. Lisa looked like a radiant southern belle with a very classy hat. Katra, our newest ExCom member and delicious Wonder Woman, was a hit. I kept wishing she would tie me up with her golden lasso. Heidi and Monika came all the way from Northern California to march with us. We had our reliable Contingent Monitors — Nancy, Tommi and Terry among others. Sheila, a researcher who is doing a study on bathrooms, came all the way from Toronto and marched with us. She was worried that she didn't look as glamorous as our girls on the float, but I assured her that she looked pretty freakin' gorgeous. And Dawnne and I whipped the crowd into a frenzy or at least a moderate degree of enthusiasm.

The most touching story was the one very young girl, whom I won't embarrass by name. She approached me a bit timidly before the parade and asked if she could join us. By all means! She in fact, even helped carry the banner. I looked at her from time to time and I could see she was having a great time. When the parade was over, she came over to Dawnne and me and cried in our arms. The experience had meant that much to her. She got the feeling of acceptance, that she was loved and accepted for whom she is and that there was a place for her with us. It was the feeling I got three years ago, the feeling many of us have gotten. That someone cares. That in a place like TGSF, everything and anything is possible. That someone will help you find your way to being the person you are.

To paraphrase the words of Linus, "and that is what Pride is all about, Charlie Brown".

PROUD OF PRIDE

By Jennifer A.

We are quickly coming to the end of another "Pride" season. I personally had the privilege this year to attend my first pride event (Santa Cruz Pride) and participate in one (SF Pride).

What a treat! I could gush for pages about what a fantastic time I had, how many gifted and talented people I met (how many people wanted to take my picture <blush>) or how many people were brought to tears by the tremendous outpouring of love, compassion and support shown to our community, but I won't. If my blabbering causes an extra stamp to go on to each Channel Roxy will kill me!

What I want to do in this limited space is to appreciate all of the people who contributed to make these events the huge successes they were. Most parade organizers are unpaid volunteers and it is only through their selfless passion and dedication to our community that events such as these are possible. If you are one of these people, thank you so much. I had a great time and I owe it all to you!

Then there are TGSFs superstars, your Board! Each one is a living, breathing YES! They continually suit up, show up, set up, clean up, etc. up in support of the community they love. And again, all of them are unpaid volunteers.

So, the next time you are at a TGSF event, and you see a member of your Board, please remember to acknowledge and appreciate them. They don't do it for the accolades, but a sincere hug and a thank you sure is a nice bonus!

WHAT CAN TGSF DO FOR YOU?

Dear Members & Potential Members:

My name is Jennifer A. and I am one of the newest members of your TGSF Board. In order to serve you the best I can I need your help!

The mission of TGSF is (in part) to provide social, educational and outreach programs to the Bay Area transgendered population and to others interested in transgender issues/activities. Some of their key areas of focus are educational seminars on female appearance and male to female transition, social events such as the Cotillion and the mid-month/end-of month socials and community events such as our recent Pride marches and education/outreach booths.

As you can see, there is a lot to be done in order to serve our community completely and well, and there are limited resources/people to meet those needs. That is where you (our membership) come in. You are the reason why we are here. Please help us focus our efforts in order to serve you better.

All I ask is that you take 5 minutes this month to write to an Ex-Com member. Any one will do! Our e-mail addresses are published in the Channel or you can write to us c/o the TGSF PO box. Either way, we want to know what you think.

With your input we can design programs and allocate resources to better meet your needs. With your assistance we can make this the best year TGSF has ever seen. Won't you take 5 minutes to tell us what you think?

I look forward to hearing from each of you!

**Jennifer A.
Education Co-Chair**

VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Laura Marlowe

I've been on the ExCom for over a year, but this is the first time I've sat down to write a Vice-President's report. Why now? Because it's a special occasion-I get to write about Pride, and to thank all the people who helped to make this year's San Francisco Pride such a success.

Let's begin with the float. I convened the first meeting of the TGSF Pride Committee on February 19th. (We began so early because I'd sworn to myself that this year, the float would not be built the day before the Parade, it would be DONE by the day before the Parade.) That was the meeting where Pamela, Alli, Dawnne, Lisa and I came up with our "Stonewall to Family Values" design-the design that won TGSF a free trailer for our float, and a truck to pull it, from the Pride organization. Joining us at later meetings were Ms. TGSF Jennifer, who got us our first donated trailer, and Miss TGSF Anne-Louise, whose fabulous drawings of our float concept helped us to win the trailer we ultimately used.

When it came time to build the float, we needed a lot of help-and the members of TGSF came through. It seems like everybody helped. Everyone on the committee pitched in. Perpetual volunteers Tommi and Veronica Nova, as always, were there to do whatever they could. JoAnne Handa came to help us paint. Debra Ann Moore helped build the picket fences. CJ Khing donated hardware; Richard, an EoM regular, made a generous cash donation to the cause. Arianna did a lot of painting, and found the time to select the songs for the float soundtrack, and burn a CD for us. Anne Louise designed and built the beautiful "Stonewall" sign you saw on the front of the float. Katra spent hours creating the bridge's suspension system-one of those tiny details that made our float look so good.

Some non-members pitched in, too. Will, whom you may remember as our waiter at the Blue Muse, came by to paint. Erica spent hours cutting and welding steel to make frames for the float buildings, and the handles the float riders held on to. Bonnie painted our Stonewall bar with a loving detail that made it look like the real thing-and she donated the door hardware, to boot. Anthony and his assistant Marianna did a fabulous job painting the skirt of the float: the spray-painted "TransGender San Francisco" on either side. (We couldn't bear to lose Anthony's work, so we took it off the float and stored it.)

Dave Thomas, who runs the Float Barn, was his usual helpful self, loaning us tools and giving advice. Jodie, who works with Dave, gave us a lot of help. Among other things, she single-handedly removed a huge platform from our trailer. I don't know how she did that all by herself.

I always thought our float would look good. But because of the contributions of all the people I've mentioned above, our float looked great-I still can't believe just how wonderful it looked. My heartfelt thanks go to all those who helped. (And if I've forgotten anyone, I'm sorry. Let me know and I'll correct my omission.)

This year, Pride was more than just our float. TGSF was also one of the groups which put together the Trans March, the Trans Pavilion and the Trans Stage. Allison Laureano was the TGSF representative for these efforts-and she somehow found the time to work tirelessly on the float, and staff our outreach booth, too. Thank you, Alli.

My special thanks go to all who were volunteers for Pride this year. It requires a special dedication to take the time to attend trainings, and to take the time during Pride to help others. I honor you all for sacrificing your time, for putting our organization's needs first. So, to all our contingent monitors, to our safety monitors Roxy and Lisa, to our accessibility volunteers Katra, Jennifer Anderson, Roxy, Marsha and Pamela, thank you. You did a wonderful job.

SECRETARY'S DESK

Lisa Rae Dummer

As you can see, there have been a number of changes to this month's Channel, with hopefully more to come. In an effort to improve the Channel and help Ayme at the same time, we've come up with a number of new guidelines. The first is that articles will be limited to about 500 to 800 words. That way there will be more information available to you each month. Hopefully, there will be more columns like this and Roxy's from the other members of the ExCom, keeping you fully informed of what is happening and will take place in the future.

The second major change is that all articles will funnel through the TGSF Secretary. At the moment, that's me. If you have an article you wish to see in the Channel, just email it to me (destinee382436@yahoo.com) and I will forward it to Ayme. This leaves Ayme free to set up and edit the Channel without having to deal with the collection of items for it. Ayme will still be searching all the news sources for other items of interest to the TGSF community.

Third, if you are going to submit a picture, please try to provide a caption with it. This will help us identify where it should go. This is especially important when the picture is accompanying an article. When you submit a picture with an article, please try to keep the article a little shorter, closer to the 500-word limit. This will help in maintaining column space and integrity.

We are also hopeful of bringing you more articles dealing with upcoming TGSF events. We want to give you ample information to what your interest and time to plan to attend. As you may know, the next big event is the Halloween Ball and then the Cotillion. Look for information on both of them in future issues. The Cotillion is going to be fantastic, so make your plans now. There are events scheduled Friday, Saturday and Sunday, so plan on making it a weekend in San Francisco.

There will be other changes to come and this is where we need your help. If there is anything you would like to see, or that you miss from the past, please let me know. Would you like to see more articles about local transgender leaders? Let me know. Would you like to stay informed of what's happening in Sacramento or Washington, D.C. that affects transgender persons? Let me know. Ayme, Roxy, Dawnne and I will be meeting at the end of the month to go over any suggestions you have and to see how the channel can better meet your needs. This is your newsletter and we want it to serve you.

Special Events and Announcements!

A Protest, A Festival, And More:

CAMP TRANS - IT'S NOT JUST A REACTION TO MWMF

By Dawn Wolfe Gutterman / Pride Source
Between The Lines News, www.pridesource.com

HART, Mich. - From August 7-14, transgender activists and allies from all over the country will descend on Camp Trans, the transgender community's answer to the "womyn-born-womyn" policy of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which is held nearby during the same week.

According to the Camp Trans web site, the first Camp Trans was held in 1993, two years after a transwoman was asked to leave MWMF. While Camp Trans hasn't always been focused on protesting the exclusion of transwomen from women's space, organizers began refocusing the event beginning in 2003.

According to Lorraine Donaldson, a member of the executive committee who is in charge of culture at Camp Trans, the event is both a protest of the MWMF policy and "an experience in and of itself."

"In particular this year, [because] we have a number of guest speakers and presenters who are there to help educate trans people and allies in how to become better activists to deal with all of the issues that trans people are facing in the world at large," she said. Donaldson stressed that Camp Trans is open, not only to trans women and men, but to anyone who is trans-friendly. According to the Camp Trans web site, about 200 people attend each year.

Political activity is a central facet of life at Camp Trans. Participants "walk the line" at the MWMF, educating about the harm they say that the Festival's exclusionary policy does to trans women and the women's community as a whole. And, according to the Camp Trans website, "Throughout the week we'll have trans activists from around the country presenting workshops designed to give you the tools to organize around issues that affect trans people in your own community - health care, discrimination, employment, HIV, lower-income resources. This is the "meat" (or textured soy protein, if you like) of CT and is not to be missed!" In addition, organizers are planning a week-long workshop on organizer and activist training.

A festival is not a festival without entertainment, and Camp Trans is no exception. The 2005 Camp Trans event will feature entertainers including Sandy Stone, Dana Baitz, the Athens Boys' Choir, and LotSix. There will also be time for trips to the nearby lake and other social activities.

Despite the plethora of events, however, the heart and soul of Camp Trans is a protest against the exclusion of trans women from women's space, particularly the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. According to Donaldson, MWMF's exclusion of trans women "hurts a lot of people."

"I think one thing that's very important about the protest aspect of Camp Trans is to recognize that excluding trans women from Festival hurts more than just the trans women," she said. "It hurts other women who'd like to attend but don't because they disagree with the policy. It hurts women who attend the festival without friends or lovers who can't or won't attend. It hurts women who feel guilty about attending while other women can't. It hurts women at Festival who are deprived of the contributions of those women who can't or won't attend. It hurts women's communities that are divided over the issue. It hurts LGBT communities that are forced to choose between supporting the MWMF and respecting trans women. It hurts trans women, who come to feel that we have no place in communities that disrespect us, and it hurts the communities that alienate trans women."

At least some "womyn born womyn" agree with Donaldson. Janna Pereira of Dennis, Mass., says that she and her partner, Kathleen Lambert, stay away from the festival because of the policy. Pereira is a natal woman; Lambert is a transwoman. "Now, if she wanted to practice deception, she could go to MWMF," said Pereira of her partner. "No one would know about her male past by looking at her or talking to her. But the point of going to an event like this is to get away from 'don't ask don't tell,' not buy into it."

Janelle Wielhouwer of Kitchener, Ontario, another natal woman, said she has been to MWMF but "I will not return until they change their policy."

"I cannot enjoy the land knowing that those women who are immigrants to women's country are not welcome," she said. "I cannot enjoy it any more than I could join a club that excluded people of color. I grieve every year that I am not on the land, and I hope to one day be able to return, but only when this policy has changed."

TGSF & RGA - COOKBOOK AND CONTESTS!

Ok everybody, here is your chance to get your favorite recipe published and talk a little about yourself if you want! TGSF, RGA, and possibly Kaiser Permanente (KP) Pride is sponsoring the creation of a community cookbook. More details can be found at RGA's home page: <http://www.transgender.org/rga/>

Recipes should be original and unpublished. In addition to your recipe you may (but it is not required) submit a short (200 words or less) bio about yourself. You may also submit a small passport sized photo. Please be sure to indicate very clearly what name you would like to be published with your recipe. You may also be anonymous. Contact information, however is necessary. An email address as a minimum, so the editor can contact you if he can't tell if you mean a teaspoon or a cup. Contact information will be kept strictly confidential. If there is no contact information and the editor can't make out your recipe, it may not get published.

Recipes, bios, and photos can be submitted in any PC format: disk or floppy. They can also be submitted printed/typed, or even hand-written. Submit any such items to your RGA or TGSF leadership. Photos should be in JPG format. Your submissions can also be sent via email to: TGCommCB@hotmail.com. Submissions will be accepted through October 30th. You are not limited to one submission, but not all of them may be published at this time. If you don't have a scanner available to you, you can even give us the actual passport size photo and we will scan it for you.

Cover Contest!

I know there are lots of graphic artist's in our community, so get your thinking caps on! The cover of the book will be in color, and the design should encompass TGSF, RGA and KP Pride in some way. If you are a TGSF Yahoo Group member, go to the Yahoo Group home page, click on "files", then click on "TG (and others) Cookbook", then click on "add file". Upload your PDF submission of your design directly there. This will make voting on it later easier! If you are not a TGSF Yahoo groups member, or if you prefer, submissions can be made either on disk or floppy in PDF format. Submissions on disk or floppy can be given to any of your TGSF or RGA leadership. Some prizes will be offered to the winner of the contest! Submissions will be accepted through Sep 30. Don't forget to include your contact information.

Naming Contest!

Ok, the "bun" is in the oven, so what do we name it? Ideas and suggestions can be submitted in any format, including email. Get them to your TGSF or RGA leadership. Submissions will be posted on TGSF and RGA websites for a community vote in October. Submissions will be accepted until Sep 30. Submission's can also be sent via email to: TGCommCB@hotmail.com. The winner will receive some prizes, details to follow. Remember to include some form of contact information.

Just a reminder folks, don't ever let go of your only copy of anything. Please make sure you have backup copies of all your submissions. Blessings of good fortune to you all!

Sydney Mason

An organizer for the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival said that there are currently no plans to change the "womyn born womyn" policy. "As far as we're concerned, nothing's changing for us," said Sally Ramsey. "We're continuing to do the same festival we've been doing for thirty years."

Though, according to Donaldson, in the years she has gone she hasn't seen many other trans people from Michigan, the event does have nationwide support. Fundraisers for the 2005 Camp Trans have been held in Minnesota, North Carolina and California.

For more information about Camp Trans, including directions to the event site, visit <http://camptrans.squarespace.com>.

Special Events and Announcements!



TGSF MOVIE NIGHT WITH BOGIE AND BACALL!



Featuring:

The Big Sleep
To Have and Have Not

**7:30 Saturday Night, August 6th 2005 at the Bijou Hotel
111 Mason St., San Francisco, CA, 415-771-1200
Located on the corner of Mason Street and Eddy Street**

Come out and help support TGSF with a couple of wonderful movies that feature some great actors, wonderful stories. Some are even set in a spectacular city – San Francisco! Help us get ready for Cotillion 2006 – “Hooray for Hollywood!” by watching some good, old classic movies with us and get some ideas for what to wear at the next Cotillion

First we have detective Philip Marlowe, called into a case involving a wealthy family, when he discovers blackmail and murder as he falls for the eldest daughter in the family.

Then IN “To Have and Have Not”, Steve (Humphrey Bogart) is urged to do the right thing politically and ends up working for the French Resistance and falls for a pickpocket, “Slim,” (Lauren Bacall). It was her first film, at the age of 20. The film is most remembered for the onscreen chemistry between Steve and Slim, and Slim’s erotic insolence, epitomized when she reminds Steve “You know how to whistle, don’t you? You just put your lips together, and blow.”

See you there, At the Movies!

Donation for Admission: TGSF Members \$7.50, Non Members \$10. Refreshments: 12-oz can \$1.00 / 16-oz bottles \$1.50 Popcorn: \$1.00 / Nachos: \$1.50 / Hotdogs: \$2.50

SANTA CRUZ DIVERSITY CENTER

A Great LGBT Community Resource

By Jennifer Anderson

I had the great pleasure earlier this week of meeting with Bob Correa, the Executive Director for The Diversity Center in Santa Cruz. The Diversity Center was founded in 1989 as a place for members of the LGBT community to come together in support of their common good, as well as a means of providing reliable information on LGBT issues and greater access to available community resources.

The center is located at 177 Walnut Av. in downtown Santa Cruz. It provides services to LGBT members from Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, and is easily accessible from south Santa Clara County. Its facilities include a large meeting room (available for community events), a 2000+ book lending library, free high-speed Internet access and changing facilities. There are twice monthly drop-in meetings focusing on MTF issues and a once-a-month meeting focusing on FTM issues.

The Diversity Center also works to develop partnerships with other non-profit community organizations in order to improve access to community services and to help produce local activities/events of interest to our community.

Bob indicated that TGSF members would be welcome to come by and visit the center and to participate in their meetings. We hope to explore additional common interests in the future and perhaps co-produce LGBT activities and events with them.

To learn more about the Diversity Center visit www.diversitycenter.org or give them a call at (831) 425-5422. Please tell Bob you learned about them via The Channel!



Mid-Peninsula Support Group

WEDNESDAY, August 3, 2005

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

For more details please contact Laura Patterson at
Laura@simcbt.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.

New weekly FTM social group will replace the “Transitioned Men’s” group

FTM GET-TOGETHER AND SUNDAY BRUNCH

Every Sunday @ 1pm • The Crepevine 216 Church St., San Francisco, CA 94114 • Castro †Cross street: 15th & Market St. • (415) 431-4646. For further directions call Marty @ 415-845-1157.

This weekly Get-Together is about Visibility, and Social Activities that we can do as a community! The Crepevine is a nice eatery near all the transit lines (22, J, N, L, F) w/a decently priced menu! Vegetarians & Meat Eaters alike will be comfortable at the Crepevine! Bring your SOFFA’s and you appetites to FTM International’s Weekly Get-Together!

This is meant to supplement the monthly meetings and replace the Transitioned Men’s Group which has suffered since stopping it’s outdoor activities. The idea came out of the need for more FTM specific social support. So, we are gonna try to build community and create FTM, friendly space @ the Crepevine on Sundays at 1pm. Hope to see you there!

Do you want to help with any events @ FTM International? Do you have an idea for an event? Call Marty 415-845-1157.

Events Horizon!

Coming in September!

FTM 2005: A GENDER ODYSSEY

FTM 2005: A Gender Odyssey is a national conference for masculine-identified people who were assigned female gender at birth. It is place for us to gather together, share our lives, speak our truths, learn from one another, and celebrate our communities. This conference offers workshops addressing the practical aspects of trans lives, including: legal issues; intersections of race and gender; coming out to family and friends; transitioning at work; hormones and surgery; and dating, sex, and relationships. Accompanying events include a vendor fair, art exhibit, cabaret, all-ages dance, and much more. The conference will be held on Labor Day weekend, **Sept. 2nd-5th**.

Now in its third year, Gender Odyssey is expanding and moving! In order to accommodate our growing numbers, we will schedule a third full day of programming and relocate to the Washington State Convention and Trade Center. Most workshops and panels offered at this conference are selected from our attendees' own programming submissions. In addition to other topics, we invite workshop proposals to address the issues of the older and/or post-transitioned FTM and the complex needs of families.

Gender Odyssey is pleased to have Kate Bornstein as our keynote speaker. Kate is a high femme, transsexual dyke performance artist, author, playwright, and social activist. The focus of Kate's work has been locating and vigorously promoting common ground among outsiders of all sex and gender variations. She is the author of the groundbreaking books, *Gender Outlaw* and *My Gender Workbook*. Her current work includes a new solo show, "Kate Bornstein Is a Queer and Pleasant Danger" and a new book in the works, *Hello Cruel World: 101 Alternatives to Teen Suicide*.

This conference is also open to anyone interested in the topics to be covered. Whether you are new to thinking about your gender, well established in your chosen gender, FTM, trans, genderqueer, MTF, part of an these communities because of the people you love, or simply questioning the role of gender in your life, FTM 2005: A Gender Odyssey, is open to you. Please plan to attend!

The FTM 2005 Conference Organizers
www.transconference.org

Coming in September!

TRANSSISTAHS AND TRANSBROTAS CONVENTION

Provided by **Richmond Out in the Mountains**
Mountain Pride Media

Louisville, KY – This fall, Louisville will host an event that will mark a turning point in the history of the African-American transcommunity: the first annual **Transsistahs and Transbrothas Convention** at the historic Galt House Hotel and Suites.

The meeting is in response to the need for an infrastructure and support system similar to what the Caucasian transcommunity has built up over the last 20 years.


The event will reflect the African-American cultural heritage promoting networking in the transcommunity. Discussions will focus on programs around the country, what works and what doesn't, with an eye to implementing successful programs.

There will also be time to lay the groundwork for interactions with allies and supporters in the mainstream African-American and African-American GLBT communities.

The event is **September 14-18, 2005**, with more information at www.transfamilydefyinggravity.net

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Events Horizon!

18TH ANNUAL CREATING CHANGE CONFERENCE

Request for Workshop Proposals

Deadline for Submissions: July 15, 2005

Notification Process Begins On/About August 9, 2005

Building An Anti-Racist Movement: A Primary Goal of the Creating Change Conference

Now in its 32nd year, The Task Force remains firmly committed to addressing the impact of racism in this country, in our movement and in our organization. A primary educational goal of Creating Change is to build an anti-racist LGBT movement that includes and reflects the perspectives, needs and priorities of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists of all ages, races, ethnic and language origins, spiritualities and incomes.

While we know that building an anti-racist movement will take much time and many resources, we believe that we can take important steps towards the more immediate fulfillment of that commitment. To this end, The Task Force seeks programmatic proposals that will present participants with opportunities that educate, challenge, support, and help to build an anti-racist movement that is more fully representative. Not all presentations at the conference primarily address this goal, but we will give priority to presentation proposals that thoughtfully consider how racism and the failure to build a LGBT multi-racial social and economic justice movement impacts particular issues and communities and organizing projects. Activists of color are strongly encouraged to submit proposals.

Other Creating Change Priorities:

- Educate on issues such as the recognition and protection of our relationships and families, bias violence, domestic violence, repression of sexuality and gender identity and expression, equality of opportunity in employment, housing, public accommodation and education, the freedom to marry, and military and immigration discrimination;
- Give special attention to strategies, projects, and methods of organizing that link race, class, gender and age oppression with homophobia and heterosexism;
- Strengthen the skills of activists and organizers who work at all levels of our movement;
- Improve our abilities to create change in legislative bodies, media, workplaces, faith communities, community and social institutions, and on campuses and at schools;
- Increase our confidence to work collaboratively with allies to effect durable change;
- Provide opportunities to discuss and explore difficult and challenging issues and topics in a supportive environment;
- Give special attention to emerging issues in our movement and communities, as well as those people most affected by them;
- Build an anti-racist movement for social and economic justice that is vigorous in each state and territory of the US and that includes and reflects the perspectives, needs and priorities of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender

activists of all ages, races, ethnic and language origins, spiritualities, and incomes.

Presentations must fit within one of the following formats:

Workshops (90 minutes): Prepared presentations with stated and specific learning goals and some time dedicated to Q & A and group discussion. Workshops are political education sessions in which attendees will gain useful information, advice, and technical assistance about a specific topic. Please specify if your session is intended for participants whose work is entry level; or intermediate level; or advanced level.

Caucus/Networking (60 minutes): A time for affinity groups or groups working on similar projects to gather for networking, discussion, and community building; or, an opportunity to convene a group of somewhat discordant participants to discuss a specific topic, i.e. a multi-generational group invited to discuss our movement's commitment to persons of disparate ages.

Presenter Policies

In order to keep conference registration fees at the lowest possible rate, we ask presenters to volunteer time, expertise and services at Creating

Change. In consideration of your service as a presenter, you will be able to register for the entire conference at a rate of \$150. This registration rate is inclusive of all pre-conference institutes, plenary sessions, workshops, roundtables, trainings, screenings and caucuses, beginning Wednesday morning November 9 and concluding Sunday November 13, 2005. This registration rate does not include special events, dances/parties, and travel or hotel expenses. The presenter registration rate is limited to four presenters per session.

After a proposal is accepted, presenters will be mailed a presenter registration packet which includes a conference registration form. Should your proposal not be accepted, you are invited to register for the conference at the presenter rate of \$150, inclusive of pre-conference institutes. If you submit a proposal, please do not register for the conference at any rate higher than \$150.

Presenter Responsibilities

As a presenter, you are responsible for making your own travel arrangements. The conference hotel, the Oakland Marriott City Center, located in downtown Oakland, offers a conference rate of \$119.00/night. Please be sure to mention the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Creating Change Conference when making reservations. Reservations must be made by October 7, 2005 to receive the guaranteed conference rate. You may reserve a room by calling 800/991-7249. The 2005 Host Committee will organize a community housing program to provide a limited number of no-cost housing options for conference presenters and attendees. In order to participate, submit a completed housing request to the local Host Committee, available on our web site www.creatingchange.org.

For more information and to download the request for workshop proposal in pdf format, please go to the following link <http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/CC05RFP.pdf>

If you have any questions about the workshop proposal process, please feel free to contact Sue Hyde, Conference Director at: 617-492-6393 or shyde@thetaskforce.org

Sue Hyde - Conference Director

Julie Childs - Assistant Conference Director

Creating Change Conference Kickoff

We had the first planning meeting tonight for the Creating Change Conference sponsored by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force. This year's conference will be held **November 9-13, 2005** at the Oakland Marriott City Center. After introductions and a briefing on the purposes of the conference we got right down to business and divided ourselves into subcommittees to cover the highest priority tasks. The GLBTI spectrum was well covered with youth and seniors, transpersons, persons of color, and people of faith.

As a member of the Local Promotion/Outreach subcommittee I will be using my extensive community contacts to publicize the conference. We have a goal of enlisting 250 volunteers to cover the myriad of tasks need to have a successful conference. I will be letting you know how you can volunteer. Please join us!

Stephanie Ann Blythe

TRANSVISION 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!

Significant Other Support East Bay

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

SAN ANTONIO COP CHARGED WITH RAPING TRANSEXUAL

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(San Antonio, Texas) A San Antonio police officer has been charged with sexual assault in the rape of a transsexual woman. Officer Dean Gutierrez was arrested Tuesday while on duty. The 45 year old Gutierrez has been on the force for 16 years.

The complaint was filed by Starlight Bernal. She told investigators that on June 10 she was stopped by a San Antonio officer who said he needed to check for warrants. Bernal said that she was then attacked by the officer in his patrol car. DNA tests on bodily fluids found in the vehicle and on Bernal led investigators to Gutierrez San Antonio Police Chief Albert Ortiz said.

Gutierrez was placed on administrative duty while the investigation proceeded. After the charges were laid Tuesday the force began the processes of terminating him. "The citizens of this community deserve to trust every police officer on the street," Ortiz told a news conference where he announced the arrest.

"When something like this happens, of course, that destroys a certain amount of that trust. Hopefully, by handling this case expeditiously ... sends a message to the community that trusting San Antonio police officers is worthwhile.

Bernal, 22, said she is relieved that the charge has been laid. She told television station WOAI that she has had nightmares ever since the attack. "I begged for my life and that didn't help," Bernal told the station. "He (Gutierrez) could have done this to anyone. He had a badge and a gun. He had all the authority to do what he wanted."

If convicted Gutierrez could face life behind bars.

TRANSEXUAL DIES FROM ILLEGAL SILICONE PROCEDURE

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(San Diego, California) A San Diego transsexual woman has died in hospital more than two weeks after she collapsed from silicone injections given by a woman without a medical license. Patricia Gonzales, 45, was one of two transsexuals rushed to hospital on life support suffering severe breathing problems as a result of the procedure

She died early Monday morning police said. The other woman remains in serious condition. They were among five transsexuals who attended a so-called pumping party at a San Diego home. (story) The three other women also became ill after receiving the injections but did not require hospital care police said. The woman who administered the shots does not have a medical license. A warrant has been issued for her arrest

The cost of gender reassignment is often prohibitive and some women opt to seek out non-medical practitioners to get silicone injections. Frequently the silicone used is industrial-grade and not safe for humans. While medical-grade silicone is implanted under the skin in sealed sacs to keep it from leaking, pumping involves injecting silicone straight into the body. The industrial version is not sterile and can cause infections, particularly in the lungs. Experts say the silicone is often mixed with paraffin, oil, even peanut butter.

Police say that there may be other victims and are urging trans women who have received injections at pumping parties to come forward. Investigators also say they know the identity of the woman who administered the injections and are hopeful of making an arrest.

Last February a transsexual who pumped industrial grade silicone into other trans women to give them feminine features pleaded guilty in Albany, Georgia to felony involuntary manslaughter in the death of one woman who died of complications from the injections.

TRANSCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

We are greatly pleased to announce TranScience Research Institute's website is has been certified by Health On the Web Foundation an NGO United Nations contractor providing certification of medically-related website material.

This certification guarantees the quality of the materials presented and serves as an international recognition of a standard of quality of materials related to healthcare that are presented on a healthcare website.

TranScience Research Institute is dedicated to providing quality research on lifecourse aging issues in the transgender, transsexual and intersex communities worldwide. All of our materials are made available for free download.

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JUDGE RULES TRANSEXUALS HAVE NO FEDERAL HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTIONS

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Salt Lake City, Utah) A federal judge has dismissed a suit by a transsexual woman who was fired from her job at the Utah Transit Authority for using the woman's washroom.

Krystal Etsitty, 42, is in the process of transitioning. She is undergoing hormone therapy, wear's women's clothing and presents herself as female. Etsitty sued under federal sexual discrimination laws.

In court judge David Sam referred to Etsitty as "she" but dismissed the suit saying that because Etsitty had been born male the federal law did not apply. Sam's written ruling said that a 1989 U.S. Supreme Court ruling banning discrimination against people who do not meet the stereotype of their gender - an effeminate man or a butch woman - does not apply to the transgendered. [sic]

"There is a huge difference between a woman who does not behave as femininely as her employer thinks she should, and a man who is attempting to change his sex and appearance to be a woman," Sam wrote. "Such drastic action cannot be fairly characterized as a mere failure to conform to stereotypes."

The ruling sparked sharp criticism from LGBT rights activists. "The American people believe that employees should be judged on performance and nothing else," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "Corporate America is leading the way in ensuring that transgender employees are able to do their job free of harassment and discrimination. It's time for Congress to follow."

Etsitty is appealing the ruling to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver.

HRC Rebuttal:

RULING DEMONSTRATES NEED FOR TG NON-DISCRIMINATION LAW

"The American people believe that employees should be judged on performance and nothing else," said HRC's Joe Solmonese.

WASHINGTON - Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese made the following statement regarding a U.S. District Court ruling saying federal law allow transgender Americans to be discriminated against in the workplace. "The American people believe that employees should be judged on performance and nothing else. Corporate America is leading the way in ensuring that transgender employees are able to do their job free of harassment and discrimination. It's time for Congress to follow.

"The majority of Americans already think that there is federal law that makes sure nobody can be fired merely for being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. And when they're told that such a clear law doesn't exist, they support its enactment. We are committed to working for the day that Krystal Etsitty, who brought her case before this District Court, and other GLBT Americans are free to do their job without worrying about being fired for who they are."

Etsitty, who is transitioning from male to female, was fired by the Utah Transit Authority where she worked briefly as a bus driver. Upon the June 24 dismissal of her lawsuit against the Utah Transit Authority, U.S. District Judge David Sam reasoned laws that prohibit sex discrimination only apply to a person's biological sex.

From 2003 to 2004, the number of Fortune 500-companies with non-discrimination policies covering gender identity and expression rose by 89 percent. Major companies with these policies include: Ernst & Young, Merrill Lynch, Microsoft, Viacom and Chevron.

The Human Rights Campaign is the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender political organization with members throughout the country. It effectively lobbies Congress, provides campaign support and educates the public to ensure that LGBT Americans can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.

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FROM GI TO GLAMOUR GIRL

By Jackie McGlone
Scotsman.com

ONCE SHE WAS the most notorious woman in the world, as glamorously beautiful and exquisitely dressed as any Hollywood star. Today, though, who has heard of **Christine Jorgensen**, "the convertible blonde" who lived one of the most eventful double lives of any woman in the last century? In her 60-odd years, she was a soldier, a librarian, a noted photographer, a nightclub entertainer and a reluctant celebrity whose sensational autobiography sold millions of copies. Truly, a woman of many parts.

She may sound like some obscure Danish actress, but Jorgensen was an ex-GI who turned from man to woman more than 50 years ago, transforming George Junior into Christine, becoming, according to the tabloids of the day, "mankind's gift to the female species", "the latest thing in blonde bombshells", "tops in swaps" and "the turnabout gal". With her sleek platinum blonde hair, smoky voice, willowy figure and chic clothes, Jorgensen - a shy, 26-year-old photographer from the Bronx - became the most celebrated transsexual of the 20th century after undergoing surgery in a Copenhagen hospital in 1952.

She was one of the first people in the world to go public about her sex change. Britain's most famous transsexual, a merchant seaman from Liverpool also called George, did not have the operation which turned him into April Ashley until 1960. Jorgensen's story is told in a thought-provoking new play, *Christine Jorgensen Reveals*.

Created and performed by Bradford Louryk, a New York-based actor and avant-garde performance artist, the play is a lip-synched re-creation of an historic recorded interview given by Jorgensen to Nipsy Russell - a black American male entertainer and comedian - in 1958.

Jorgensen speaks candidly in the interview about her life, sexuality, gender and tolerance, despite being the subject of much prurient curiosity and controversy. However, as another journalist who interviewed her once wrote, she speaks with "all the aplomb of a movie queen".

Louryk - tall, dark and handsome in his boho black clothes and colourful bandana - has, at 26, been voted one of New York's most eligible bachelors. He discovered an LP of the Jorgensen interview in a record shop in downtown New York. "The cover was pinned to the wall and the image was so striking," he says. "It showed a stylish blonde woman in a smart green dress, with a radio mike hanging down and a man with his back to us, smoking a cigarette. I had no idea who Christine Jorgensen was, but I bought it for \$150 (£85) and took it home, although I had no means of playing it on my CD system."

He forgot about the recording until, some months later, a friend was throwing out an ancient record player. "Before he did so, I asked him if I could play the old 78 on it. The recording itself was a mess, but when I heard Christine telling her story, I was mesmerised. It was a complete revelation - and it's such a testament to the strength of the interview and to Christine's eloquence and intelligence that everybody who hears it falls in love with her; I certainly did."

He persuaded two sound designers to clean up the recording and transfer it to CD. Now, he says, "it sounds so sparkling, so clear. You are in the room with her. So I set out to find out more about Christine and spent a lot of time researching her story. I became obsessed."

What emerges when you listen to the interview today is a woman more womanly than a real woman. When we meet in a New York café, Louryk quotes Jorgensen on how, as George, she always knew she was different: "My only answer is that I am more of a woman than a man."

Upon divesting himself of the last trappings of masculinity, George became Christine - as a grateful tribute to Dr Christian Hamburger, the Danish surgeon who performed the operation - and originally planned to return home to the US to lead a very private life, working as a colour photographer, the job for which she had been trained. In 1953, she even flew to London to photograph the coronation of the queen.

However, headlines proclaiming "Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty" greeted her arrival in New York. She stepped off the plane to be greeted by "more than 350 admirers, autograph hounds and just plain curious people". Not to mention hordes of reporters and photographers who catalogued everything from her baggage (13 pieces) to her destination ("the swank Carlyle Hotel in Manhattan") to her first beverage in America ("a Bloody Mary containing two shots of vodka and tomato juice").

Deluged by offers for photo shoots, personal appearances, nightclub acts and the 1950s equivalent of Oprah Winfrey-cum-Jerry Springer exposure, Jorgensen was at first repelled, but eventually she turned her notoriety into a lucrative cabaret performance. Her theme song was *I Enjoy Being a Girl*.

The gossip columnist Walter Winchell ridiculed her, while the society hostess Elsa Maxwell feted her. The Stork Club banned her, but the Waldorf Astoria welcomed her. "I could never understand why I was receiving so much attention, but I decided if they wanted to see me, they would have to pay," said Jorgensen, although she said she firmly believed that her life paved the way for more toler-

ant social attitudes towards matters of sexuality. "Some people may find it easy to live a lie," she once said. "I can't. And that's what it would have been - telling the world I was something I'm not."

Her celebrity was astonishing, given that this was America's age of innocence, when discussions about sexuality, much less transsexuality, were taboo. Was she some sort of side-show freak? Or a modern pioneer? When she died of cancer in 1989 at the age of 62 one of Jorgensen's obituarists wrote that here had been no consensus.

At first Jorgensen regretted that the press had got hold of her story and made her life such an open book. "But the publicity, too, hasn't been altogether bad. It enabled me to make an awful lot of money," she confessed. She did the talk-show and lecture circuit and, in 1967, wrote her much-censored autobiography. She never talked about sex and she never married, although she was engaged twice. "I've been deeply in love twice," she said. "I was never engaged to the men I was in love with, and I was never in love with the men I was engaged to." Looking back on her life, just three years before she died, she said: "I realise it was the beginning of the sexual revolution, and I just happened to be one of the trigger mechanisms."

That, says Louryk, is one of the reasons he's passionate about *Christine Jorgensen Reveals*. "I think the timing of this piece is important. I feel the political climate is such that we should examine her life again. There's so much discussion about sexuality and identity now, particularly in the wake of the wave of moral righteousness that swept the country after George W Bush was elected. Everything in the States is so Right right now!"

Louryk has played a clutch of female roles, most notably tragic Greek heroines in his acclaimed 2001 one-man show *Klytaemnestra's Unmentionables*, recently analysed in a scholarly work, *Dionysus Since 69*, published by Oxford University Press. He uses the lip-synching of drag performance to explore "the complexity and subtlety of the female body, the female voice".

For *Christine Jorgensen Reveals*, he's been working with the legendary drag artist John "Lypsinka" Epperson, as well as several male and female playwrights, to create what he hopes will be a tribute to a woman of "extraordinary intellect, charisma, poise, and grace". His work is much influenced by Charles Ludlam's *Ridiculous Theatrical Company* and Ethyl (James) Eichelberger.

"Never for one moment do you believe he's a woman when he's performing, but he's re-created great women of history, playing the roles no one would ever have cast him in," explains Louryk.

No-one would ever cast Louryk as Elektra or Medea, although he's played both in his own shows. "I always feel the great parts are the women's roles. If women want to play men's roles, do so. There are many levels of distance - here's Christine, a man who became a woman, being played by a man pretending to be a woman who was once a man, while lip-synching to a recording of her speaking. She sounds like a screen star, a contract player at MGM. When you listen to her, it's like hearing Joan Crawford or Norma Shearer. It's impossible to ignore her - and we should never forget her."



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I WANT TO BE A WOMAN WHEN I MEET GOD

Transvestites, transsexuals and other gender-benders have long been part of Indonesia's entertainment industry. Their ability to amuse and enchant often hides a great sadness. *The Jakarta Post* contributor **Duncan Graham** meets one tough, clever woman in East Java:

If cruelty, rejection and hostility during childhood can determine attitudes in adult life then Lina Sutrisno has a thousand reasons to hate — probably more. That she shows no signs of bitterness is a tribute to her determination that nothing would halt her precious ambition: To be a woman. For Ibu Lina was born *Ano Liong Thay* — a boy.

In his early school years in Malang little Ano found no pleasure in the company of knockabout boys. He had male genitalia, wore trousers and was considered by classmates and teachers to be male. But he wanted dolls and dresses, mascara and nail polish — behavior that rapidly singled him out for derision. He didn't realize it at the time but through some quirk of nature he was a transsexual.

Ano's parents, who ran a small general store in the Klontong market, were not sympathetic to their little lad's situation. His mother was Christian and her son was sent to a Catholic school. It was there that his position became most distressful when a priest and sisters rejected him as evil.

Unable to tolerate the sneers and derision from children who didn't know better — and the adults who should have done — he fled school in second year high. He also made his first move to Islam, a religion he found more accepting and which she now embraces with grace.

After working in his parents' shop Ano entered puberty and felt the overpowering pull of his feminine side. He grew small breasts but also facial hair. His male organs remained undeveloped but he shaved and wore women's clothes. His parents' marriage broke up and he was truly alone. Aged 15, Ano changed his name to Lina, after a Roman royal called Queen Messalina, a character in a popular film of the time. It was a clear statement of independence: "He" had become "she". Two years later she got her identity card with the classification "female."

Big City, Broader Horizons

Lina moved to Jakarta and only there encountered people with wider knowledge and tolerance. A friend who had lived in Holland reported on European perspectives. Fortunately, at that time some advances had been made overseas in the recognition and treatment of transsexuals, particularly by an American physician, Dr Harry Benjamin. She learned that surgery could help change her body and soothe her mind and spirit.

"Surgery meant big money," Ibu Lina said in the beauty salon she now runs in her hometown. "I knew I had to strive hard to get those rupiah. I was on my own, so I learned makeup and hairdressing and became successful. I worked in Jakarta for seven years. Then I had to find a doctor who would do the operations." No easy task. President Soeharto controlled the media and there were to be no detailed stories of sex changes littering the pages of the nation's press.

Strange things might happen in the decadent West, but Indonesians had to be protected from such information — even when needed for serious reasons by people who had been born incomplete and desperately needed to know the facts.

Slowly and by word of mouth Lina's road led to the Surabaya surgery of Professor Dr Johansyah Marzuki. Before any operation could be undertaken Lina had to get supporting letters from specialists in a wide range of fields, from urology to psychiatry.

And every one wanted a close look at her naked body, along with their fee. Once they'd peered and probed and satisfied their curiosity some then rejected her, applying personal moral strictures instead of professional counseling.

This gross embarrassment lasted for three years: It would have discouraged any lesser person. Lina wasn't confronting some ordinary disease that could be revealed to arouse public sympathy. Instead she was facing a future of being physically incomplete and emotionally ambiguous; it was psychologically scary and extremely personal.

"Everyone wants to be a woman or a man, not half-and-half," she said. I had a problem and I knew I must be clever enough to get the money to solve the problem. "I remained determined. I didn't care what people thought. I knew that I wanted to be a woman when I'm called to God."

Femininity And Self-Confidence

Through hormone treatment, Lina grew a pair of most presentable breasts that gave her the courage to wear a bikini on the beach. But the hormones had unpleasant side effects. Eventually Ibu Lina had two operations, one to enhance her breasts, the other to remove the small male genitalia and shape it into a female form. That was in the early 1980s.

Then she started to lose body hair though the hormones had been discontinued. Now, at 53, her skin is smooth and soft. She looks 13 years younger than her age, a tall and extremely feminine woman proud of her sexuality and

Eight-part Original Series to Debut on Sundance Channel September 20, 2005

SUNDANCE CHANNEL AND PLANETOUT EXCLUSIVE ONLINE PREMIERE OF *TRANSGENERATION*

NEW YORK — An exclusive online premiere of the first episode of "TransGeneration," an eight-part Sundance Channel original series will kick off the soon-to-be launched PlanetOut Video broadband service in early September 2005. The announcement was made today by Kirk Iwanowski, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Sundance Channel and Mark Elderkin, President, PlanetOut Inc. (Nasdaq: LGBT). "TransGeneration" premieres on Sundance Channel on Tuesday, September 20 at 9:00pm ET/PT; the date of the PlanetOut.com and Gay.com premiere is forthcoming.

As part of a larger marketing platform in support of the series launch, PlanetOut Video will also feature exclusive video clips, episodic promos and behind-the-scenes footage from the show. Episode 1 and the supporting exclusive content will be made available on Gay.com and PlanetOut.com during simultaneous windows. Combined, these two sites reach an audience of more than five million unique visitors per month.

Kirk Iwanowski, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Sundance Channel, said "We chose to collaborate with PlanetOut in creating this strategic marketing platform in support of TransGeneration because of their deep reach in the LGBT market, their success in building unique, interactive programming, and ability to support a fully integrated campaign to this discerning audience. "Sundance Channel looks forward to building this multi-faceted affiliation with PlanetOut beyond the launch of this series."

"TransGeneration" is an eight-episode series following students at four different colleges over the course of the 2004/05 school year, capturing their triumphs and setbacks as they balance the challenges of academia, campus life, and family with their commitment to gender reassignment. "TransGeneration" is Sundance Channel production in association with MTVN's Logo. The director and supervising producer of "TransGeneration" is Jeremy Simmons, whose credits include the television documentaries "School's Out: The Life of a Gay High School in Texas" which aired on MTV and AMC's "Gay Hollywood."

"TransGeneration" is produced by Thairin Smothers and executive produced by award-winning filmmakers Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato, founders of film and television production company World of Wonder. As directors/producers, their credits include the documentaries Behind Deep Throat, The Eyes of Tammy Faye, and Party Monster: The Michael Alig Story, as well as the 2003 drama Party Monster.

her substantial achievements. And also with the courage and self-confidence to tell her story.

Through her long quest to consolidate her gender Ibu Lina learned much about human psychology and the powerful drive women have to retain their looks and to battle aging. Through her encounters with the medical profession she began to assist doctors working in cosmetic surgery and has built a good business specializing in the laser removal of hair, warts, birthmarks and wrinkles. Ironically, her salon is only a few hundred meters from her parents' old stall and where she endured so much public humiliation.

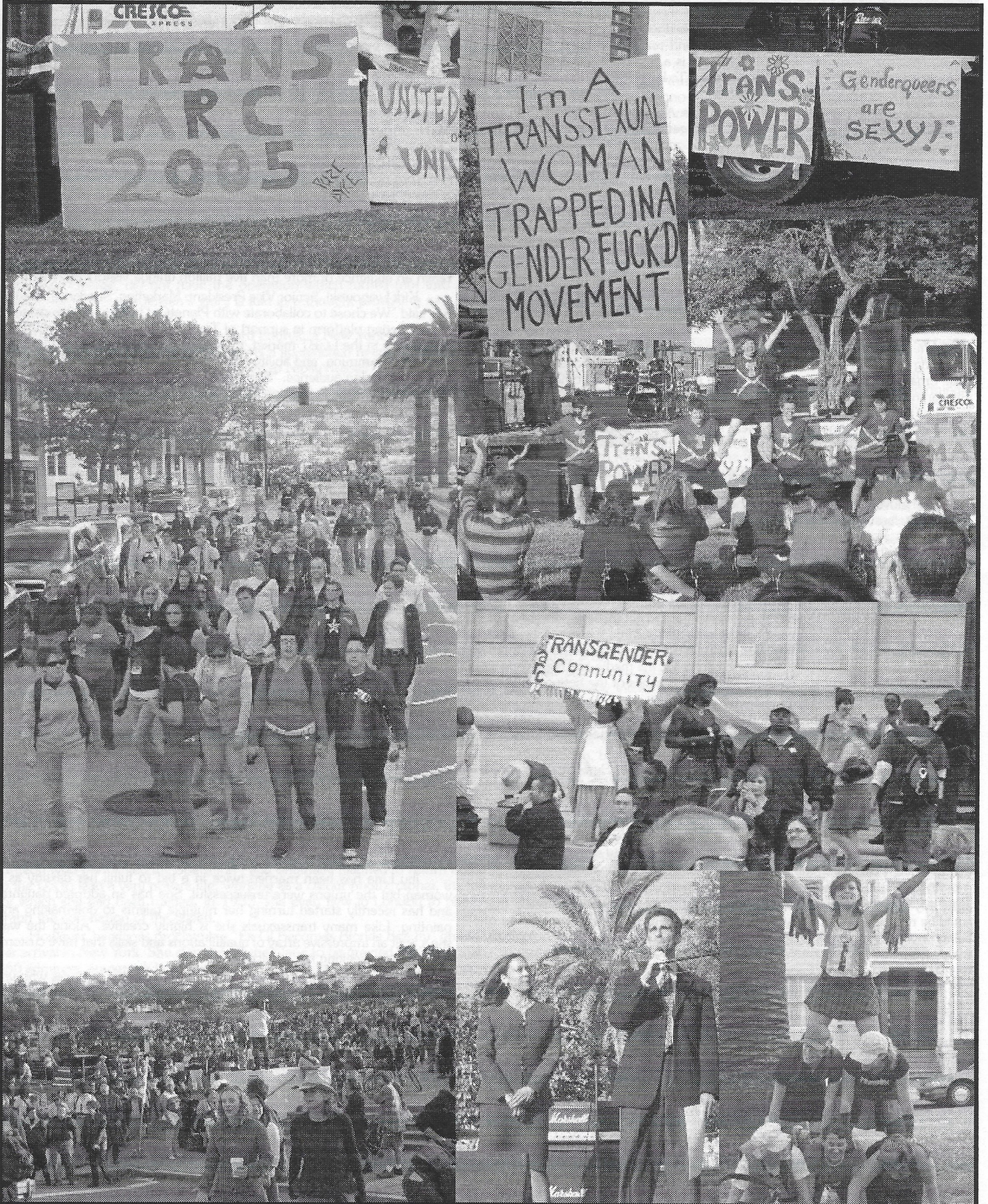
Ibu Lina has been married twice in a bid to fulfill her destiny as a woman but the unions were unsuccessful. She has an adopted daughter and has recently started turning her multiple talents to doll-making and painting. Like many transsexuals she is highly creative. Along the way she's built an impressive array of qualifications and skills that have customers from afar seeking her services.

She is also strongly supported by other women in business who understand how difficult it is to survive alone. "I know about discrimination. I can't forget the cruelty — though I do get close to forgetting," Ibu Lina said. I hate cruelty. I only want love. Now I know we can finally only get true love from God. My childhood years were undoubtedly bad. However, I knew what I wanted and I never cried. I was never angry with God.

"Even now, the position of women in Indonesia is not good. To succeed we must be very smart and intelligent. Where there is a will there has to be a way. I urge young people in whatever they are doing and however they have been made to value themselves above all.

"Don't worry about what others think: It's not their business. No one asks to be born a transsexual — people should be more flexible in their outlook and thinking. Everyone is different. Keep an open mind. Who knows what handicap can visit you or your family? Respect difference."

2nd Annual Transz March Photos!



TRINIDAD'S CLERGY FIGHT 'SEX-CHANGE CAPITAL' LABEL

Religious leaders cite studies saying the surgeries don't solve anyone's problems.

By Mike Garrett / The Pueblo Chieftain

TRINIDAD, CO - In the city known as the "sex change capital of the world," a group of local ministers blame the practice for unleashing gender and morality confusion. Some ministers and congregation members are asking what kind of spiritual, emotional and physical damage the sex-change operations are having on recipients and the city's reputation since Dr. Stanley Biber began offering the surgeries in the late 1960s.

They say that such surgeries really aren't necessary, citing Johns Hopkins University studies that conclude that they don't successfully treat most patients in dealing with their gender identity issues. After originating the sex-change operations, Johns Hopkins has since discontinued them based on those studies.

Since last November, some Trinidad Ministerial Association members and their respective congregations have been circulating petitions asking that Mount San Rafael Hospital and resident gynecologist and sex-change surgeon Dr. Marci Bowers cease performing the operations. "This is thinly-veiled bigotry and I'm really saddened by it," said Bowers, a protegee and former patient of Biber, the now retired sex change surgeon. She said critics should personally ask her patients how they feel about themselves after their operation and not base their actions on flawed, superficial misinformation before casting moral judgments.

"It's the kind of thing that Jesus would be appalled by," said Bowers. "If ever there was a kind of anti-Christian feeling, especially in taking flawed information, this is it. Where is their love for these patients? It's one thing if they had visited here (surgical clinic) and they had come up with information and could see there was clearly a trend that this wasn't helping people," she said. "But that simply isn't true. What they're really saying is that we don't want you in our back yard."

A member of the ministerial alliance didn't agree. "We believe the church has to take leadership on moral and ethical issues, especially if they affect the lives and well being of people in the community," said Terry Keith, former pastor and current elder at the nondenominational All Nations Fellowship Church, who is spearheading the petition effort.

"A group of us started meeting on a regular basis last November and we came up with 10 points on our petition based on our moral and religious convictions - that the surgery is a mutilation of the human body except in rare cases of ambiguous transgender people. Our reputation as sex-change capital of the world has brought shame and reproach on the community," said Keith. "When I'm in other states and countries and I say I'm from Trinidad they immediately ask me a question about that."

Bowers said she gets just the opposite feedback. "I can't tell you how often I go to the Springs or Denver and someone will recognize me from television and will come up and tell me, 'I think what you're doing is a beautiful thing and I thank you for being there for the people who need you.'"

The retired Biber, 81, who recently returned from Italy, where he received an award from the International Harry Benjamin Dysphoria Association (dysphoria is a state of feeling unwell or unhappy), said that the sex change operation "is a well-accepted syndrome all over the world."

Among the attending 5,000 physicians at the conference were several like Bowers, who had mentored with Biber and who now perform the operation. "I taught her (Bowers) the procedure, she's also a gynecologist and is really doing well," said Biber, credited with doing nearly 6,000 sex change surgeries since 1969.

Continued on Page 22

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!

FROM STRIP SHOW TO SKID ROW

By Diane Winston / Los Angeles Times

I've set a zero-tolerance policy for my family. Use it or lose it and no amnesty — not for Barbie, not for GameBoy and definitely not for last season's Steve Madden slides. So on a recent run to my local Goodwill donation center, I readily added my own offerings to a small mound of green plastic garbage bags, old cartons and ragged furniture.

I barely registered the middle-aged man inventorying the donations. But while driving home, I wondered who would take a job handling other people's leavings. Do household items come clean or crusty? Are clothes washed and folded? What if something nasty slithers out of a bag?

Goodwill intrigued me. In a city where competition for castoffs is hot, who donates to a charity that lacks a distinct constituency? I can guess who gives to Hadassah, Seoul Thrift or Out of the Closet. But where is Goodwill's constituency? Among the good, the willing, or both?

There's a high fusty factor to Goodwill's public identity. Goodwill isn't your charity. It's your Aunt Beulah's. Many stores are shabby, and the customers aren't hunting for vintage chic. The whole scene seems part of an older era, a challenge met head-on by the venerable charity's new tag line — "It's not what you think" — and a spruced-up visual identity that owes more to TJ Maxx than the Salvation Army.

The current fervor for faith-based activities notwithstanding, Goodwill's branding strategy doesn't mention its Christian roots. But it's certainly there: In the 1910s, several Methodists in Los Angeles began a social and religious outreach to the Mexican community around the Olvera Street plaza. Their efforts to raise money for a medical clinic led to the first Goodwill store in Southern California, following the model developed by a minister in Boston's similarly depressed South End.

The local church folks bought 200 old coffee sacks and paid unemployed immigrant women to mend them. The "opportunity bags" were distributed to businessmen, students, church members and USC professors, who filled them with unwanted clothing and household items. Mexican workers repaired and mended the donations, which were then sold to the community at a low price. The recycling scheme succeeded and, in 1919, Goodwill Industries incorporated as a secular nonprofit.

Today, the downtown store on South Broadway is managed by Gina Torres, a Yucatan native who moved here more than 30 years ago. A flamboyant red-head, Gina always has a good word for customers and "clients" — workers with disabilities or vocational disadvantages.

She takes her management duties seriously — productivity and profits have risen on her watch. She knows what items to mark up and which to send for scrap, and she will happily advise customers what blouse to buy and which one to leave on the rack. Gina enjoys every aspect of the business and is deeply committed to the mission. "I like helping people," she said recently. "I am very blessed with what I have, and I want to give something back."

During the 1980s, Gina was a topless dancer who focused solely on staying young and beautiful. "I was 25 until I turned 40," she said. "Then I began to put my mind with my body."

After several friends died of AIDS, Gina realized she was lucky to be alive. When a job at Goodwill came open, she saw it as a chance to grow up. "I decided to develop what I call being humble — that gives me strength," she said. "It means being sure of yourself, and it's more important than being beautiful. I don't need all the attention any more. I can give it to others."

Like so many religious narratives, Gina's evolution traces the familiar arc of struggle, acceptance and service. But when I ask about her relationship with God, she is uncharacteristically quiet. "I believe in my own way," she said.

She is more comfortable talking about her journey across genders — from Fernando Torres to Gina Torres. She always knew who she was, but it took time, money and determination to let the world see that person too.

She was teased for being feminine when she lived as a man. Once she became a woman, Gina had difficulty finding a job because all her identification belonged to Fernando. She says the experience of being mistreated makes her more sensitive to co-workers' problems as well as to Skid Row residents who sometimes steal from the store. "If I can't help somebody, I move out of the way so someone else can," she said.

With its 100th anniversary closing in, Goodwill's intention to reinvent itself serves its longtime mission. The more than 15,000 people who benefit annually from its vocational services, job training and placement programs — as well as its customers — may be unaware of the founding Methodists' mandate but are grateful for assistance and all the happier that it comes in pleasant surroundings.

And what would those good church folks, who saw a need and responded, make of their current heir, a spiritual-but-not-religious transgender former topless dancer? I'd like to think they'd see a woman whose heart, like Methodist founder John Wesley's, was strangely warmed by love.

Diane Winston, Knight professor of media and religion at USC, can be reached at dianewin@usc.edu.

BATHROOM AMBIGUITY DELIBERATE AT SATURN CAFE

San Jose Mercury News

The young and hip in Santa Cruz may think they've experienced all the weirdness the city has to offer. Then, they head to the bathroom at the Saturn Cafe. Suddenly, decisions must be made.

Door No. 1 has a huge photograph of Elvis — wait, that's an Elvis impersonator, possibly male, possibly female. Door No. 2 features a photo of two women — wait, is that two men in drag?

So, which door to enter? Either, say employees of the Saturn Cafe.

From Starbucks to gas stations, unisex bathrooms are becoming ubiquitous. But the idea is, one sex at a time. At the Saturn Cafe, owners have taken the concept of "gender neutrality" to new heights — some say out of this world. The idea at the Saturn is, any and all sexes at any time.

The Saturn — a gay-friendly vegan/vegetarian eatery that has been a Santa Cruz institution for a quarter-century — is not just the place to go for the quintessential Santa Cruz dining experience. The Laurel Street restaurant is at the heart of a small but growing movement aimed at making transgender and "intersex" people — those born with genitalia that aren't typically male or female — feel more comfortable using public facilities.

"This is the new wave — to really look at bathrooms," said Deborah Abbott, director of the Lionel Cantú Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex Resource Center at the University of California-Santa Cruz.

A "new wave" in bathrooms may seem like something that could happen only in Santa Cruz, but the issue is being taken seriously by the mainstream gay and lesbian community. At its huge annual conferences, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force now replaces the "men" and "women" signs with "gender-free" or "unisex" signs.

Many people who are transgender — an umbrella term that includes transsexuals, cross-dressers and people who consider themselves androgynous — say they often feel threatened in traditional restrooms. "People stare, and the message transgender people get is that they don't belong there," said Bryan Burgess, coordinator of the Safe Bathroom Access Campaign at the Transgender Law Center in San Francisco.

Sometimes, things get uglier. In a 2002 survey conducted by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, nearly half of all transgender respondents reported having been harassed or assaulted in public restrooms.

"Single-sex toilets give bigots another excuse to hit people," Ian Ayres, a Yale Law School professor, argued in a recent commentary published by the online magazine Slate.

A year and a half ago, the Transgender Law Center joined the efforts of a grass-roots group in San Francisco called People in Search of Safe Restrooms. Their goal is to push for unisex restrooms — be they single-toilet or multi-stall. They say the unisex facilities would also meet the needs of disabled people and, often, parents who don't want to send children alone into single-sex restrooms.

The movement scored a big success when the New College of California in San Francisco last summer decided to eliminate the last two "gender-specific" bathrooms on campus. The signs now simply read: "Your Bathroom."

On its Web site, People in Search of Safe Restrooms praises the Saturn Cafe for eliminating the traditional figures in dresses and pants — and opening both bathrooms to all. The 26-year-old eatery has long had unisex restrooms, but they each had only one toilet. Not until the Saturn moved downtown in 1999 did it have a multi-stall restroom.

"I like it," Vanessa Gomez, 20, a Cabrillo College student who lives in Santa Cruz, said of the attempt to present gender as a spectrum, not an either-or. "It makes you think."

But conservative groups have condemned multi-stall unisex toilets as unnecessary and perverse. Some feminist groups side with the conservatives, arguing that many women don't feel safe sharing a public restroom with men. Some call it an open invitation to peeping Toms with camera phones.

Vincent Sandoval, 22, of Modesto, isn't thrilled about the idea, either. Unlike his friends gathered at a Saturn table earlier this month, Sandoval had to go to the bathroom. He peered at the cross-dressers on the doors and couldn't decide which one to open.

"This isn't right," he said in frustration. "Which is the men's room? Damn. They don't have stuff like this in Modesto."

Trinidad's Clergy Fights Label...

Continued from Page 21

Biber claims he had the support of the ministerial association back in the early 1970s. He said they were then open-minded about the operations and agreed to be ombudsmen for transsexuals of faith. Attitudes, apparently, have undergone radical change themselves.

Although Trinidad churches aren't always known for working together, last year several banded together to pressure City Council into preventing a local bar-restaurant owner from establishing topless dancing in the city. He soon shut down and left town. During the 1990s, city voters with church backing also rejected legalized gambling.

The ministers don't know whether the petition signatures will have any significant impact on Bowers continuing the operations. But Keith said they at least want to raise public awareness that the practice is still ongoing and encourage opponents to take a stand rather than remain silent. "A lot of people think that since Dr. Biber retired (two years ago), it's not going on anymore. I felt that to say nothing would be irresponsible."

Cary Nelson, pastor of First Christian Church and another cause supporter, agreed with Keith that churches need to get actively involved to try and end the practice in Trinidad and help find economic alternatives. "We're not against the hospital; we want to keep it open," Nelson said.

While many Trinidad churches have not taken a stand on the surgeries, Keith and Nelson said that a solid majority were behind the effort. Keith stressed that it's not a matter of church judgment or being intolerant of the responsible person or hospital as it is taking a stand against "a questionable surgery" and preserving the town's reputation.

"We can love the sinner but be against the sin," said Keith. "I have nothing against Dr. Biber or Dr. Bowers; my heart goes out to her and all those people affected by gender identity disorder. But no one talks about the families of these people. What about the wives who have lost their husband or the children who lost their father? Who is concerned about them?"

"We're going to be branded as intolerant by a lot of people but that only works one way according to them," said Keith, noting he's received flak and venom against him on the subject from anonymous sources writing to his Trinidad Web site. It only works if you're in agreement with them. If you're not, then you're automatically branded as intolerant and closed-minded. It has to go both ways."

But Bowers said critics still don't understand what her patients are going through emotionally and psychologically. She said having a sex change operation is not the result of a psychiatric disorder diagnosis since nearly all sex change patients start exhibiting gender issues from ages 4 to 6.

"I can't tell you the number of them who seek religion and think they are being pursued by the devil," said Bowers. "So many turn to the Bible to look for answers and try to avoid and repress their feelings. So many patients are major decorated combat veterans, from Vietnam on. Some turn to alcohol and drugs before finally coming to peace with themselves that they're better for having had the operation."

"We're doing an incredible service and this community is a beacon of hope throughout the transgender community," said Bowers. "It's nothing short of hallowed ground and we're a humanitarian city for them. They are starting to come here from all over the world."

Bowers said she performed five surgeries the week of June 13-17, had five more scheduled this week and that she is now considered the nation's most prolific sex-change surgeon. "I think these ministers want to do the right thing and do God's work," she said. "But this is not a moral issue, this is a humanitarian service. I think we're doing the right thing."

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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.

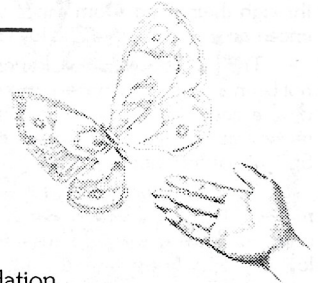


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To support transgender education work: **Gwen Araujo Transgender Education Fund** c/o Horizons Foundation, 870 Market St. Suite, 728 San Francisco, CA 94102 (415) 398 - 2333 / www.horizonsfoundation.org

Thank you!



KEEPING FOCUS ON VICTIM IN RETRIAL

Transgender advocates publicize the details of the latest proceeding against three men accused in the slaying of teenager Gwen Araujo.

**By John M. Glionna
Los Angeles Times Staff Writer**

HAYWARD, Calif. — Most days Connie Champagne is there in the courtroom, scrutinizing the evidence presented in the grisly murder of transgender teen Gwen Araujo — killed in 2002 by three men who said she had deceived them into believing she was biologically female.

Champagne never knew the victim and only met her family after the slaying. But the anti-violence advocate wants every one of the details of the 17-year-old's killing to become public. Her regular blog tracks developments in the East Bay trio's retrial, which started last month and could continue all summer.

A program director for the San Francisco nonprofit group Community United Against Violence, Champagne calls this a different trial than the first one, which ended in a mistrial in 2004: "Last time, attorneys tried to drag Gwen's character through the mud. But now there's none of that trans-phobia and trans-ignorance because they know the jury won't buy it."

There's indeed a changed atmosphere surrounding this second proceeding against Jason Cazares, Michael Magidson and Jose Merel, all 25. The three men, close friends and drinking cohorts who often called themselves "The Three Stooges," face murder and hate-crime charges in the killing, which occurred early Oct. 4, 2002, inside a dingy tract house Merel shared with his two brothers.

After a night of heavy partying, the men — two of whom had previously had sex with Araujo — confronted the teen about being biologically male. The victim, who lived and identified as a girl, assuming the first name of her favorite pop singer, Gwen Stefani, was then attacked. She was kicked and beaten with a soup can and iron skillet, smashed with a shovel and strangled with a rope.

At one point, Araujo — whom the men knew as Lida — was punched so hard in the face that a wall behind her head "indented and cracked," according to court testimony.

Just before dawn, Araujo's attackers buried her body in a forest in the Sierra foothills and went to a McDonald's drive-through to order breakfast.

Since her death, Araujo has become a civil rights martyr among California's widespread transgender community. Along with Araujo's mother, Sylvia Guerrero, and numerous family members, the trial in this bedroom community between San Francisco and San Jose is often attended by transgender observers, who circulate details via e-mails and blogs.

The teen's murder also helped persuade Assemblywoman Sally Lieber (D-Mountain View) to introduce a bill that would prohibit defendants from contending they were provoked to kill by discovering the victim's disability, gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

The first time the case went to court, jurors deadlocked over whether the slaying was premeditated and therefore first-degree murder. Araujo's accused killers had used the so-called deception defense.

"In the first trial, the defense tried to blame Gwen for her own death and people did not want to see that happen again with a retrial," said Christopher Daley, director of San Francisco's Transgender Law Center. "So you're seeing a more coordinated response by activists — the blogs, people e-mailing trial details back and forth and keeping on top of things. There's a focused energy to ensure that justice is done."

In the Bay Area alone, Daley estimated, there are thousands of residents who are "transsexual, cross-dressing or gender nonconforming."

Autumn Sandeen, a pre-op transsexual who is monitoring the trial from her San Diego home via the Internet, said Araujo embodies the violence and insults endured by transgender individuals nationwide.

"She was by no stretch a perfect person, no Rosa Parks," Sandeen said. "But she was just acting as who she was, a precocious young teenage girl. She was a transsexual and she was killed for that."

Sandeen, 46, a Gulf War veteran who served in the Navy, says that the Araujo case, if anything, needs to show Americans that "the deception defense is not valid, it's not OK to kill someone just because you find out they're a pre-op transsexual."

Being a transsexual is not a deception, Sandeen said. "It's as deceptive as dying your hair to cover the gray," she said. "If you meet a woman on the street with augmented breasts, is that deception? Well, neither are we."

The first four weeks of the retrial, which started May 31, included testimony from Jaron Nabors, a fourth man at the home in suburban Newark on the night Araujo was killed. Nabors, 22, pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of involuntary manslaughter, with a sentence of 11 years in prison, in exchange for testifying against the three suspects.

The trio are also expected to take the stand, a litany of testimony that lawyers predict will take the trial into August. They each could receive a sentence of life in prison.

For this new trial, Alameda County Superior Court Judge Harry R. Sheppard ordered attorneys not to speak to the media, eliminating the spin-control and grandstanding that sometimes goes on outside the courtroom, Champagne said.

And unlike the first trial, defense lawyers are referring to Araujo as female, as the activist notes, "calling Gwen 'she,' the way she always wanted."

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TRANSGENDER COUPLE HAVE STAYED TOGETHER THROUGH GOOD TIMES AND BAD

By Kristin Buehner / The Globe Gazette

CHARLES CITY — They have withstood hurtful gossip, rocks thrown through their living room window and social ostracism. They have also experienced acceptance, love and loyalty from family, neighbors and even strangers.

The road traveled by Charles City residents Renee and Mayetta Usher has not been an easy one, nor a common one, but it was the only path the transgender couple could have followed, they say. "Renee could not choose her life, any more than the rest of us could choose to be the way we are," Mayetta Usher, 56, said of her longtime mate.

Their story goes back to January 1965, when Renee, a transgender female who was then a Navy seaman named Michael Usher, met Mayetta, a Southern California native, on a bus en route to Costa Mesa, Calif. "This really good-looking sailor hopped on the bus and sat next to me," Mayetta recalled.

They met again that weekend while roller-skating and Michael Usher walked Mayetta Lesnick home. The attraction was immediate — and lasting. "I thought Renee was good-looking," said Mayetta, of that long-ago bus ride. "I liked her sense of humor and her character. I just had this feeling that we were soul mates. It seemed perfect." The two married in 1965 in Costa Mesa. Two weeks into their relationship, Renee, now 61, a Chickasaw County native, told Mayetta she was transgender. "She told me I could make up my mind to stay or leave," Mayetta said. "Obviously, I stayed."

From a very early age, Renee felt she was only pretending to be a male, she said. By age 11, she was dressing up in women's clothing, using clothes she found in the trash and borrowing clothing from girlfriends. Renee underwent a legal name and gender change 10 years ago. Transsexual surgery has yet to be performed, and Renee is hopeful she will have it someday.

As a youngster, she endured being beaten up and tormented by other kids. "Kids at school knew I was different because I never wanted to play with the guys," Renee said. "I was out there playing girls' games."

Renee's parents never knew of her gender preference. But in 1994, when Renee's father died, she decided to "come out." "I think she finally just said, 'I've had enough of this, I'm going to be true to myself,'" Mayetta recalled. "And I kind of encouraged it because she was hard to live with when she was so unhappy."

Long before that, Mayetta had accepted that Renee wanted to dress as a female. Sometimes she even went out and bought Renee dresses. "I figured it made her happy," she said. When Renee decided she could no longer deny the fact of her femininity, the Ushers experienced some harassment. People threw eggs at their windows and stones through their living-room picture window.

Michelle (Usher) Messer of Des Moines, 36, the couple's oldest child, worried about her parents during this difficult time. "I was afraid somebody would hurt her (Renee)," Messer said. The couple has also experienced rejection in their desire to find a church to join. In April the couple was asked to stop attending Messiah Lutheran Church in Charles City, where some members felt uncomfortable with Renee as a member. Messer wrote a letter to the congregation to express her feelings. "I got tired of people picking on them," she said. "They don't know my dad and don't understand her. They don't try to see things through her eyes."

Although it took some time before she could accept her father being a female, Michelle said she feels proud of Renee today. "Now I understand some of what she went through," Messer said. "It makes me proud that she had the courage to stand up and be true to herself even though she knew there was a lot of opposition. It takes a lot of guts."

The experience has made her more understanding of the differences in other people, Messer said. "I understand what it's like to be persecuted, so I wouldn't want to do that to other people." The Ushers' younger daughter, Mary Viers, 33, of Charles City, said she had a feeling growing up that "something was going on" with her father. "But I never said anything to anybody." When Renee came out, "it really wasn't a surprise," she said. "I don't let it bother me," said Viers. "If I hear anything, I just ignore it."

The problems her parents experienced in finding a church has bothered her, said Viers. "I've pretty much lost my faith because of that," she said. "Why should I believe if they don't even practice what they preach?" On May 8, the couple became members of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a small Charles City church that reached out to them and has made them feel welcome, they said. "When we walked into First Christian, I just felt so much love and acceptance," Mayetta said.

Bob Durrwachter, head of trustees at First Christian, said the Ushers have been well accepted and there have been no problems. "They've just jumped right in with our activities," he said. "We're all like family." In fact, many townspeople have expressed support for her parents, Viers said. Looking at the two of them, sitting at the dining room table holding hands, she said, "There's a lot of people out there like you guys, more than you even know."

The Ushers' third child, a son, Mark, now deceased, did not understand. Mark Usher died of self-inflicted wounds in August 2001 at the age of 31. But the problems leading him to suicide were personal problems that went beyond his father's coming out, his family says. Those problems included drug and alcohol abuse and the fact that he could not get visitation rights to see his only daughter. The Ushers have six grandchildren, ranging in age from 2 to 15.

Today, the "excitement" in the community concerning Renee's sexuality seems to have died down, Renee said. "Every now and then I'll see someone turn around and point at me and say something to someone, but we haven't really had any bad stuff."

Mayetta recalled one heart-warming experience that happened on Mother's Day at a fast-food restaurant. "A friend of my son told me he supported us and realized he had been mean when he was growing up," she said. "He said it was only because he didn't understand."

Daughter Supports Her Father's Choice

CHARLES CITY — Michelle (Usher) Messer of Des Moines, daughter of Renee and Mayetta Usher of Charles City, shared her thoughts about her parents in a letter she sent to the congregation of Messiah Lutheran Church. The Charles City church was one of several the Ushers tried unsuccessfully to join. "I am writing this letter as a request for understanding and compassion," Messer said.

In her letter, she discusses the anxiety and depression her father, Renee, experienced for many years before she decided to come out. "She (Renee) often felt trapped," Messer said. "I can totally understand how many of your congregation must feel," Messer writes. "When Renee told me she was going to live as a woman, I felt confused, angry, threatened and challenged."

"I disliked Renee because she changed my perceptions of who my father was. In some ways, I felt as if my father had died and Renee had killed him. I was afraid of what other people would think and I was afraid of retaliation on me and my family. I had to get to know this new person."

"As time went on, I was able to see the positive changes in Renee. Renee was happy and fulfilled. She went to college and got her B.A. degree. She became productive. Renee was kinder and more tolerant than I had ever known her to be."

"If someone were to meet Renee, they would find that she is very gregarious and outgoing. She is loyal and supportive to those she cares about. She loves to tell stories and has a passion for photography. Renee hopes to have her own photography studio some day. My sister and I know we can count on Renee for advice and support."

"I ask that your congregation please try to see past the surface and to get to know my father. My father is a threat to no one. She does not wish to harm anyone or to convert anyone to her lifestyle."

"My father did not make the decision to become a woman lightly. It has taken a lot of soul-searching and courage. Two of Renee's brothers and her sister refuse to talk to her. Many of her former friends have rejected her."

"I am very proud of Renee for her courage and her refusal to be less than true to herself." The letter is signed, "Renee's loving daughter, Michelle Messer."

Transcending Transgender

Sponsored by
City of Refuge UCC Outreach Ministries

A support group facilitated by Janetta Johnson and Portia Denard; Where: City of Refuge, United Church of Christ, 1025 Howard Street, San Francisco CA 94103, (415) 861-6130. When: Every Friday, 6 pm to 7:30 pm. Food and snacks will be provided.

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