

Halloween - TGSF Tradition!



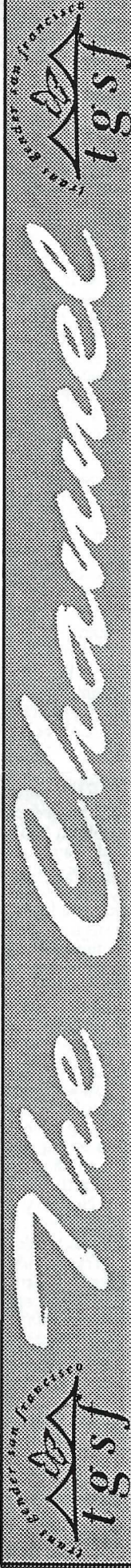
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TGSF TransGender San Francisco is a group for all members of the Transgender Community. Transgender is used as an umbrella term that includes female and male cross dressers, transvestites, drag queens or kings, female or male impersonators, intersexed 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



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 2004 - 2005 Officers

(Fiscal Year: May 1 - April 30)

- President Roxy Carmichael-Hart
- Vice President Laura Marlowe
- Secretary Siobhán Ellis
- Treasurer Pamela Gray
- Education Damon Helton
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- Outreach Kara Flynn
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- Social Anne Louise Mortenson
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- Miss TGSF 2004 Anne Louise Mortenson
- Mr. TGSF 2004 Bobbie Cheung
- TGSF Outreach Ambassador Kelly Anne Marsh

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 uncopyrighted portions of the newsletter for their members, provided TGSF is acknowledged as the source of the material. Copyrighted materials may be reproduced only with written permission from TGSF.

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- Editor Ayme Michelle Kantz
- Advertising Dawnne Woodie
- Contributing Photographers, this Issue: Roxy Carmichael-Hart and Jamie Faye Fenton

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*!

WWW.TGSF.ORG
NEW SITE! GET ONLINE!

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415-564-3246

FROM THE EDITOR...



First, let us all bid a fond farewell to columnist **Wendy Schultz**, authoress this past year of the incredibly concise *Beauty Boost* series, which have no doubt been helpful to many of you. Her Page 5 column this month is her last for TGSF, and I, for one, will miss her terribly - not only for the useful information, but because she was so faithfully reliable as a contributing writer: never missed a deadline (often providing a column a month ahead of time!), always kept her prose to a tidy column's length, did her spell- and grammar-checks, typed one space after periods (instead of two), and never had extra carriage returns cluttering up things. An Editor's dream come true, and Wendy it was an honest pleasure working with you. You made my job that much easier and I shall forever be comparing other writers to you (both past and present) and find them wanting. But beyond my meager gratitude, I know there are many readers who appreciate your wise advice, have taken your suggestion and tips to heart, and have benefited from your gracious charm and helpful attitude. Thank you so very much, and good luck to you in your future endeavors - you'll always have column space waiting for you should you decide to return.

Moving on, I decided this month to devote several pages (beginning on Page 18) to a terrific and insightful interview with **Jennifer Boylan**, best-selling author of *She's Not There*, a book that ranks right up there with Kate Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw* as a highly suitable tome for use in teaching gender identity awareness in our schools. And this is the course we must set and follow if we're ever going to put an end to the hate and violence. Education must be the corner stone on which we build our fundamental policies, to ensure an end to discrimination and foster recognition that we are capable, contributing members of the human race. While the recent election has shown that half of our country is amazingly stupid, you should take comfort in the fact that the other half not only owns the best real estate, but consistently lead the way in fertile imaginations, progressive politics and an open-mindedness with regards to alternative lifestyles. Our fight is far from over, but armed with tools such as these, we can make valuable inroads towards wider acceptance and greater understanding.

Education, of course, is the foundation on which TGSF has based its non-profit status, and as such, makes it eligible for your tax-deductible donations. I mention this particularly to those of us in a position to do so, that choose to donate with pre-tax dollars via their United Way or other community support programs. Judging from trends revealed by published financial reports, TGSF is hovering on the brink of insolvency (and has been all year), and could use all the help it can get. But with the focus this year on social events over educational programs as a means to fatten the coffers, I hesitate to think any of you are willing to continue throwing "good money after bad" towards all-flash-but-little-substance parties over the more pressing needs of educating the community on our issues and providing resources for those in need. But that's become an old horse that doesn't need more flogging from yours truly. I've chewed on that chestnut far too many times to little effect. Suit yourself as the case may be.

When I spent four months in Minnesota during the summer of 2000, I ran across a band called *All The Pretty Horses* - friends of mine there knew the founding members, Venus and Lynette, to whom I had the pleasure of being introduced (but I wouldn't go so far as to say they'd actually remember meeting me). So it is not without some small measure of pride and pleasure that I reprint a fabulous article about them, their band and their new documentary beginning on Page 23. Not only does the trans community provide us with talented trans authors (Feinstein, Bornstein, Boylan, Green and Roughgarden, et. al.), but with talented trans musicians and artists as well (Trans Central Station, Transcendence Gospel Choir, Dana International, and Loren Cameron come to mind), all using music and art as a means to communicate our message. Trannies seem to have an amazing capacity for expressing themselves creatively, and it would behoove us to foster and encourage our trans youth to emulate them and follow in their footsteps.

And finally, tongue wedged firmly in cheek, thank you for all the cards and letters from you folks out there in television lant (I feel a polka coming on...where's Lawrence Welk, Spike Jones or Weird Al Yankovic when you really need them!). The ankle is doing much better thanks, and I'm once again perched on my spiky heels. There's nothing like a little pain to increase one's situational awareness, I always say. Choosing to always find the good in any bad situation, I'm grateful for that opportunity to mind my steps and put a good foot forward. No fear, baby!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roxy Jolene Ross Ewing-Carmichael-Hart-Barnes-Krebs-Farlow

Season's Greetings

Check out the new boyfriend (see picture). That pretty much illustrates the kind of man I have been able to attract!

I had hoped to bring you the announcement of our Mr. and Miss TGSF contestants by now, but I am sorry to say that we have not gotten sufficient contestants for us to have a meaningful pageant. So we are leaving the deadline open until December 5 and that is positively the last deadline. We'll need to move warp speed into rehearsals, script finalization and technical considerations so we'll go with whomever we have at that point. More Cotillion talk in a bit.

I want to wrap up a couple of events we had in October. First, our fantastic Halloween party. There are numerous people to thank but since I left some names off last time and got in trouble, I will just say that I deeply appreciate everyone who donated, promoted, hosted, cooked, cleaned, provided prizes, etc. We had an attendance of about 100 and Carla's and TGSF each made about \$1,000 when all was said and done. The costumes were unique and original and I hope that your favorite won a prize. But they were all worthy of a prize. I spoke to a young woman who was our grand prizewinner, as voted by the audience. When I spoke to her before I left, she seemed a bit sad. She said she felt a little guilty about winning because she had just come to have a good time. When I told her that her peers had deemed her worthy of recognition, she gave me a hug. I think that is all she needed to hear - that she was welcomed and accepted and loved for who she was. We have to remember that while the dressing up is great, sometimes there is a little more to it, like touching a heart and making a friend. Since she was from Sacramento, I put in her contact with the lovely Terri Lee and I know that with her big heart, Terri made her feel very warm and welcomed.

A couple of days earlier we had our annual Leather and Lace event which was a lot of fun as always. We had six contestants in the contest and when it was all settled, Lisa Dummer, Telzey Adams and Wendi, a newcomer were the winners. I was very happy for Wendi. She'll soon need to go back into hiding so she was trying to take every opportunity she could to get out. When she won, I saw the same smile and excitement that I had when I won two years ago. In the course of the last couple of months, I know that Wendi got to meet a lot of people who touched her heart and made her realize that Wendi will always be inside of her. It was great to see Telzey after many months and she brought me some of TGSF's archives which I found fascinating. And as always, Lisa Dummer looked hot and in her leather miniskirt and lace blouse, made a few hearts pump faster. Thanks to all who participated and to Anne Louise, Laura and Dawnne for being judges.

Hey, the mid-months are back! After months of advertising and begging and pleading and getting an overwhelming response (she said sarcastically), the task fell once again on our Jill of all trades, the gorgeous Anne Louise. She has been working with the Cathedral Hill Hotel on Van Ness and Geary and our first event was scheduled for November 11. This hotel has been very friendly and has actively pursued our business. We have developed a good working relationship with their sales staff and have sched-



uled our next ExCom meeting as well as our Celebration Brunch after the Cotillion at that venue. Anne Louise, by the way, has planned quite a few events for the next several months and it is quite clear that her commitment to TGSF will not end with the end of her reign as Miss TGSF. She has always been more about the community and less about herself. Maybe I am putting too much pressure on the contestants to follow when I gush over Anne Louise (and Bobby too for that matter) but they have performed so admirably in their roles that I think the community, and I, have the right to expect the same level of commitment from those who will follow. The titles of Mr. and Miss TGSF should not be "what your community can do for you" but "what you can do for your community" to paraphrase the other JFK (the one that actually got elected). We'll be watching our eventual winners.

The week of December 12 should be one in which you should not start a diet because that will be the week of parties. December 12 as you know is the annual TG Community Holiday dinner at the Tarragon in Sunnyvale. I appreciate the work that my beautiful big sister Jackie does each year on this event. She spends a lot of time working with the Tarragon staff and her task was not made easier this year when the staffed turned over. Few realize the effort that it takes to put on this event (or any event for that matter) so I am deeply grateful that she continues to want to take on this responsibility, this year with Siobhan's help. Please show them appreciation and courtesy by not waiting until the last freakin' second to make a reservation and by paying promptly when asked, and by showing up. Please see the announcement elsewhere in the Channel. As always we hope to have a great turnout. Following the dinner, Rachael Janelle and I will host an after party at Rachael's house, just a hop step and a jump from the Tarragon. Once again, much thanks to Rachael for opening her home and her heart to all of us. The TGSF Holiday Party at the Blue Muse will be held later that week as well.

And as soon as December passes, we will be putting the finishing touches on the Cotillion which may turn out to be the biggest and best yet. Every day I get calls for tickets. Last week, I got a request for a block of 15, which I had to refer to the box office because my own supply is dwindling. Yesterday at ExCom, someone made a reservation for 4 tickets. I know Carla is about out of her \$45 tickets and Donna has sold half of her \$35 tickets so the supply is drying up. Thus it is imperative that if you want to attend at a specific price, you has better get your ticket soon because I have no guarantee that any will be available at the box office on show day. In other words, you might not be able to just walk up and expect to sit where you want. I am appreciative of all of the people that have offered to help and to donate their time and energy. Staff wise, our show is in good hands.

Lastly as most of you know, Siobhan Ellis, our secretary and our friend, will be leaving us after the Cotillion to return to Australia in search of truth, justice and the Holy Grail. I know that we will all miss her tremendously but before she leaves she will finally need to answer the question "what is the flight speed of a swallow?" (African or European, it doesn't matter.) Siobhan, in all seriousness, I will miss you and I love you with all my heart. Thank goodness for those pictures I downloaded from the Internet. They'll keep me warm at night.

Happy Holly Daze one and all!

Postscript:

My friend Sharon died on October 3. May God rest her soul.

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November 7, 2004

TGSF ExCOM MEETING MINUTES

Present: Roxy Carmichael-Hart, Dawnne Woodie, Laura Marlowe, Pam Gray, Kara Flynn, Anne-Louise Mortensen. **Guests:** Lisa Dummer, Veronica Nova. **Not Present:** Damon Helton, Siobhan Ellis, Allison Laureano, and Tommi Watson.

President's Report

The next Mr./Miss TGSF events are the TGSF Thanksgiving Potluck on November 13th, the Day of Remembrance on November 20th, and the TG Holiday Dinner at the Tarragon on December 12th.

Vice President's Report

The VP has been busy working with Roxy on organizing the 2005 Cotillion.

Treasurer's Report

Pam reported that TGSF has approximately \$4,000 in the account. Our debt has been cleared, thus we no longer owe anyone money. Pam also reported that we have not had any new advertising.

Secretary's Report

Siobhan will be leaving her post in February, and will need someone to fill in on the website, membership duties, and taking minutes. The Channels were mailed last weekend. The next profiles are Laura for December, and Anne-Louise and Bobby for January.

Education

Dawnne is working on a TG Health Law Seminar after the Cotillion.

Outreach

Kara reported the latest calls to the hotline and mentioned a radio interview that she had set up, along with Bobby, to discuss TGSF.

Social

Anne Louise reported that the Halloween event made \$915 and earned a lot of good feedback. The next End of Month event is November 18, entitled a Day of Thanks. She has lined up a Mid-Month event for November 11th at Cathedral Hill Hotel with a variety of performers. TGSF is co-sponsoring the Holiday Dinner at the Tarragon with Siobhan assisting Jackie. Anne Louise mentioned that she is working on Unity for next May, which may be in conjunction with OPTIC. She is also working on a benefit event with Luminescence and Transcendence.

Old Business

Someone is needed to continue Siobhan's efforts to establish a subcommittee to develop a demographic report on the members of TGSF. Kara motioned to defer the subcommittee until after the Cotillion. Motion carried.

New Business

Someone is also needed to take over Siobhan's duties as Secretary.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for December 4th at Cathedral Hill, 1101 Van Ness at Geary, with the Cotillion planning meeting at noon, and the ExCom meeting following.



THE TIME TO CONTRIBUTE BACK TO OUR TG COMMUNITY IS NOW

As transgender people, many of us are fortunate to have support and resources available here in the Bay Area. We had our first Tranny March in San Francisco this year, and more organizations are catering to TG community — the Transgender Law Center, Youth Gender Project, etc. On Nov 16, Assemblyman Mark Leno, Chair of the California State Assembly Select Committee on the LGBT Families, will be having a hearing on expanding and improving healthcare quality and access for transgender people at the LGBT center in SF.

However, the TG community is still in need of more people to step up and participate, which would ensure the growth of our community, and outreach to those who have been underserved. The time to contribute back to our community and help make a difference is NOW. And the opportunity to create visibility for people on FTM Spectrum is HERE: Transgender San Francisco is still looking for contestants to run for Mr. TGSF 2005. The deadline has extended to Dec. 5th. (see details below.)

I want to share with you what being Mr. TGSF is all about, and what I got out of it this year as a titleholder. Hopefully, I can be your inspiration. I challenge you, I implore you to continue to carry the torch for our beloved community, for your friends, and above all, for yourselves.

Please note that all transgender people (not only transsexuals) are welcome to apply for Mr. and Miss TGSF.

The reason why I competed for this title? Have fun (#1 on my list.) I feel fortunate to have the support and resources, and want to contribute back to the community that made it possible, so others can benefit as well. I want to help in alleviating problems that need attention within the TG/FTM community; so all types of TG people will be served. I want to improve and share my skill sets with the TG community.

Continued on Page 5



MID-MONTH SOCIAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

TGSF is looking for some enthusiastic and motivated people to help plan our mid-month socials. TGSF used to hold these events but, due to a lack of staff, has not been able to continue these events. So, since all of our current ExCom members are overwhelmed with other projects, we are asking our members and our community for assistance.

The Mid-Month is a social that is held during the first two weeks of the month at a venue in San Francisco or Berkeley. Previous mid-months were held at the Thirsty Bear, San Francisco Brewing Company, and the Whitehorse Tavern. Unlike the monthly End of Month events, the Mid Months are much more social oriented.

All it takes to plan these events again 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 roxymhart72903@aol.com and she will present it to the Executive Committee for discussion and action. Thank you in advance for your help.

Time to Contribute is Now!...

Continued from Page 4

One-year commitment as a titleholders – Mr. & Miss TGSF:

- Public relations for TGSF at various TGSF and LGBTQI functions.
- Assist with outreach at various events by “making appearances” as a titleholder.
- Help to organize efforts that would benefit TGSF and the TG community.

Personal journey/enlightenment/benefits from being a Mr. TGSF:

- With the support of TGSF and recognition from other organizations, the title has empowered me to make positive changes within the TG community while having tons of fun.
- I used the opportunities to network with other people in the LGBTQI community, where I’ve met and made connections with like-minded people, friends, and allies.
- Gained a wider perspective on changes/issues that the TG community faces.
- Exposed to other leadership opportunities in the LGBTIQ community, and be part of the change and evolution of TG community.
- TGSF supports a speaker’s bureau, which has given me more opportunities to speak and educate more people in effort to abolish ignorance.

I also believe that having visibility is a non-verbal way to educate others the existence of TG/FTMs. I used the title to show my presence at events of other organizations/communities that I’m in or an ally of – queer art, queer Asian, Asian American, queer women/trans, trans youth.

To all transgender people on the FTM spectrum:

The 2005 Cotillion will be the 22nd Annual event. Transgender San Francisco is calling for contestants for Mr. TGSF 2005. This is a golden opportunity to contribute to our wonderful transgender community in the SF Bay Area, and help create visibility for FTMs. With this royal title, Mr. TGSF will be asked to represent TGSF and participate in outreach at various fun & exciting functions throughout 2005 (see photos from links below).

The crucial date is **December 5th** for application materials and a mandatory contestant meeting. The technical details of your presentation are due at that time.

The theme of the show is “Back to the 80’s”. There are three distinct parts of the show: Active Wear, where the theme is Raiders of the Lost Ark, the Presentation, which can be anything you want to do up to 5 minutes and then evening wear, where the theme is “Cheers”.

Please contact me directly at mingster008@hotmail.com, for the application materials. Tyler Fong, Mr. TGSF 2003, tazboy_@yahoo.com, and I will be delighted to fill you in on some of the details and give you some tips.

Links to check out:

<http://www.mingster007.com/tgsf.org>

<http://siobhanellis.20megsfree.com/events/TGSF2004/TGSF2004.html>

**Best Regards,
Bobby Cheung
Mr. TGSF 2004**

Beauty Boost

by Wendy R. Schultz

The Shelf Life of Cosmetics

Have you looked through your cosmetics lately? Do you remember when you bought that mascara? How about that foundation? Perhaps it’s time you took a good look at your supply of beauty products and made some decisions about what to keep and what to toss. Cosmetics don’t last forever; each has a shelf life.



Bacteriology

Ready for your science lesson? The term bacteriology simply refers to the study of bacteria and its effects. Bacteriology plays a huge part in the safe use of your cosmetics. Cosmetics made with liquids or emulsions have a shorter shelf life than those with powder because anything that contains liquid breaks down faster than a dry product. Mascara and cream-based products, for example, can be a breeding ground for bacteria. Some acne creams and moisturizers have active ingredients that become inert over time. These types of products should be kept in a cool and dark place, like the medicine cabinet. Many products do contain preservatives, but products containing all natural ingredients should be watched closely because the lack of preservatives in them may accelerate bacterial growth, lessening their shelf life.

Products that come in tubes or containers with flip tops (think toothpaste) are less prone to bacteria growth because the product doesn’t come in contact with fingers or brushes like products in pots or containers do. Basically, the more you dip anything into a cosmetic, the more it will store bacteria. Mascaras, too, need to be watched because the brush that touches your lashes also goes back into the container, thus depositing bacteria. Although preservatives keep your mascara from spoiling too soon, don’t risk using something you have doubts about; it may cause a bad reaction on your skin or in your eyes.

In Doubt, Throw it Out When...

- A product separates.
- Something smells bad or rancid.
- A product’s color changes, and that’s not a part of the product’s normal activity. Most products will usually indicate that a color change is normal.
- You’ve had an eye infection.
- You’ve shared a cosmetic with someone who’s had an eye infection or a cold sore.
- You’ve had something for a long time (See the Shelf Life guide below).

A Guide to Shelf Life

- Mascara – 3 months
- Moisturizer – 3 months to a year
- Oil-free foundation – 1 year
- Products with SPF – 1 year. The ingredients in the SPF become ineffective after a year.
- Concealer – 12-18 months
- Powder foundation, blush or eye shadow – 2 years
- Cream eye shadow – 12-18 months
- Eye or lip pencils – 2 years. Sharpening them eliminates existing bacteria on the exposed tip.
- Lip stick, lip gloss, and fragrance – 2 years

Questions? Feedback? Need help finding products? Send me an email - BeautyBoost@hotmail.com.

Although I’m a licensed Esthetician, I’m not a healthcare professional. As such, please consult with your doctor prior to beginning any new skin care regimen.



7957 Events in December

Saturday / December 4 / 12:00noon

TGSF ExCOM MEETING

Note new location for this month! Cathedral Hill Hotel, 1101 Van Ness at Geary. A busy agenda is planned and all available hands are needed - please join your ExCom at this important meeting!

Sunday / December 5 / 1:00pm - 4:00pm

TGSF ExCOM MEETING

Note this location! MCC Church, 150 Eureka, SF. This is the deadline for all contestant applications and technical information and is a mandatory meeting for all contestants.

Thursday / December 9 / 7:30pm

TGSF MID-MONTH SOCIAL: SPOKEN WORD

Please bring your poems, written work or anything you would like to read! See ad elsewhere in this issue for all the details!

Sunday / December 12

TGSF MAC EVENT

See ad in this issue for more information or contact Siobhan Ellis.

Sunday / December 12 / 7:00pm

RGA, TGSF & DVG HOLIDAY DINNER AT THE TARRAGON

See ad elsewhere in this issue for all the details!

Thursday / December 16 / 7:30pm

TGSF END OF MONTH EVENT: HOLIDAY PARTY!

Blue Muse Restaurant, 409 Gough Street. Join us for dinner at 7:30 and the program will begin about 9 PM. We'll have a gift exchange and sing holiday carols. Please bring a gift, valued at no more than \$10, if you would like to participate.

Friday / December 17 / 8:00pm

RGA HOLIDAY POTLUCK

New Community Church of Faith, 6350 Rainbow Drive, San Jose. Please bring a dessert or side dish. For more information, please call the RGA Warmline at 408-984-4044.

Coming in January!

TGSF COTILLION 2005!

See ad elsewhere in this issue for all the details, or visit us online at www.tgsf.org.

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.

December's Birthdays

- 12/03 Sheila Faulkner
- 12/03 Elizabeth Walters
- 12/05 Mary Anne Sales
- 12/06 Ally Grillo
- 12/07 Kathryn L. Skeens
- 12/11 Billie Cox
- 12/12 Linda
- 12/13 Tammi
- 12/17 Paula Dancer
- 12/18 Susie
- 12/20 Jill O'Brien
- 12/20 Barbara Lokker
- 12/23 Cynthia Young
- 12/23 Toni Martinez
- 12/23 Gabrielle Taylor
- 12/23 Sonya J. Quist
- 12/24 Janis R.
- 12/27 Jill Dettmer
- 12/29 Charlene Marie
- 12/30 Michelle Crawford

Happy Birthday To All!

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Nails Wigs Lingerie



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Calendar - December 2004

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 and 3rd Monday of 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 and 3rd Thursday of every month, 7:00pm at Rainbow Community Center, 2118 Willow Pass Road, Suite 500 in Concord. For more information call 925-937-8432.

FTM International
A support group for Female-to-Male CDs and TSs; Holds open Informational Meetings and closed Support Meetings. Write FTM International, Inc., 160 14th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 or call 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 for directions and more information.

Mid-Peninsula TG Group (MPTG)
TGSF-sponsored support group for the TG community that meets at 7:00pm, First Wednesday of each month at Full Circle Books in Belmont, CA. For more details please contact Laura Patterson at Laura@slmcbt.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 transgender support group meets at the Billy De Frank Community Center in San Jose on the 2nd and 4th Friday of every month from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. For more information, call 408-293-2429.

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

T.R.A.N.S
MTF support groups meet every Wednesday afternoon 2:00 - 3:30pm at 1145 Bush Street in San Francisco.

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social 7:30 PM MPTG	2 7:00 PM DVG RCC	3 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	4 12:00 PM TGSF: ExCom Mtg @ Cathedral Hill
5 1:00 PM TGSF: Cotillion Contestants @ MCE Church	6 5:00 PM CCHH 7:00 PM PISSR General Meeting 8:00 PM DVG	7 7:00 PM SCT	8 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	9 7:30 PM TGSF Mid Month: Spoken Word	10 7:00 PM SVGA 8:00 PM PacCtr	11 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
12 7:00 PM TG Holiday Dinner @ Tarragon TGSF MAC Event @ Bloomie's	13 5:00 PM CCLIII	14	15 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	16 7:00 PM DVG RCC 7:30 PM TGSF: EOM Holiday Party! TG Legal Clinic	17 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA 8:00 PM RGA Holiday Potluck!	18
19	20 5:00 PM CCHH 8:00 PM DVG	21 7:00 PM SCT	22 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	23	24 7:00 PM SVGA 8:00 PM PacCtr	25 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA Merry Christmas!
26	27 5:00 PM CCLIII	28 7:30 PM SCOUT	29 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	30	31 8:00 PM PacCtr	

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.

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TGSF Sustaining Memberships

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Designated Sustaining Membership Giving Levels & Recognition

GUARDIAN LEVEL: \$2500

Recognition & Benefits:

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

PATRON LEVEL: \$1000

Recognition & Benefits:

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

ANGEL LEVEL: \$500

Recognition & Benefits:

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

CENTURY LEVEL: \$250


Recognition & Benefits:

Recognition in Cotillion Program
Framed Recognition Certificate

MERIT LEVEL: \$100

Recognition & Benefits:

Recognition in Cotillion Program
Recognition Certificate

 *Clip & Mail Today!*

Make your CONTRIBUTION to TGSF Today!

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

Please indicate your level of giving:

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

Your Name: _____

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

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

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

Thank you for your support of TGSF!

CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

By Roxy Carmichael-Hart

The Three Steps to Happiness (or Who the Fuck is Harry Benjamin and Why Should I Care About Him?)

When we first come into this community, we are told that there is no right or wrong way to do things, that everyone's approach is correct, that gender is not defined by your genitalia. However, we soon hear a refrain, repeated over and over again, that there is only one true path. I will call this the "three steps to eternal happiness" and these steps, in brief, are defined as follows:

- 1 Take Hormones
- 2 Crossdress and Live for a Year
- 3 Get SRS, find Mr. Right and Live Happily Ever Freakin' After.

Let's debunk these myths one by one.

Hormones

Many begin their journey into the female life by taking hormones. The first hormone treatment is looked upon as a big accomplishment. Hormones are sold as a short cut to femininity. They make your male hair fall out, they soften your skin and your features and make your breasts grow to Ana Nicole Smith size. But there is a side of the story not often told.

You should only take hormones when prescribed by your therapist. Why? Because, and I cannot emphasize this strongly enough, hormones are dangerous. They can cause blood clots. This is documented by the following. When I first came into the community, I asked my physician about hormones. She told me they can cause blood clots. A few months later I saw the Discovery Channel show and lo and behold one of the participants said that she had to stop hormone treatment because she had developed a blood clot and almost died. Hormones are particularly bad for you if you are in a high-risk category, such as if you have high blood pressure or diabetes, like I do. I take medication to thin my blood, so hormones would have the result effect. Now, I could take a blocker to counter the hormone results but let's face it. You can only throw so much medication into your body. Who knows what kind of chemical reaction you are creating down there? Who knows what you are doing with your body? What the hell good is transition if you are damaging your health? Don't ever take hormones without not just your therapist's advice and consult, but your general physician's as well. He or she is much better qualified to tell you what the result of hormone therapy will be on your body. And don't under any circumstance take black market hormones or those over the counter "herbal" hormones you will see advertised in those exploitative magazines. That is crap.

Crossdress and Live for a Year

This is where the sub title of my article comes in. Harry Benjamin was a noted gender therapist and after study, determined that after living full time for a year (aka the "real life test") a person was ready for surgery. By living a year, he meant living and functioning in the real world in your intended gender. That means going to work or school or the movies or to the supermarket en femme. And after one year, you were ready to become a "real woman".

My question is, how is it, after living for 40 or 50 years in one gender, after one year of training, a person is suddenly ready to live in another gender? Does one year remarkably eliminate years of the other gender? Don't we still have normal male reactions to things? Are we still not genetic men? Of course. Then pray tell how does one year magically undo the past years of

your life? You would be utterly amazed how many of us take a calendar, mark off each day, and count down until that magic one-year day. Then they call a therapist, get their letter and schedule surgery regardless of whether they are financially or psychologically ready for it.

The truth of the matter is that neither Harry Benjamin, your therapist, nor anyone else knows when you are ready for surgery. It may be a month, a year, five years or NEVER. That has to be considered as a reality. I will never be READY for surgery. No one can tell me differently. And that leads into the third part of our story.

Get SRS, Find Mr. Right and Live Happily Ever Freakin' After

SRS is sold as the ultimate end. That you can't be "complete" until you have had SRS. You aren't a real woman until you have had SRS. You are a tweener, a pre-op, a non-op, a shemale or whatever name someone wants to come up with. To that I say, BULLSHIT.

Do you know what hurts worst of all? That these insults come from our own sisters. There is a clique out there and fortunately it is a tiny minority, that fully believe that they are the real women and that the rest of us are just party girls and that we don't count. We just like to dress up in spiked heels and miniskirts and get drunk and pick up men for the fun of it. They are serious women. There is even a group that has parties and BBQ's for post-ops only. No crossdressers allowed. When I found out about this, I was horrified and tempted to ask. "What's next? Signs that say "no colored" or "no Jews"?" (Having grown up in the deep south, I have seen both of these). I mean, the intent is the same - exclusion of a group of people because they are different than you are. Who in the hell gave these people the right to judge anyone as being less than they are because they chose a different path?

As I said, fortunately there is a minority that thinks this way. I look at several women I know who have had surgery - Stephanie Ann Blythe, Laura Marlowe, and Leah among them, who are intelligent, loving and giving women. I have never heard any of them use their surgery as measurement against anyone else. They come to our events and treat every one with respect. If we ever want to advance as a community we need to stop this gender apartheid. We need to stop eating our own because we will never get respect from the outside world unless we start respecting each other.

The sad part about the myth is that someone will feel like a complete woman after surgery and find Mr. Right. I don't know a lot of cases where this happened. Someone wrote me once to tell me that this was her desire. She wanted a husband and had surgery. She told me this was the biggest mistake of her life. She does not feel any more complete, the surgery did not have the desired result and she hasn't found a boyfriend. Is she the exception or the norm? No one knows. She had fallen for the myth and followed the dream. Her expectation was that she was going to find a man, preferably one with children so that she could be a mom and take the kids to soccer practice or to get their nails done. There was no Mr. Right in this story for her. She did not live happily ever after.

And what if you find a man? Are you going to tell him that you used to be a man? Or will you try to fool him and deceive him? What if he is Mr. Right? Is deception a foundation on which to begin a relationship? I think not.

I fully respect and support the decisions others have made relative to how they want to live their lives. It is up to us to support our brothers and sisters as well. But I would hope that I would receive the same respect and support for the choices I have made. I have chosen not to have surgery. I have chosen not to pursue a man. Those are my choices. They have not made me feel less complete, as less of a woman or as something else. I am happy with the choices I have made and wouldn't do anything differently. My way worked for me. It might not work for you.

In sum, don't listen to the myths, don't fall for all of the lines, don't believe the hype. Talk to a lot of people, get a variety of opinions, make your own choices. Because the only person who knows what is right for you is YOU. And YOU will be the one who will need to live with your decisions. Whatever you decide, there is a place in our community for you.

Happiness is out there. You can find it when you hear your cold say its first words, or you see the first robin of the spring, hit the lottery, get your play published, find a 1952 Topps Mantle. There are a lot of ways to measure happiness. There are far more than three steps to happiness and there are a million ways to find it.

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Special Events in December!

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Bloomington
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Sunday December 12th 2004

Contact:

siobhanellis@hotmail.com
408 431 6997

BAY AREA AMERICAN INDIAN TWO-SPIRITS

Community Potlucks

Tentative Dates For 2004: **December 3**. Held from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the San Francisco LGBT Community Center, 1800 Market Street at Octavia. Check board upon entering for room number.

Please bring something to share — food, non-alcoholic drinks, song, poem, raffle item. Traditional food is especially welcome. Contact us to confirm each event. BAAITS potlucks are clean and sober. Those under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave.

BAAITS has an office at 1800 Market Street #411 in San Francisco, CA 94102. 415-865-5616 / www.baaits.org. BAAITS is a community based volunteer organization creating forums for spiritual, cultural and artistic expression of Two-Spirit people.

TRANS

(Transgender Resource and Neighborhood Space)

TRANS is a program of UCSF, entirely dedicated to the well-being of transgender people, staffed almost entirely by members of the transgender community, providing a community gathering place for MTF, FTM, genderqueer and emerging trans-identified communities.

In our space we provide gender-appropriate and culturally-appropriate workshops, linkage to service providers, case management, support groups, events, guest speakers, substance use/abuse intervention and mental health services to the broad spectrum of transgender and gender variant people in San Francisco. Our workshops and support groups address issues of transgender health and health care policy, HIV awareness and substance use/abuse issues, transitioning and surgical procedures for both FTM and MTF transpeople, identity and self esteem, transgender law, commercial sex work, and general life skills.

Through our workshops, support groups and special events, TRANS hopes to offer the transgender community of the San Francisco Bay Area the means to address concerns both within and outside of our community. Staffed by caring and committed transgender and gender variant people, TRANS provides an informal drop-in center where MTF and FTM transgender people, gender queer and gender variant people can go to relax, socialize, take a shower, and join in the ongoing effort to foster the well-being of our community.

You may view our website at the following URL: <http://www.caps.ucsf.edu/TRANS/>. Please feel free to provide a link to our website if you wish.

RGA, TGFSF, and DVG

Invite You to a

Holiday Dinner

Sunday, December 12, 2004 • 7:00pm

Tarragon Restaurant
140 South Murphy Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
408-737-8003

Dinner includes a salad, entrée, dessert and coffee

Entrée choices are prime rib, chicken, salmon or vegetarian

\$40.00 per person

Hors d'oeuvres will be served beforehand,
but drinks are on your own

Gift Exchange

Each guest is requested to contribute a gift-wrapped present

Suggested price range: \$5.00 – \$10.00

Reservations Required

Please contact siobhanellis@hotmail.com by December 11!

Please indicate how many guests will be attending,
and their dinner choices

Pre-payment preferred, if possible, but cash or check payment acceptable at the restaurant

Miss Rachael Janelle Light

Empress 34 (The Butterfly Empress)

And

Miss Roxy Carmichael-Hart

President of TGFSF and Cookie Princess 003

Cordially invite you to an

After-Party

Sunday, December 12, 2004

Following the TG Holiday Dinner at the Tarragon

At Miss Janelle-Light's home
931 Bidwell Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA

Come enjoy a variety of
sweets, treats, and spirits

Help Decorate the Christmas Tree!

RSVP to Rachael at (408) 508-2321

A Hart-Light Production/Hart-Griffin Joint

Special Events in December!



Mid-Peninsula Support Group

WEDNESDAY, December 1, 2004

and continuing on the first Wednesday of each month

NEW LOCATION!

Full Circle Books

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

7:30 - 9:30 P.M.

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

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

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

Please note: This is a support group.

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

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

December 9th!

TGSF MID-MONTH: SPOKEN WORD

Hi Everyone,

We were very happy with our last mid-month. Thank you to all that came. The Hotel is wonderful. We have a number of members who would like to read their written work and so we're going to make our next mid-month a Spoken Word event. Tommi, Kelly and I have been to some of Julia Serano's Genderbender events and have really enjoyed them. This event is open to everyone and I think we'll have some wonderful readings. You can bring something by written someone else to read as well.

**Thanks again,
Anne Louise**

Spoken Word

TGSF MID MONTH SOCIAL

**Thursday, December 9th, 2004
Cathedral Hill Hotel**

Bring your poems, your written work or anything you would like to read. The event will start around 7:30pm and last till around 10:00pm or so.

The Cathedral Hill Hotel
1101 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco CA 94109
Tel: 415.776.8200

This is at the intersection of Geary and Van Ness so it is very accessible by Public Transportation - and in a nice area. The social will be held in the Restaurant area, which has a full menu with appetizers and an excellent selection of California cuisine dinners.

Toll Free Reservations: 800.622.0855
cathedralhillhotel.com
tgsf.org

TGSF wishes You and Yours a
Merry Christmas!

New Vendor in Sacramento!

ANNOUNCING ARIEL'S CLOSET

Ariel's Closet will be a discrete comfortable place in Sacramento where members of the transgender community can go to be themselves. Cross Dressers, Transsexuals, Transvestites and those who care for them can go to Ariel's, especially those who cannot dress at home or who cannot go out in public. You will be able to receive mail, keep your clothing, enjoy social activities like formal teas, get makeovers and use computers at Ariel's. Similar establishments are Carla's in San Jose and I Love It in Fremont. Now there will be one in Sacramento.

No more having to rent a hotel room just to dress for an evening to go out. No more fearing the family or kids will find your clothes, or your boss will see you when you need to be who you are.

We take confidentiality very seriously. All members will be screened. This is a SAFE PLACE. You can join an e-list at no cost and give Ariel's staff input right now on what you need and what you would like to have. Your input is invaluable as this new service is being created. Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ArielsCloset/>

You can also use a website that is in the process of being created. It will be interactive for the community. There will be a calendar of events, chat rooms, galleries where you can post your pictures, and forums where you can discuss things you chose and decide are important. Free membership to the website keeps out Spam bots and porn spammers. It will be up and running as soon as the domain points to the servers in about 72 hours. Visit <http://www.ArielsCloset.com>.

December 7th!

TGSF OUTREACH ON THE RADIO

TGSF Outreach representative **Kara Flynn** and Mr. TGSF **Bobby Cheung** will be on the radio discussing TGSF, being transgender, and the possible obstacles living under the Bush administration for the next 4 years. Kara and Bobby will be the guests of **KSAV** internet radio talk show host David White from 8-9pm on December 7th. Listeners are encouraged to call in to 1-800-407-KSAV with comments or questions. The radio show can be found online at www.ksav.org.

TRANSGENDER VETS TO MARCH AGAIN

After assessing the success of the first Transgender Veterans March to the Wall held last May, the Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA) is moving once again to gather transgender veterans in Washington, DC.

The First Transgender March to the Wall was for history. The second March to the Wall on May 20, 2005 will be for tradition. With the addition of a tour of the newly opened WWII Memorial, the March will be expanded. As with this year's tour, the 2005 March will also visit the Vietnam Memorial and Iwo Jima Memorial and will experience the very emotional and proud moment of dedicating a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

Fifty-five Transgender Veterans and significant others from across the country attended this year's March to the Wall. The emotional event was also supported and witnessed by many others in the GLBTI community from Washington, DC and around the country.

"No one could have anticipated the tremendous success of this year's March to the Wall in bringing together so many Transgender Veterans for the first time," said Angela Brightfeather, event organizer and TAVA Special Projects Chairperson. "Added to that success is the fact that so many other GLBTI people have recognized the importance of this March, not only to the Transgender Veterans, but also to our community in general. By providing the hub for other events to gather around with pride and determination, TAVA has touched on the emotion and great sacrifices made by the GLBTI community in the defense of our nation. By honoring our past, we will be able to more effectively and emotionally gather together to create the motivation that will change our future."

TAVA expects that the success of the first March to the Wall will encourage more Transgender Veterans to attend the May 2005 event. Pictures of this year's March can be viewed at the TAVA web site <www.tavausa.org> under the "Events" link.

"The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) is honored to support this effort to honor transgender veterans and all veterans," said Robyn Walters, NTAC Secretary and TAVA Veterans Affairs Liaison Representative. "NTAC was happy to coordinate its May 18 - 20, 2005 Congressional Lobby Days schedule with the TAVA March dates. Both organizations look forward to the same synergy seen in last year's events."

Karen Rice, TAVA Secretary and partner of Tina Rice, veteran and TAVA Media Director, captured the solemnity of the occasion with these thoughts: "On the first March to the Wall I stood proudly with men and women who served their country in at least four conflicts - WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm. For the first time in their lives they mourned their fallen compatriots [while standing] proudly and openly as themselves. They paid tribute to the many who have served in silence. We know, as some may not, that there are those who serve in silence now. They love their country, and they welcome those who would like to join us and support them."

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

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

NTAC Sets Lobby Days for May 2005

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Significant Other Support East Bay

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

HEY!

\$10 Bucks Per Issue Gets You An Ad Like This...!

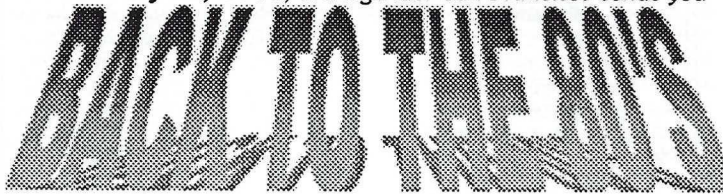
Tall, feminine, graceful closet CD seeks Big Sister to help with shopping and makeup tips. I live alone so it's helpful if you can come here, but I can certainly travel. SF Area. Call (415) 000-0000. Up to 40 words only \$10.00. Send text of ad and Check or Money Order to TGSF's PO Box, ATTN: Editor. Reach out and come out!



The hair...
the clothes...
the music...



On January 15, 2005, Transgender San Francisco sends you



COTILLION 2005

The soundtrack of your life

Cowell Theater at Fort Mason Center

San Francisco, CA

Doors open 5 PM, Show starts 7 PM

Tickets \$15-\$25-\$35-\$45

Available at: Carla's Salon and Boutique,
I Love It Consignments. Diablo Valley Girls
or the Fort Mason Center Box Office:

• (415) 345-7575 (phone) • (415) 292-4639 (fax)

or by mail from:

Fort Mason Box Office, Landmark Building A
San Francisco, CA 94123 • www.fortmason.org

Host Hotels:

Holiday Inn Fisherman's Wharf

1300 Columbus Avenue, San Francisco, CA
\$105/night; parking discounted at \$28/day
800-942-7348

www.ichotelsgroup.com


Must be reserved by December 24, 2004 to guarantee group rate. Must mention "Transgender San Francisco" to receive group rate.

Cow Hollow Motor Inn and Suites

2190 Lombard Street
San Francisco, CA
\$86/night; free parking (one car per room)
415-921-5800

www.cowhollowmotorinn.com

Must be reserved by December 14, 2004 to guarantee group rate. Must mention "Group 1696, TGSF 2005 Cotillion" to receive group rate.

Details available at www.tgsf.org
or call Roxy  (510) 366-9855

The Cowell Theater is fully accessible by public transportation.
For information visit www.sfmuni.com

ASL interpreted.

A Roxy Hart-Griffin Joint

Events Horizon!

On The Horizon...

IFGE ANNUAL CONVENTION.

The International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE, the publisher of "Tapestry" magazine) will hold its 19th Annual Convention in Austin on **April 26-30, 2005**, at the Red Lion Inn (near 290 and I-35). This is a short cab ride from the Austin Airport.

IFGE is currently soliciting presenters. I am submitting several proposals, and I hope that Christie Lee Littleton and Vanessa Foster and others of my Texas friends will do the same. Deadline for presentation proposals is September 30th. Contact alng@mindspring.com for information on being a presenter.

You are encouraged to mark this date and make plans to attend. For more information, send a request to S. Kristine James, PO Box 61, Easton, PA 18044, phone 610-759-1761, skristine@aol.com.

Coming May 2005!

TRANSGENDER AWARENESS WEEK

Dear TGSF:

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

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

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

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

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

Andrea Miller
SJSU GLBTA Secretary

ONLINE SO LIST!

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

Announcements!

NEW SUPPORT GROUP AT UCSF TRANS!

Calling all FTM's, Transmen, Genderqueers, Gender-Variant and Gender-Fluid folks of all kinds! The UCSF TRANS Program is starting a new support group for all of us, from 5:30-6:30pm on Tuesday nights at 1145 Bush Street at the UCSF TRANS drop-in space. ALL AGES, all backgrounds, all orientations, and all gender expressions are completely welcome.

Discussion topics will be determined by the needs of the group, and are likely to include:

- Testosterone and its various effects
- Sex and communication
- Genderqueer and trans body image
- Dating and casual sex encounters
- Top surgery, and other trans surgeries
- Passing vs. being out
- Relationship issues
- Dealing with body changes and changes in sexual desires
- Discrimination in employment
- Being part of SF gay male culture
- Multiple identities in ethnic and disabled communities
- Class issues
- Harassment and safety concerns
- Accessing social services
- How to talk about our sexual parts
- Activism and social change, and many more!

For info or directions, please contact Sam Davis at (415) 476-0143 or sadavis@psg.ucsf.edu

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Tall, feminine, graceful closet CD seeks Big Sister to help with shopping and makeup tips. I live alone so it's helpful if you can come here, but I can certainly travel. SF Area. Call (415) 000-0000. Up to 40 words only \$10.00. Send text of ad and Check or Money Order to TGSP's PO Box, ATTN: Editor. Reach out and come out!

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THE TRANS PROJECT

If you identify as transgender, you have a sibling who does not identify as transgender, and you and your sibling are 18 or over, you can help bring the voices and experiences of trans people into psychology.

My name is Rhonda Factor/RJ and I am a doctoral student in psychology at the University of Vermont. My doctoral dissertation is designed to illustrate the various ways we experience and express our gender identities. While as a group, there are many differences among us; we also share the experience of not identifying fully with the sex/gender to which we were assigned at birth.

Our experiences are also similar to and different from individuals who do identify fully with the sex/gender to which they were assigned at birth. This project is also designed to explore these similarities and differences by comparing your experiences with those of your "conventionally gendered" siblings. The surveys administered to your siblings will simply be entitled "The Family Project" and will not focus on gender identity.

In fact, that survey only asks about sex in the conventional way. Therefore, individuals will not be "outed" by sending a survey to their siblings. It is my hope that this project will contribute to a culture that understands, supports, and celebrates the varieties of our gender experiences.

Trans research should be community-based because of our specific sensitivities, understanding, experience, and consciousness.

— Leslie Feinberg

This project was designed in collaboration with trans communities and trans researchers. Questions in areas of research important to trans people were developed through attendance at trans conferences, exploration of trans listservs, and consultation with trans individuals, mental health providers, and researchers. Interviews were conducted and questions based on the responses were incorporated into the questionnaire. Drafts of the questionnaire were shown to consultants and feedback was incorporated.

To participate, please email me the following information so I can mail the surveys to you and your sibling. If you would rather have your sibling's survey sent to you and then forward it yourself, let me know. In that case, I'd send you both surveys and would only need your sibling's first name.

I. Your Name, Your Address, Your Email, (Name your sibling knows you by if different from "your name" above)

II. Your Sibling's Name (If more than one, the one most likely to respond. If more than one likely to respond, the one closest in age.), Your Sibling's Address, Your Sibling's Email

III. (If there is another sibling I can contact if the first one does not respond.), Other Sibling's Name, Other Sibling's Address, Other Sibling's Email

Thanks again for helping to create a more trans-affirming culture. Please feel free to contact me if you have any more questions.

Warmly,

Rhonda J. Factor/RJ, The Trans Project
Rhonda.Factor@uvm.edu
University of Vermont - John Dewey Hall
2 Colchester Avenue, Burlington, VT 05405

GenderQueer, Trans, & Gender Questioning Youth Group

Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center
www.defrank.org

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

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

TRANSSEXUAL ACQUITTED OF FALSIFYING MARRIAGE APPLICATION

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff



(Leavenworth, Kansas) A transsexual woman Tuesday was acquitted of intentionally lying by listing herself as the bride on a marriage license application. Sandy Clarissa Gast, 48 was charged with false swearing, a misdemeanor carrying a maximum fine of \$500. Sheriff's deputies arrested her shortly after she filled out the license form with her partner and fiancé George Somers. Somers now also lives as a woman. Kansas law does not permit the transgender to correct their birth records to show their proper sex.

Prosecutor Frank Kohl said Gast should have been listed as a man on the license application, filed in February. Even so, she still would not have obtained a marriage license since gay marriage is illegal in Kansas.

Gast has legally changed her name and obtained a driver's license that declares her to be a female, but under Kansas law she is still a male. "The change of driver's license, the change of name — even though they were done through legal channels, doesn't change gender," Kohl, told television station KMBC when Gast was arrested.

In court Kohl cited a 2002 decision by the state Supreme Court invalidating a transsexual woman's marriage to a man, even though the woman's sex change was recognized in her home state of Wisconsin. The U.S. Supreme Court declined to review that decision, effectively upholding it.

Dr. Eric Vilain, head of medical genetics at UCLA, told the court that it is not unheard of for someone to appear to be one sex at birth but carry characteristics of the other sex. Gast underwent sex change surgery in October.

Topeka psychologist George Hough testified that after examining Gast three times this summer, he believes she should have been considered a woman even before her surgery. Hough said Gast suffers from "gender identity disorder," in which a person believes he or she belongs to the opposite sex.

In finding Gast not guilty of falsifying a document, Leavenworth County District Judge Frank Stewart's ruling does not alter Kansas law. Gast is still considered "officially" male. Stewart's ruling was based whether "Gast had intended to lie on the application or whether she truly believed herself to be female." Stewart said it was impossible to determine, and with probably doubt found her not guilty.

"I don't know what my next step is going to be," Gast said outside the court. Holding Somers' hand she said, "Right now I'm just going to kick back."

HRC Applauds Judge's Ruling, Transgender Woman's Efforts

By: J Smith, OIA Newswire

WASHINGTON - Human Rights Campaign President Cheryl Jacques made the following statement regarding a Leavenworth, Kan., Superior Court judge's dismissal yesterday of charges against Sandy Gast, a transgender woman arrested for identifying herself as female on her marriage license.

"The judge recognized the absurdity behind these discriminatory charges. The judge properly recognized that Ms. Gast intended no dishonesty by checking the box that truly corresponds with her gender identity.

"Unfortunately, the disrespectful and detrimental treatment Ms. Gast suffered at the hands of the state happens all too often to transgender people, as well as gay, lesbian and bisexual Americans. Until our country's justice system treats all GLBT people fairly, our work for equality will not be done.

"We laud Ms. Gast and her lawyer for their work on this important case. Our fight for fairness would be much harder fought without individuals like Ms. Gast bravely defending their rights."

Gast, a post-operative male-to-female transsexual, filled out a marriage license in April 2004 identifying herself as female. The Leavenworth County Sheriff's Office arrested Gast for violating a Kansas statute pertaining to false swearing. Although the crime was a minor infraction, Gast was arrested. Her bond was five times the amount of the maximum fine for her crime. The judge in the case ruled that Gast did not intend to falsify the document.

THAI STUDENT WINS TRANSVESTITE BEAUTY PAGEANT



BANGKOK: Blessed with flawless skin and a flashing smile, Thai college student Treechada Petcharat beat 23 challengers to win the world's first international transvestite beauty pageant, organizers said Sunday.

The 19-year-old cross-dresser, looking for all the world like the woman her birth certificate refutes, was crowned Miss International Queen Sunday beating transvestites and transsexuals from 10 Asian countries, France and Germany.

After rounds showing off his figure in swimwear, an evening gown and national costume, the student emerged triumphant, richer by 7,000 dollars and with a tiara for his well-coiffured hair.

Asia secured a clean sweep with contestants from India and the Philippines taking second and third spots at the pageant in the Thai coastal resort Pattaya, well known for its relaxed attitude to all things sexual.

Although the competition was the first international one, Thailand has long held contests to crown the country's transvestites, who are widely accepted in most of predominantly Buddhist Thailand.

"We were successful with our first international beauty pageant and we will keep organizing them for the coming years," said Alisa Phanthusak of organizers Tiffany Show Pattaya.

Beauty pageants are extremely popular in Thailand and the government is lobbying hard to host the Miss Universe contest next year.

One of the country's most famous is the annual Jumbo Queen for large-sized women while Miss Spinster is for mature single beauties aged 28 or over. Thailand now awaits next month's staging of the Miss Air Hostess pageant.

What, you were expecting a show tune? Gia Tamalas demonstrates her talent at Miss International Queen 2004, a transvestite beauty pageant in Pattaya, Thailand.

No Cross Dressing In Texas School

by The Associated Press

(Spurger, Texas) A homecoming tradition in which boys dress like girls and vice-versa in a tiny Texas school district won't be held today after a parent complained about what she regarded as the event's gay overtones.

As a substitute for TWIRP Day, the schools ranging from elementary to senior high decided to hold Camo Day - with black boots and army camouflage to be worn by everyone who wants to participate.

TWIRP, which stands for The Woman Is Requested to Pay, was hosted by Spurger schools for years during Homecoming Week - to give boys and girls a chance to reverse social roles and let older girls invite boys on dates, open doors and pay for sodas.

Plano-based Liberty Legal Institute issued a news release reporting it "came to the aid of a concerned parent" over an "official cross-dressing day" in the school district northeast of Houston. "It is outrageous that a school in a small town in East Texas would encourage their four-year-olds to be cross-dressers," Liberty Legal Institute lawyer Hiram Sasser said in the release.

Tanner Hunt, the school district's lawyer, called Sasser's statement "inflammatory and misleading." He said the district never planned or conducted a "cross-dressing day." "They are a tiny little East Texas school district," Hunt said. "It never occurred to them that anyone could find anything morally reprehensible about TWIRP Day. I mean, they've been having it for years, probably for generations and it's the first time anybody has complained."

Delana Davies, 33, said she complained after reading a school notice about TWIRP Day. Davies, whose nine-year-old son and four-year-old daughter attend Spurger Elementary, said she viewed the day not as a silly Homecoming Week activity but rather something "related to homosexuality."

"It's like experimenting with drugs," Davies said. "You just keep playing with it and it becomes customary...If it's OK to dress like a girl today, then why is it not OK in the future?"

More 7-News!

KUWAITI TRANSSEXUAL PETITIONS FOR HOPE

Her bid to be officially recognized as a woman is before the Muslim nation's highest tribunal. Her family has rejected her.

**By Diana Elias, Associated Press Writer
Los Angeles Times**

KUWAIT CITY — Her father and brothers beat her. The government suspended her from her job. A group of Muslim fundamentalists screamed abuse at her outside a courtroom. Her crime: She was born a boy named Ahmed and is now a tall, 29-year-old woman who calls herself Amal — Hope.

An overseas sex-change operation has done little to help Amal's struggle for official recognition as a woman in conservative Kuwait. One court ruled for her, another overturned that ruling and now she is going to the Court of Cassation, her last avenue of appeal. "People see me as a comic case," Amal said. "I wish they could look at me as a human being, someone who was born with a disease."

Many Middle East countries refuse to recognize sex changes. Jordan, Lebanon and Syria do, but it takes complicated and lengthy court proceedings. Only Iran and Egypt allow people to officially change their gender with relative ease. Amal says she has always felt and acted like a female. When she was little, she said, she loved to wear her mother's dresses and shoes. Her family humored her in childhood and even called her by a girl's name: Athari.

On the first day of kindergarten, she said, the teacher called her Ahmed and she didn't respond. "My name is Athari," I told her," she said.

As she grew up, however, her family realized that it wasn't just a phase. Classmates noticed, and a neighbor sent his mother to ask for her hand in marriage. Her father and two brothers, one of them her twin, beat her, locked her in the bathroom and forced her to spend many nights in the yard without dinner. "I couldn't be a man by force. It was out of my hands," she said. "It felt like living in a detention center."

Amal's father refused to be interviewed. His lawyer, Adel Abdul-Hadi, said it was "logically and religiously unacceptable for Ahmed to enter women's toilets and beauty shops," even after the operation. "I pity the young man now."

During her interview, Amal wore a red skirt and matching tight-fitting blouse, and was fasting from dawn to dusk in observation of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month. She refused to be identified by her surname or to be photographed, saying her life was in danger. She said she had attempted suicide three times. At 14, she swallowed all the pills in her family's medicine cabinet. Another time, she ended up in intensive care and her family didn't visit her, she said.

At 17, she was kicked out of the house. On her own, now calling herself Amal, she found a secretarial job at the Ministry of Education. She wore jeans and hid her long hair under a baseball cap, but co-workers would open her office door "just to take a peek at me without saying anything," she said. She couldn't go to the toilet because she didn't know whether to use the men's or women's room.

Amal made extra money by designing women's and children's clothes, and selling paintings and home decorations. In 2001, at age 26, she had saved enough for an operation in Thailand. Amal declined to discuss it, but claimed that her body was already "80% female" at birth. "I found out that my case is not unknown to medicine," Amal said. "My real problem is with the lack of understanding by society and my family." Last year, the Ministry of Education suspended Amal from her job until she works out her legal status.

Kuwaiti women work, and unlike those in neighboring Saudi Arabia, they drive cars and can travel abroad without a male relative's permission. The mixing of the sexes is largely frowned upon, however. Coeducation stops at kindergarten, and the idea of a sex-change operation is too much for many. In the newspaper Al-Rai Al-Amm, columnist Ali al-Fadhel wrote that just thinking about sex changes embarrasses him.

But Amal is pressing her fight. In April, a court upheld her right to register as female because the sex-change operation was a health matter that merited an exception to Sharia, or Islamic law. Gender is not "just ... genitalia; it is also psychological feelings," the judges ruled.

Last month, an appeals court overturned the ruling, saying God decides gender and humans have no right to change it. "Ahmed is still a man, and the operation he had does not change the way he was created, even if it changed the way he looks to others," said Mohammed al-Tabtabai, dean of Kuwait's Sharia College.

The last time she went to court, she wore a veil and black cloak. Outside the courtroom, fundamentalists tried to attack her, one of them screaming, "We will not let you be, you infidel," according to her lawyer, Adel al-Yehya. "I feel I am sitting in a cardboard box with one hole bringing me light," Amal said. "Either I get out of the box, or they close this hole."

Antioch Woman Has Created Web Site To Honor The Victims Anti-Transgender Violence - Remembering The Slain

Rona Marech, Chronicle Staff Writer

It started with the killing of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was stabbed to death in 1998 in Boston.

Gwen Smith thought Hester's killing seemed tragically similar to the recent slayings of two other transgender women — Debra Forte and Chanelle Pickett. The earlier deaths had received a small amount of news coverage, but when she mentioned the parallels to friends online, Smith was stunned by the response. No one had heard of Forte or Pickett.

"From that night on, I begin to look for all the people we have forgotten, bearing in mind the George Santayana quote: 'Those who cannot remember the past are (condemned) to repeat it,'" Smith later wrote. "I want to make sure we remember." Soon after, Smith created Remembering Our Dead, a Web site that records the lives and deaths of victims of anti-transgender killings, and called for a Transgender Day of Remembrance to honor the people on the grim list she kept.

At the first remembrance event, in 1999, 25 people held candles in the rain outside San Francisco's Castro Theater. This year, on Saturday, the day of remembrance will be recognized in at least 166 cities and seven countries. "It's a lot better than being a voice crying out in the wilderness," Smith said.

Smith, 37, is a self-described computer geek with a passion for Rambler cars and Disney cartoons. She lives in a nondescript cream-colored house in a nondescript Antioch development with her wife of 12 years, Bonnie Smith.

Six months before they were supposed to marry, Smith told her then-fiancée, whom she had met in a college graphic design class, that she had struggled with her gender identity all her life. She made the disclosure at a restaurant near a bus route "so she could run screaming to the bus if she needed to," Smith said.

But Bonnie didn't run. The pair married as planned at the Renaissance Faire — in full-on Renaissance garb. A couple of years later, Smith began taking hormones and transitioning from man to woman.

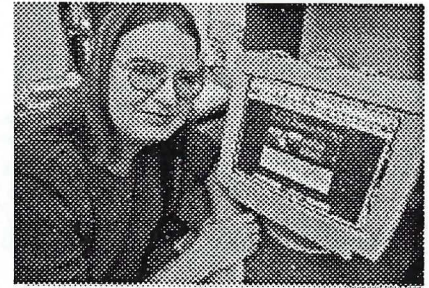
In her bedroom — and only in her bedroom — Smith keeps a picture of their wedding day. She was a he and had dark hair and a full beard and was dressed like a Shakespearean prince. That was the old Gwen. (She does not reveal her old name.)

The new Gwen has long, dirty blond hair and chipped pink polish on her nails. She likes thick make-up and lots of dark eyeliner. She's a Web designer who writes a column about transgender issues that is published in a number of gay papers. And she has something of an obsession for her project — her death tally — as depressing as it can be.

Smith devotes hours upon hours to research: perusing newspaper clips, searching archives and data bases, interviewing police officers and reporters and talking to family members. One by one, the names — and sometimes a story and a photo — get added to her site in a plain white-on-black font.

Pickett: strangled in Massachusetts in 1995. Christian Paige: beaten, strangled, stabbed and burned in Chicago in 1996. Vianna Faye Williams: died of multiple stab wounds to back, neck and chest in New Jersey in 1997. Harvey Aberles. Jae Stevens. Cameron "Tina" Tanner. Maria "La Conchita" Palencia.

The Web site now lists 322 names, all people Smith believes were killed because of their nonconformist gender expression — whether or not they actually identified as transgender. Three times, Smith has had to type in the name of someone she had met. By her estimate, 19 people were slain in the last year in cases of anti-transgender violence; nine of those victims were in the United States, including three in California.



Continued on Page 19

Takin' Care of Biz...

TGSF FINANCIAL REPORT

As of November 20, 2004

Assets

Cash	4121.74
Decorations	1000.00
Beverages	200.00
Total	5321.74

Liabilities and Equity

Accounts Payable	0.00
Total	0.00

Statement of TGSF Income

Revenues

Memberships	270.00
Donations	325.80
Advertising	205.00
Halloween Party at Carla's	935.00
Total	1735.80

Expenses

Channel	431.00
Phone	48.54
Contribution to Day of Remembrance	100.00
Total	579.54

Net Income 1156.26

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.

TGSF DONATIONS

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Roxy Carmichael-Hart \$117.00

Bless You and Thank You for Caring!

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INTERVIEW WITH JENNIFER FINNEY BOYLAN

By Gwen Park, PlanetOut

For Jennifer Finney Boylan and her family, the biggest event of the last five years was not, as you or I might have guessed, her gender transition, but the death of her sister-in-law. It's one of the stories Boylan left out of "She's Not There," her memoir about life, love and coming into one's own. Make that *best-selling* memoir, for, as unlikely as it might seem, a book by a trans author did make the best-seller list. Boylan chatted with us recently about her book, gender and imagination.

One thing you talked about [in the book] was how, before your transition, a lot of your reading lists for your classes were about characters who lived in their imaginations. So I'm wondering, now that you've transitioned, what are your reading lists, and what do they say about you?

That's really interesting. Of course, the courses I teach are determined kind of on a round-robin basis, which is to say that I'm not always teaching whatever I please. And my primary bread-and-butter courses are courses in creative writing, in which we're essentially reading the work written by the students.

But when I do get the occasional course in which I get to determine the [reading list] — if it's a literature course. I'm still largely teaching the same stuff, but I'm teaching it from a different point of view. I'm teaching it from the point of view of someone who has found [herself] rather than the point of view of someone who feels imprisoned, which in some ways makes for a less manic teaching style.

It's also true that imprisoned people can be quite passionate. I think my courses used to have real passion, and I hope they still do. I mean, in the long run, it's true that students aren't really there for me, they're there for themselves. Whether I have anything to teach them, to help them with whatever their business is, whatever their journey is, I'm largely teaching the same stuff.

And also — and I think this is kind of controversial — for the first time ever, I'm teaching my own work. In a course on writing, I am doing about a week on "She's Not There" and talking about how I wrote the book and what the issues are. I'm not teaching it from the point of view of teaching transgender stuff. I'm teaching it from the point of view of, I've got a roomful of students who want to write nonfiction and memoir. So, OK, here's the story, here's how I wrote it and here's how I put it together.

Most of them have probably read the book by now, but I'm getting underneath the hood and saying: Here's how I wrote this, here's what I took out of this chapter and here's what I could have done here, and this is what I did in the second draft and changed. I think that's helpful.

In a way, I used to teach from the point of view of giving my students models of how to live from the literature. If I'm doing [that] at all now, I'm doing it from the example of my own life, somehow letting my life stand in for my lecture and saying, look, here's somebody who found the courage to do something really impossible and yet did it.

I think a lot of my students pick up on the sense of, well, if Jenny can do that, then we can do anything. [And the issues] are a whole lot less difficult than changing genders, although they're not less difficult for them. Whatever your issue is, whatever your impossible thing is, it's the hardest thing for you.

You mentioned rewrites and things you might have done differently. What do you think you would have changed if you could go back now and re-edit?

I am very, very proud of the book. I don't think there's a lot I would change, quite frankly. There's one line in the second chapter which is the only real lecture in the book about what being transgender means, and I'll digress here to note that one reason I think that "She's Not There" is connected to a lot of people — including straight people or gay and lesbian people — who didn't get it before, is because it doesn't lecture. It's not a tirade about gender. It's a series of stories, or it's one long story. And I think people connect to the story of a real person's life rather than being yelled at.

Having said that, there's one little place where I do provide some of the basic information, because a lot of people just don't get it. There's a line where I say that the big difference is that being gay or lesbian is about sexual orientation and being transgender is about identity. And that's the one line in the book that I think is a little bit too dumbed down, because being gay or lesbian is about identity. But it's a different question of identity. And I think that some gay and lesbian readers of the book have kind of bristled at that line a little bit, and I think rightly so.

On the other hand, a lot of people who've never understood this stuff before looked at that line and it was the moment where they actually got it, so maybe I shouldn't be quite so self-conscious about it.

I'm really happy with "She's Not There." I should be happy with it. It took me forever to write it and the interesting thing about "She's Not There," and what's interesting for me as a writer, is what's not in the book. There are many, many stories I took out.

What's the best story you took out that you think should be in there?

Well, some of these stories are going to wind up in future books. What I think people have to learn is that when you tell a story about your life, you're not telling a story of every little thing that happened. Even the most realistic of memoirs is not the same thing as a photograph.

The major trauma of our family's life over the last five or six years was in fact not my changing genders but the death of my sister-in-law, Grace's sister, who had ovarian cancer, and the book is dedicated to her, Katie Finney.

Originally, I had 50 pages on Katie getting sick and dying, and the editor pointed out to me that as tragic as that is, that's not the story I was telling, at least not now and not there. So I took out that story with some consternation, if only because I loved Katie and to have her not in the book really hurt, but that's how you write a story. You don't put in everything.

And it's also true that you don't put in everything about your suffering and your pain and your misery, as I think the tradition in transgender narrative is. That's why there are so many dozens of books by people about how miserable they are, and that's why when people read about transsexuals, they generally think of you as marginalized, miserable people. Which is not to diminish the suffering that people go through, but it's also true that a lot of us survive this and a lot of us go on to live good lives. And people ought to know there's another story.

And I think that's where your book does succeed. You have a lot of humor in it and things that people can relate to.

You know, it's funny. Most of the transsexuals I know are very funny people. We all have a kind of a similar sense of humor. It's a kind of — I hate to say — laughing on the outside, crying on the inside. Transgender people seem to have a particular appreciation for the absurd. And I think that if you survive the condition at all, it's because you have a sense of humor.

I know it's a cliché that humor helps you survive, but in very few instances is a sense of humor as necessary for survival as it is when you're transgender, and in very few conditions is it quite as difficult to maintain a sense of humor. Your condition is so absurd and at times hopeless.

To understand this condition is to almost by definition understand an existential or an absurd dilemma. And as a result, I think a lot of TS people get this kind of view of the world which is ... certainly there's no shortage of irony in the lives of most transgender people.

You are questioning this very basic thing which you are taught is this way or that way, and when you start questioning it, you sort of have to be able to laugh about it or you go crazy.

The fact of the matter is that if you have this, you have to question it all the time. And you understand perfectly well that this is an odd thing to be thinking. It's not like you're thrilled by the fact that you've got this gender dilemma. You'd be so happy to be able to feel like other people feel. And when people say to you, "You want to change genders? But that's so weird. That's so bizarre." You want to say, "Tell me about it, girlfriend. Please." We know the absurdity of the condition better than anybody. But what are you going to do? Eventually, you just have to accept yourself.

And I think that's the hard part. Just accepting everything.

And it's not like we invented [these issues]. I think that's the thing that a lot of transgender people feel: "Why do I feel this way? I must be crazy!" In fact, you're no crazier than a blind person is crazy for not being able to see. It's just a fact. It's the way your brain is wired. It's the way you are.

And it's not simply a matter of snapping out of it or thinking something else, or thinking that something else would solve a problem. Well, geez, we would have all done that years ago.

But that's one reason why I say in the book, the most important thing you need in order to understand this is an imagination. But unfortunately, a lot of people, because they can't imagine what it would be like to feel something that's so real and so strange, they assume that it must not be real. And I try to be sympathetic to people, because if you've never imagined this, how could you, why would you?

On the other hand, if someone told me that they had this profound sense of unease with themselves, rather than kind of talking them out of it, my first reaction would be to try to offer them sympathy, compassion. That's how I feel, but call me a nut.

You're a nut. But I think that's probably a more effective way. Getting back to what you were saying before about trying to educate people through stories rather than lectures, I think that tends to be a more effective way of dealing with stuff like this. When you



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Interview with Jennifer Boylan...

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shut down, when you fight, when you whatever, they just shut down themselves and don't even try to imagine or try to understand.

I think that if people in the transgender community — whatever that is — have had issues with me, it's because they see me as someone who might in the worst-case scenario be called an assimilationist, someone who might emphasize the things we have in common with everybody else, to build bridges to straight people and to gay and lesbian people, and to show that transgender people are more familiar than not. And there are plenty of other people who are fighting a revolution for separatism.

If you look at the history of any civil rights movement, there are often two strains. There's one group of people who emphasize building bridges with everyone else — that's your Martin Luther King model. It says: We're going to change the world by making the point that we're actually very familiar people and that we're just like you.

And then there's the Malcolm X model, which says: No, we're going to change the world by changing the way everyone else thinks about us, and that's everyone else's job, not ours.

Gay and lesbian people went through this same dichotomy. Do gay and lesbian people want to make the case that they are a thing apart? Or do they want to make the case that sexual orientation is not that big a deal? And the fact of the matter is that both things are true, and you need your Malcolm X and you need Martin Luther King. Both of those points of view are valid, and we shouldn't have to choose between them.

I think that transgender people are coming to the same place. For years now, I think that the separatist, revolutionary wing of the movement has essentially been dominant. Which is as it should be, because there's a lot of work to be done.

But I think we're slowly approaching the place — and I don't know that we're there yet — where we can start making the point that you can be transgender and not have it be the most important thing in your life. [It depends on] how you deal with it and how lucky you are and what kind of resources you have, which are pretty big questions.

Was that one of your aims of the book? To build bridges to a lot of other people, to straight people, to queer people?

No, actually. I wrote this book almost unconsciously, I have to say. I never really considered not writing the book, and I never particularly considered writing the book any other way than the way I did.

My sense was that if I'm a storyteller I could tell stories, and these are the stories that I had. And I told them as best I could. But having done that — and maybe this sounds conceited — but I think it's worth noting that this is the first book by a transgender American to be a best-seller.

And it may be true that other people's work may be more complex, or more scholarly, or angrier or something. But it's also true that I did manage to sit next to Oprah Winfrey. And lots of people who never thought of accepting transgender people before suddenly got it. The primary audience of "She's Not There" is straight people, some of whom are getting it for the very first time and I think that's worth celebrating.

I actually didn't see the episode of "Oprah" you were on, but I heard about it. For all its problems, I think it's amazing that you were even on the show.

If we think of transsexuals on TV, we all think the same thing.

Jerry Springer.

Of what talk shows do to us. The fact [is] that I was able to sit there, to be unshocking. One of my favorite backhanded compliments: Somebody wrote me and said, "You know, Jenny, when I saw you on that show, it almost seemed like you were somebody that a person might know."

Thanks.

I wanted to [respond], "Actually, I am a person you might know." But so many of the transgender people we see on TV are a self-selecting group of escapees from a mental institution.

They're very unreal.

Well, it's just that. As long as those are the images of transgender people that are out there, that's what people will think. And that image helps no one. I don't even think it helps us.

I'm not saying I'm America's transgender spokesperson. This isn't going to last, and I'm not going to be around forever. There are all kinds of different stories, and mine is only one of them. I don't want my story to be held up as emblematic of anything other than what happened to one person, but it's certainly worth something to have someone out there who's not pathetic or pissed off. What I should say is that I've been pathetic and pissed off in my life, but what I am now is mostly grateful.

What are you grateful for?

Remembering the Slain...

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She includes fatalities that have the tell-tall signs of "overkill," even if authorities don't officially label them hate crimes.

"A lot of murders are not simple gunshot wounds," Smith said. "Instead, you'll see a case like Gwen (Araujo) where she was strangled and beaten over time. ... It gets to a point where it's not just about killing a person, it's about obliterating them, erasing them if you could."

Araujo is the transgender teenager from Newark who was slain in 2002. The trial of three men accused of killing her ended in a mistrial in June.

"I think it's very hard for non-transgender people to understand the level of potential day-to-day violence most transgender people face," said Shawna Virago, director of domestic violence services at Community United Against Violence. "We owe it to our community not to forget those of us who have been slain."

This Saturday, Transgender Day of Remembrance will be recognized in cities from Lincoln, Neb., to Cheyenne, Wyo., and Auburn, Ala. Numerous high schools and colleges — including UCSF, City College of San Francisco and George Washington High School — will organize their own events, leading vigils, holding panel discussions and writing names of victims on posters, T-shirts or symbolic grave stones.

"It's caught on basically because people have had enough," said Ethan St. Pierre, whose transgender aunt, Debra Forte, was stabbed to death in Massachusetts in 1995. St. Pierre is also transgender, but his aunt died before he was able to speak to her about his identity. "I think more and more people are recognizing our right to exist as human beings," he said.

I'm grateful for having been able to get from one side of this gender divide to the other in one piece and to have been able to do so with the love and support of my family and friends, and the community and tens of thousands of readers.

You do seem to have gone through it very well.

But I think that lots of people go through it very well; I don't think that I'm unique. What happens, as you know, is that most people who get through it in one piece — which I think most people do actually, sooner or later — they drop off the radar.

And some people say they're not transgender anymore — they're just women or they're just men. They're either trans women or trans men, but some people don't even use that prefix anymore. That's their own choice. I don't know what my opinion is on that particular topic.

What I will say is that as long as people continue to disappear once they've made successful transitions, the only transgender people that will be usable in this culture are Ru Paul and losers on Jerry Springer.

I'm not saying that I'm going to be doing this forever, but there are tens of thousands of us, and I meet them all over the country. That includes trans men as well, whose stories are not being told. So everyone needs to get over themselves and to be able to talk about this like it's something that happens to a lot of people, which it does, and that it's not that unusual.

When I was coming out, when I first met a therapist — and this is when I was 20 — I didn't see the word transsexual. I couldn't even tell the guy that's what I was. I was so afraid. It took me the whole hour just to say, "I think I've got some gender issues, man" and I was shaking and crying.

Now I say transsexual a hundred times a day, but it's very hard to remember how deep people's fears [run]. Especially once you get across the divide. You kind of think: That's what all this stuff was about? That's it?

You've used the phrase gender divide a few times. By that are you referring to pre/post transition, male/female, what sort of divide?

I'm referring to where I was versus where I am now. It's not a divide; it's a continuum. I think that's important to note. There are plenty of people who would like to remain right in the middle of the continuum, and I meet genderqueer people all over the place. They are often quite irritated with me, because they feel like I've gone from one extreme to another.

The postmodern sense of some transgender people is that we need to reject the binary, to move to a more fluid understanding of gender and sex and get out of this either/or thing. So when they see me standing there in my Jones NY suit and my long blond hair, [they think] well, Jenny Boylan hasn't gone anywhere, hasn't done anything.

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I can only say that I understand and endorse this view of the world, but those aren't my issues. There should be room for all different kinds of people being transgender. Somebody said to me — and I don't think they meant this ironically — "There are only two kinds of people, either you reject the binary or you don't!"

So I guess for me it is remarkable to think about where I began and where I wound up. While I was on that journey it seemed like I was traveling light years, but now that it's all over I think I haven't traveled very far at all. It's not only discounting the seriousness of gender shift, because of course now that it's all over, it doesn't seem that hard. It's also that my personality has largely returned to where it was before.

I don't know about [your] experiences of knowing people going through transition, but most of the people I know who are kind of right in the middle go through this weird second adolescence. If they're MTF, they can be very girlish, very narcissistic, kind of creepy in a way. Once you get done with transition, there's a sense that after all that, it's still really only me. I think that I'm pretty unambiguously female now, but my personality isn't all that different, except that I don't have a secret and I'm not nervous about that anymore.

It's really interesting that you bring that up. It [was] similar for me, too. You go through your second adolescence, then you just kind of grow up again. And once you grow up, you're kind of the same person you were, because you went through it once [and you end up in a similar place].

I remember being told that by people when I right in the middle of it and finding it extremely irritating. It felt condescending and cruel of people to say, "Oh, well you're just being a teenager right now. You'll learn in time." It's kind of like putting people down who are in the middle of this tremendous place of self-discovery. Again, I work with adolescents all day as a college professor, and I think we have to respect adolescence — both real adolescence and transgender people in transition who are being adolescent. Because there is something wonderful and amazing about discovering yourself.

There's a freedom.

Nobody else should come along and tell you how much more you're going to know in a few years, because we have to just celebrate people becoming themselves. That's the great thing about this, even if it's awkward, even if it's ugly.

One of the things I think is great is that nowadays, there are people whose transgender adolescence and biological adolescence is happening at the same time.

When I was getting out of high school, the word transgender hadn't even been coined yet. It's my sense that it's still FTMs who are more likely to come out early, although I do know some MTFs who are transitioning early. They have resources, they have people to look up to.

When I was 18, who was I going to look up to, Renee Richards? Even someone like Jan Morris, who I think maybe did more for our people than anybody — her view of womanhood was a very preferential, 1946 view. At least it was in "Conundrum" — I know it evolved over time.

A lot of feminists in the early '70s jumped all over "Conundrum" because it reflected in some ways a very male view of womanhood. Quite frankly, there are plenty of women born women who have a very male view of womanhood. Genetic women are allowed to define their womanhood along any scale they want, but if you're a transsexual, you're always on the defensive. However it is that you locate your gender expression, people are going to be suspicious and second guess you. It's disrespectful and annoying.

Jan Morris' view of womanhood, I thought, was a somewhat mid-century view, but so is Phyllis Schlafly's, so is Laura Bush's. But no one [thinks] they're not women. Transgender women should have the ability to define their own womanhood on their own terms.

I think people should be able to determine their own genderhood on their own terms.

But having said that, it's also true that when I read books like "Conundrum," I didn't find particularly anything in them that I could relate to. Or in Christine Jorgensen's book. Or in Renee Richards' book. The first book that had anything I could relate to was Kate Bornstein's book, if only because she had such a good sense of humor. Kate is somebody who is absolutely in-your-face, highly theoretical and highly political, none of which is part of the work that I'm doing. On the other hand, Kate's book was the first book where I thought "Well, hell yes."

Her book "Gender Outlaw" was pretty incredible.

It remains the book that's most likely to be taught at the college level concerning issues of gender. I think some courses are using "She's Not There" and "Gender Outlaw" as a tag team.

Some professors I know who've used "Gender Outlaw" in the past find that students either love it or hate it. But if they resist Kate from the get-go, then "Gender Outlaw" doesn't help. So some of these people are reading "She's Not There" first to warm them up to the strangely abstract idea that transgender people might be human, too. Once they've established that, then they read "Gender Outlaw" and go into the politics.

It just kind of depends on how fertile their imaginations are when you're talking about the fluidity of gender. Some people can get this right away and they're ready for the politics, but for other people who've never thought about it, there might be a better place to go to. I hate comparing myself to Kate, because I look up to her so much. There's room for a lot of stories.

We've been talking a little bit about gender fluidity and I guess just identity fluidity. I heard you mention before that after 40-some odd years of being attracted primarily to women, if you were to date now, you'd probably date men?

I probably would. Somebody said to me, it's like you've spent \$25,000 on a new car and you're just going to let it sit in the driveway? Of course I want to take it for a test drive. This is a question — I don't have any conclusions about this.

What I know are mysterious facts I'm still sorting through. The primary fact is that I'm not looking for that kind of relationship, I'm not in that kind of relationship, so the question is moot. My family has been through a lot of changes. We've managed to keep the family together, and that's a profound and wonderful thing. But a lot of people say, "How happy can you be if you're in an intimate relationship?" I understand that, but there's a part of me that really resists this.

People want Grace and me to break up and find nice men for the same reasons they are always telling that to women — that you're never going to be happy until you have a man. And the fact that Grace and I [are] two apparently straight women legally married to each other destabilized people's universes.

People who are so urgently wanting Grace and I to get a divorce don't want us to get a divorce for our sakes, they want us to get a divorce for their sakes. As long as Grace and I are together and happy, it makes their world really strange.

It's very interesting to me that that's the one thing people keeping coming back and saying: "Oh, well, you'll never be happy until you find a man." I want to say, well, that's my business, our business. We'll figure out when we're happy, or what we need to be happy, and then we'll get back to you.

So now the questions I can answer: What's the relationship of hormones and anatomy to sexual desire? What's the relationship of the cultural hegemony of heterosexism? How does all that affect a possible change of sexual orientation? Can sexual orientation ever really change at all?

Sometimes I think we're all bisexual and the rest is all a matter of degree. I still think women are great, and I think men are great. If you want to use the metaphor of baseball, I think of women as a home game and men as an away game.

Something similar happened to me also as I transitioned. Once I started taking hormones, all these guys [started appearing]. And it was like, where did they all come from?

That's the line I use: Where did they come from? Who knows what that's about? I think studies have to be done about that. That's the question that's the most mysterious really.

I think it has interesting political ramifications, because it gets into the question of choice.

Sure does. Unfortunately, it provides fodder for people who already don't understand the issues. A thing you hear a lot of gay men say is, "Oh, well, I don't really believe in transsexuals." Kind of like you don't believe in Santa Claus or something. [We're] really gay men who can't accept being gay [and try to be] with men in a way that's socially acceptable.

It's just complete crap. But I think people do understand that the issues of gender identity and sexual orientation are different. Who you are is different from who you love. That's not a question totally separate from who you love either, is it?

It's all part of this bigger thing called identity. Part of that happens to be gender. Part of it happens to be sexual orientation. Part of it happens to be this, that. It's all a big complicated thing.

Let me get back to your work and your book. There was a comment that [Richard] Russo made about how a lot of your work prior to your transition, you weren't really in it. He mentioned that you told all these great stories that had people laughing and that your books were really incredible, but they just weren't you, they were someone else. So what I'm wondering is with your transition. I don't know if you've been writing much fiction since you've transitioned...

Tell you what. I started a new novel today, this morning. That's why I was late eating my salad.

GENDER-BENDER TURNS FULL CIRCLE

By Glenis Green

The amazing life of George Romano has turned full circle. Born a boy, growing up to become a hunky South Australian police force motorcycle policeman, who married an Adelaide model and fathered two children, he underwent gender re-assignment at the age of 35 to become a woman.

Then, as the new Anna-Serena Lane with her own sexy hour-glass figure, she married a man and, subsequently, became president of her local ladies bowls club on the Fraser Coast, near Maryborough. Together with her best girlfriend, Rose, they decided to write a book. But they fell in love.

Now, in an astonishing transformation at the age of 60, Anna-Serena has become George the man again – complete with beard, gruff voice and cropped graying hair.

He lives happily with the elegant and feminine Rose in their modest Tin Can Bay home with their poodle, Dudley, and just loves the fact his son, 30, can call him "Dad" again. "And my father can call me son," said George yesterday in an exclusive interview with *The Advertiser*.

Born in Adelaide in 1944 while his father was serving in the army in Darwin, George was bullied at school before turning to bodybuilding in his late teens. His mother, he said, was a state ballroom dancing champion and he was first employed as a trainee manager/storeperson at Woolworths, Edwardstown, before joining the SA Police in 1963. Rising to rank of senior constable, George quit the police force when he decided to become a woman.

If all this gender-bending sounds too bewildering for words, take heart from the fact even Rose says she gets confused on occasions. The one thing they are both certain about is that theirs is a fair dinkum Mills and Boon story – albeit with a twist – proving beyond doubt true love can conquer anything. "It is a love story," George said. "It shows that you can love someone else more than yourself."

Which is why he is now undergoing the slow and painful process – including surgery – to become a real man again. He has had the breasts that turned heads as Anna-Serena removed and is working at getting back some of the masculinity he lost when he became a woman more than 20 years ago. "They were the best pair of headlights," he said of his lost bust.

Humor and acceptance are essential parts of George and Rose's relationship. They have been best friends since 1993, before falling in love and becoming partners a year later. But they are quick to point out theirs was never a lesbian attraction.

In fact, it was Rose's firm heterosexual inclinations that made George decide to "change back". "I didn't know if it would work," he said. "But I thought if it could it would give our lifestyle a leg up and give Rose a traditional lifestyle, so we could go (around) as a couple. I did it for Rose."

Grandmother Rose said: "Love changes people and for George to change – well, it's the biggest example of love one can find. This is my dream . . . I'm so proud of him. We're very happy. I love him to death." She said, while she would love George if he wore a dress, changing into a man enabled them to be more "socially acceptable".



TGSF Members line up for judging at the annual Halloween Party

Interview with Jennifer Boylan...

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Can you tell me about it?

I think I'll keep my mouth shut about the new book.

Can I mention that there is a new book coming?

I hope there are several books coming. The next one is going to be more nonfiction stories about gender. It doesn't have a title yet. It's going to be "She's Not There Some More."

But I think my next book after that will be fiction. Coming back to the question of whether or not we change our identities, when I was in the middle of transition, I thought: From now on, I'm going to be a better writer. There's going to be more of me in these books. I'm going to be more sensitive. I'm going to cry more.

If "She's Not There" is a better book than anything else I've written, maybe it's because I had a true story to tell. Maybe it was because the stakes were never quite so high. But it's also true that I'm 45, and if I wasn't going to learn to write a book by now, I might never have learned.

My future work might be much more similar to what I wrote before than anyone expected. And I think that's just fine. I think my work is going to be less manic. It's going to be less aggressively entertaining. But I think there were feminine things about my work before, anyway. There was a certain sweetness to the characters. I've always been concerned with relationships. My books never involved fistfights or murders or sports or so-called male things.

Beer and red meat.

My sense is that Jennifer Boylan is much more similar to James Boylan than you would have ever thought. I think that the books I'm going to write now are going to be much more like the books I wrote before, except the author is unquestionably female.

But when we say male writers versus female writers, what does that mean anyway? Women write about relationships and salad and men write about angst and submarines? Men can write about salad and relationships — and should. And that doesn't make them feminine writers. It means there's more in maleness and femaleness than the culture is willing to accept.

It does seem the culture is sharply divided about [what] is male territory and [what] is female territory and you should stick to your sides.

There's this great story [about] a writer named Dinty Moore.

As in the stew?

Like the corned-beef hash. This story's about 10 years old. He submitted a story to an anthology of stories about Catholic girlhood. His story was accepted and they sent him a copy of the book after it was published and he looked at the author bio in the back and it said "Dinty Moore teaches at Penn State. She has previously written ..."

And he thought, "Uh oh," because he had this odd name Dinty. So he called them up and said in this very deep male voice, "Hello, this is Dinty Moore and there's something you should know." The women who ran the anthology were incredibly angry, as if he had deliberately [deceived] them. But he said, "You asked for stories of Catholic girlhood. You didn't say anything about authors who were Catholic girls." There was a whole big piece about this in the *New York Times*.

That situation shows the essential problem with the way we think of gender and authors and literature. We assume that all writing is somehow autobiographical, and if it didn't happen to you, more or less, you don't have the authority to write about it. And of course nothing could be further from the truth. What matters is an author's ability to imagine and to create a reality that we believe in. Not everyone can imagine everything, and not everyone has authority over every story. I think we have to be really careful about what men and women can write.

That brings us back full circle to the whole thing about imagination and a lot of it being about how people who aren't writers imagine their own lives and create themselves. As authors, you create these existences also.

It's funny, no one has ever asked me whether or not the fact that my transition went well was in any way related to the fact that my stock-in-trade, the way I make my living, is through my imagination.

When you're writing a book, when you're telling a story, you have to imagine the characters and the fullness of their lives. That is one of the things that transgender people who make a good transition fundamentally have to be in the business of doing. You're not trying to breathe life into a character, you're trying to breathe life into yourself, into the person that you actually are. Some people would say, if it's who you really are, why is it necessary to invent that person? I would suggest that we all invent ourselves.

In some ways, the transgender people who have the toughest time — in addition to all the other miseries that the condition has brought — are the ones who have a hard time imagining their lives.

I don't mean to sound judgmental, because I respect the struggles everyone is going through. What I am saying is that if I was able to make a good transition, it's because, by nature and by profession, I am a woman who made her way in the world as a result of her imagination.

But I think that most transgender people have a pretty good imagination. If they didn't have one, the nature of their problem wouldn't be clear to them in the first place.

FILM NOIR WITH FANTASY AND A TRANSEXUAL FEMME FATALE

By Stephen Holden



Gael García Bernal and Luís Homar in "Bad Education," which shows passions on the border of obsession. Photo by: Diego López Calvin/Sony Pictures Classic

"Bad Education" was shown as part of this year's New York Film Festival. Following are excerpts from Stephen Holden's review, which appeared in The New York Times on Oct. 9; the full text is online at nytimes.com/movies. The film, in Spanish with English subtitles, opens today in Manhattan.

Pedro Almodóvar has toyed with film noir before, most memorably in his 1997 film "Live Flesh." But his newest movie, "Bad Education," is a delirious, headlong immersion and reinvention of a style that has lured countless filmmakers onto its treacherous shoals. Because we live in a shameless age, this genre - synonymous with secrets, shadows and twisty, hair-pin-turning plots that point toward an abyss - often seems forced when its conventions are recycled in our tell-all tabloid environment.

But Mr. Almodóvar, unlike other filmmakers who lose their bearings, fully understands the degree to which film noir is synonymous with fantasy and a primal longing for the forbidden. He believes in the passions bordering on obsessions that drive films noirs. Any movie that refuses to deliver that emotional payload, he also knows, is only a shell, no matter how clever its construction.

A successful film noir is an act of seduction, in which storytelling, music and imagery lead us to imagine a shadow world of infinite temptation and corruption. Traditionally, the designated siren who lures us into the shallows is a toxic femme fatale as ruthless as she is irresistible.

The coup de grâce of "Bad Education," which ricochets back and forth between 1964 and 1980, with a finale set mostly in 1977, is that here the femme fatale is a predatory preoperative transsexual named Ignacio. Once a beautiful boy soprano, he/she was abused by a priest, Father Manolo (Daniel Giménez Cacho), the principal of his Catholic boys' school. The priest was so besotted with him that he expelled Ignacio's boyfriend, Enrique (Raúl García Forneiro), from the school after catching the two hiding in the shower. Or so Ignacio's version of the story has it.

The grown-up Ignacio is played by two actors, Gael García Bernal (pouty and doe-eyed) and Francisco Boira (lupine and feral). As the film deepens and the characters' mistaken and multiple identities accumulate, and the priest returns from the past in a new, desperate guise, "Bad Education" evokes Alfred Hitchcock's "Vertigo," with its confusions of fantasy and reality. "Bad Education" is further enriched by the notion of different versions of the same story subjected to modification, first as literature, then as a movie spooled through different characters' imaginations. Only at the end are some, but not all, of the facts revealed.

Because the figure of Ignacio is sexually ambiguous on the most fundamental level, you don't mind the absence of a major female character in "Bad Education." The attraction and repulsion exerted by the two Ignacios lend the film all the sinister heat and tension you could hope for. Mr. García Bernal, who plays three interlocking roles, is a transcendent dramatic chameleon shuffling three faces: ambitious actor, drag temptress and ruthless hustler.

The movie begins in 1980, when Ignacio materializes out of the past on the doorstep of Enrique (Fele Martínez), now a successful 27-year-old filmmaker so desperate for story ideas that he has taken to scouring the tabloids. He hasn't seen Ignacio since they were in school 16 years earlier. Ignacio, now a bearded actor, has brought the manu-

script of a story, "The Visit," which he hopes Enrique will adapt into a film. Enrique is enthralled by "The Visit," which recounts the story of their relationship and of Ignacio's sexual abuse by Father Manolo. As Enrique devours it, we see scenes from a movie in his imagination.

But from the moment Ignacio appears, something has seemed wrong. Even after the visitor returns with his beard shaved, he still looks nothing like the person Enrique remembers. He also insists on being called Ángel. When Enrique agrees to make the film, Ignacio demands to play the role of Zahara, a transsexual prostitute in "The Visit" who poses as Ignacio's sister to blackmail Father Manolo with her brother's story.

Mr. Almodóvar has admitted that "Bad Education" has a distant autobiographical component. But the movie is unconstrained by any need to appear realistic. Mr. Almodóvar's cinematic world has always been a place ruled by outsize desire and reckless fantasy. "Bad Education" is a voluptuous experience that invites you to gorge on its beauty and vitality, although it has perhaps the darkest ending of any of the films by the Spanish writer and director. A crucial binding ingredient is Alberto Iglesias's score, which suggests prime Bernard Herrmann inflected with flamenco guitar. What distinguishes Mr. Almodóvar's approach to film noir is his refusal to moralize and his willingness to incorporate elements of comedy. A master storyteller and humanist, he will not pass final judgment on his characters no matter how terrible their behavior. "Bad Education" contemplates the wonder of storytelling itself and the human instinct to embroider reality to make the tales we tell more real and conclusive, if less strictly factual.

That may be the fundamental paradox of all great movies. They transport us to a fictional universe that appears more real than the one that we inhabit. Mr. Almodóvar's films in particular insist that stories, the stories within stories and the fantasies they crystallize are the best (and maybe the only) tools at our disposal for making sense of it all.

"Bad Education" is rated NC-17 (No one 17 and under admitted) because of one scene involving oral sex.

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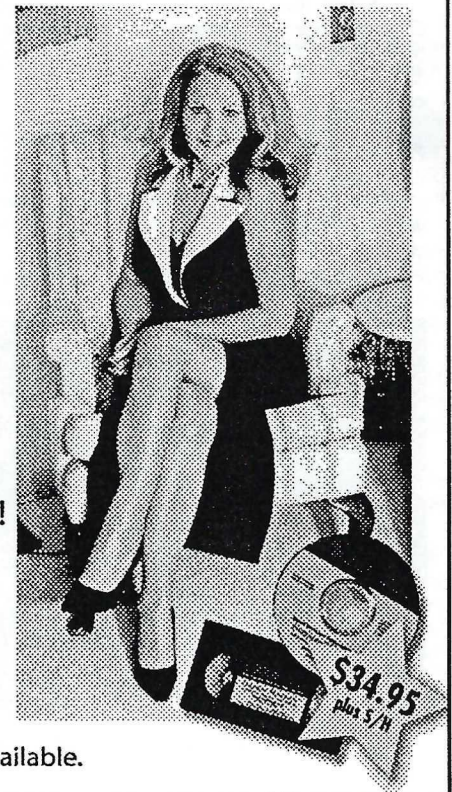
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YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A NATURAL WOMAN

In 'Venus of Mars,' all the men are women, all the women are strong, and All The Pretty Horses are somewhere in between

by Peter S. Scholtes

Venus of Mars is a documentary about a man with tits, or a woman with balls, depending on how you look at her. But the film has been made with such uncommon empathy toward the human beings involved that "man" and "woman" come to feel like arbitrary categories, as silly as the genders assigned to pencils and telephones by the French language.

The best Minnesota rock 'n' roll documentary of the century so far stars the band **All the Pretty Horses**, a "dark glam" ensemble fronted by a transgender singer and guitarist who calls herself Venus. Born Steven Grandell, she prefers the female pronoun these days, and has grown breasts and round hips thanks to a daily intake of hormones. Still, she has yet to make the ultimate transsexual leap of surgery. "Medically," she says, "I'm in between."

Director Emily Goldberg could have made the movie only about Venus and All the Pretty Horses. Known for hosting decadent fetish balls, the band plays an incongruous rock that combines glam's yearning for transformation, goth's urge to oblivion, and metal's happy swagger. Onstage, they're like a purgative Rocky Horror: Venus appears in heavy makeup and bondage gear, her breasts displayed under pasties, thrust upward by a corset. The band's go-go dancers can't compete—she's a commanding guitarist, in high heels or not, and sings with Bowie's Katherine Hepburn quaver. "Celebrate confusion," goes the chorus of one song. "It's a revolution."

The movie begins with the live spectacle—Goldberg shoves Venus's tits in your face. But what comes next will shock a few All the Pretty Horses fans: a shot in which this apparent creature of the night is working in the bright outdoors, mowing a lawn. Goldberg, who also produced and edited Venus of Mars, filmed the band over the course of a year and a half with digital cameraman Matt Ehling, beginning in early 2000 (five years after Venus launched the group with a different lineup). That was enough time to deduce that Venus is painfully normal. "You look at this incredible glam fetish band," says longtime supporter Scott Pakudaitis in the film, "and you think, 'Oh my God, [Venus] must be out partying every night and he must be living in a dungeon or something.' But he's married... His wife's an English professor... You know if you take the transgender piece out of it, it's Ozzie and Harriet."

Normalness helps isolate and focus the transgender issue in Venus of Mars, which makes its Minnesota premiere Friday at Oak Street Cinema. Drugs or infidelity never enter the picture: Venus is bisexual but monogamous—and so soft-spoken that you can imagine how the Duluth native saves her excesses for the stage. But Goldberg never reduces the marriage in question to a sappy example of how trannies are just like you and me. Turns out this rock documentary is really a 20-year love story that lays out the classic script of boy meets girl, boy gets girl, boy almost loses girl when he decides he wants to be a girl.

His girl is no stereotype, either. A poet and professor known for hosting KFAI-FM's Write on Radio (90.3/106.7), Lynette Reini-Grandell wears less makeup than the love of her life whom she still calls her husband. She's both articulate and disarmingly candid. "I always liked tall, skinny guys with eyeliner," she says in the film, sitting next to Venus. "You just got a little bit more than that," Venus replies.

The moment of confrontation that arrived 12 years ago, when the husband told the wife he wanted to be a woman, would have become the primary source of drama had Venus and Lynette decided to forgo Goldberg and tell their story to Jerry Springer.

But nothing is simple in Venus of Mars. The band includes non-trans women and transgender drummer Jendeen Forberg, born Brett Forberg, who in the film is still only half out of the closet. We watch this proud, towering, and bewigged woman duck into a bathroom at the Times Bar to become Brett again, leading his big band jazz ensemble the Wolverines. Forberg also takes a surprisingly nonjudgmental attitude toward people in the jazz community who can't handle her female identity. "People have every right to freak out," she says.

The reaction of audience members to All the Pretty Horses is never quite what you'd expect. One by one, onlookers in the film give voice to the angels and devils of their better and worse nature. In Rochester, Minnesota, Goldberg asks one of Reini-Grandell's writing students, who has come to see the band's show, if it bothers him that his prof's husband has breasts. "Fuck, no," the young man says. "Right up there right now onstage is a bunch of souls." After a concert in Newcastle, England, a British man gives that sentiment a disarming, working-class accent: "Even though they were blokes," he says, "they were quite fucking sexy. And I'm heterosexual."

Earlier in the movie, inside the now-closed Columbia Heights heavy metal bar Sharky's, the band makes two female fans. But a tipsy guy upstairs speaks with surprising candor. "I can't stand queers," he says. "But—they're not hurting you in any way," Goldberg says off camera. "No, but I'll kill them if they come in here all the time."

Standing in her St. Paul office today, burning copies of her film onto DVDs for the press, Goldberg remembers the Sharky's moment as one of several during the filming when she felt she might be in physical danger. "There's a lot of hate out there," she says. "Matt and I got fruit thrown at us in New York. Grapefruit hurts."

Goldberg previously made the PBS documentary Jane Goodall: Reason for Hope, and among her All the Pretty Horses memorabilia on the wall is a note from the renowned primatologist Goodall, who signed it, "Never give up."

"She and Venus would seem to be like completely opposite ends of the spectrum," Goldberg says. "But they both have this powerful yet quiet dignity about them, and I was struck by it with both of them."

Venus's wife had seen the Goodall film before Goldberg approached her—that was one reason why the couple agreed to trust the director. But Goldberg's admiration for both artists never canceled out her journalistic curiosity.

At one point in the film, she puts the question to Lynette Reini-Grandell, point blank: "Can you talk about what it's like when breasts enter a relationship where they weren't present before?" "You can't make a film and not address it," Goldberg says now. "Because, unfortunately, that's what's on everyone's mind."

The answer the spouse ends up offering on camera is both sensible and honest: She doesn't want to get into a discussion of her sex life. But Goldberg does persuade her to read excerpts from a poem she has written for a friend who was curious about the same thing. For this scene, Reini-Grandell reclines on a bed, and...let's just say the effect is to reveal that, yes, sex is part of their lives. Which part, she won't say. "There's just more to have fun with," Venus says elsewhere in the film, laughing like a kid when the couple is back together on camera.

Then the director asks Reini-Grandell if breasts are a turn-on. "No, it's not a plus for me," she says, turning to Venus. "Sorry, honey."

One of the things that worried parents about rock 'n' roll in the first place was the way it made sexuality suddenly very public. "That's what rock 'n' roll means—having sex," says Venus.

She is sitting for a City Pages interview two weeks before the premiere of Venus of Mars, gathered with three other members of All the Pretty Horses (including Forberg) in the band's cavernous basement studio.

The conversation has turned to the stage show, which brings transsexuality into the open like few, if any, other live music phenomena. All the Pretty Horses were even the subject of a New Zealand 20/20 segment, though the musicians were predictably hassled by customs on the way into the country.

"Don't put your metal underwear in your suitcase," says Shannon Blowtorch, the band's tattooed and mohawked dancer, by way of practical advice.



Defense of marriage: Venus (top) and Lynette Reini-Grandell love beyond gender.
Image by DARIN BACK

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DILEMMA OF THE 'MAK NYAH'

Yeang Soo Ching
New Straits Times

While social workers are helping many communities, transsexuals seem to have been largely overlooked, writes Yeang Soo Ching. In 1997, Associate Professor Dr Teh Yik Khoon of Universiti Utara Malaysia went in search of the mak nyah community.

She wanted to know the problems they had to grapple with individually and as members of society. She felt social work in the country had to be expanded to include this marginalised group. Her first research was exploratory, with 29 respondents. In a second research carried in 1999, she looked at the social, legal, religious and health aspects of 507 mak nyah.

Mak nyah refers to males who want to be females in every respect, regardless of whether they have undergone sex change operations or not. The Western term "transsexual" refers to both males and females who want to be of the opposite sex in every respect. As children, the majority of the mak nyah in Dr Teh's research had thought they were female. Twenty-three per cent thought they were both male and female, and only six per cent thought they were male.

"Between the ages of six and 15 years, most realized they were different from other boys their age. They played with toys deemed 'female', they had female playmates and adopted the female role. When they realized they were different, they were upset," says Dr Teh.

The transsexual phenomenon involves both sexual orientation as well as gender issues. Transsexuals like members of the same sex, and at the same time, consider themselves as having the gender of the opposite sex. There is still no consensus on the prevalence of people with different sexual orientation. The highest percentage cited by foreign researchers is 10 per cent of the total population. By Dr Teh's estimate, there are some 10,000 mak nyah in Malaysia. About 70 to 80 per cent are Malays, with the rest comprising Chinese, Indian and other minority ethnic groups. Islam permits only hermaphrodites to undergo sex change operations. However, it forbids males behaving like females — cross-dressing, wearing make-up, injecting hormones to enlarge breasts or undergoing sex change operations.

In 1983, the Conference of Rulers decided that a fatwa prohibiting sex change operations should be imposed on all Muslims, with the exception of hermaphrodites. Cross-dressing is also prohibited. "Mak nyah can be charged with indecent behavior, which includes cross-dressing, under Section 21 of the Minor Offences Act 1955. Muslim mak nyah can be charged in the Syariah Court for offences against Islamic law," says Dr Teh.

While non-Muslims have it easier because there are no official religious rulings that prohibit them from being mak nyah, they can also be charged for cross-dressing and indecent behavior.

The majority of mak nyah had secondary school education, but only three per cent attended an institute of higher learning. A third had been sexually abused when they were between the ages of six and 15. Almost half said their sexual abuse was frequent. At the time of the study, 62 per cent of them cross-dressed full time and 50 per cent were sex workers. Sixty-three per cent took hormones to enlarge their breasts, to have a smooth complexion, to reduce body and facial hair and to reduce penile erection. While they could easily buy hormones from pharmacies without a doctor's prescription, 65 per cent said they did not know how much to consume on a daily basis.

Asked how they felt about their male organ, 26 per cent said they hated it and wished to have it removed. Only 19 of the 507 had had a sex change operation. What were the obstacles facing the rest? Firstly, the fatwa prohibits such operations being carried out on Muslim transsexuals in Malaysia. While it can be done overseas, usually in Thailand or Singapore, the fees are expensive.

Many Muslim mak nyah had promised their parents, who had accepted their mak nyah status, that in return, they would not have the operation. Their dilemma is based on Muslim burial rites, which state that only a female can bathe the body of another female. This does not include the mak nyah who has undergone a sex change operation. Also, mak nyah who have undergone sex change operations cannot be bathed by a male.

Not only do mak nyah have problems with sex change operations, they also have to face society's negative perceptions about them. Inevitably, they find it difficult to secure employment. More than half of those in the study were sex workers. "They turned to sex because they could not find decent paying jobs, and were living below the poverty line of RM500 per month," says Dr Teh.

No wonder then that they were depressed. Fourteen per cent of the mak nyah had tried to commit suicide, with half of them having tried more than once. Others abused drugs. Dr Teh estimates that about half of mak nyah here and some 80 per cent of mak nyah sex workers are addicted to drugs.

Inevitably, they have to grapple with health issues such as STDs and HIV/AIDS. But while 71 per cent of those surveyed had in-depth knowledge of such issues, 15 per cent of them did not, and the rest were not sure. And out of this 71 per cent, only 10 per cent practiced safe sex. Relationship and marriage problems figured prominently in their lives, too. At the time of the study, 69 per

Venus of Mars...

Continued from Page 23

The underwear works well for a stunt in which Venus applies an electric-powered grinder onstage to Blowtorch's crotch, shooting sparks over her body (Blowtorch wears safety goggles for this bit). The performance has hazards, of course: Both Venus and Blowtorch have two scars. Venus took a chunk out of her hand in New Zealand, bleeding all over the set list.

The band has experienced some changes since shooting on Venus of Mars was completed: Backup singer Jonnycakes, bassist Pandora, and dancer Star have all left the lineup. There is a new bassist, Tempest, a transgender male-female in artful eyeliner and heeled boots (who is quiet during most of the interview). Tempest previously played in speed-metal bands as a guy.

And Forberg is now Jendeen 24 hours a day: The drummer's bandmates in the Wolverines have even stopped calling him Brett. "That was an issue, to have my jazz band that I've had for so long not address me in a male sense," says Jendeen, her hair now grown long to replace the wig in the film. "I don't take [referring to me as male] as an insult. It's just awkward for me, and for people that know me, to hear them do that."

Like Venus of Mars itself, All the Pretty Horses take an unusually humane, activist attitude toward their public sexuality—if they don't come out proud and persuasive, who will? As they well know, the issue can be a matter of life and death: Not long before this interview, one of the "trans" youths whom Forberg works with at StreetWorks, the homeless youth outreach program, was shot on the street (she survived).

Forberg says she has been kicked in the head and knifed in the side. She's more than capable of defending herself. But there is the occasional opportunity to turn a potentially ugly situation on its heels. She remembers one gig at the 4th Street Station in St. Paul (now Station 4) where some of the hip-hop crowd from an earlier show was still hanging around, saying "irritating things" to the band before the set began. Once All the Pretty Horses started playing, though, the same young men were dancing. "One of them shouted, 'You're all some rowdy-ass bitches,'" says Forberg.

"That's the power of rock 'n' roll," Venus adds. "Your sense of fear and concern... The music can wipe all that stuff out of you."

cent of them had boyfriends. Most said they would like to get married to a man in the future, if their religion permitted them to do so.

Some even voiced a desire to adopt children. However, Malaysian regulations do not allow mak nyah to adopt children. With all these problems looming over them, counseling for the mak nyah is paramount. But only half of them felt their support groups were adequate, with the rest saying their support groups did not fully understand their needs. "They basically need counseling and social activities, help to find employment, reasonably priced medical check-ups at mak nyah-friendly clinics, and temporary shelter for those who have no homes," says Teh.

In terms of counseling, Associate Professor Dr Brian Ho of Universiti Putra Malaysia, works with this marginalised community. The aim of therapy, he says, is to help the transsexuals accept themselves, and in so doing, raise their own self-esteem and help them in their preparation for sexual reassignment surgery (SRS).

In his clinical assessment, a diagnosis of transsexualism has to first of all be ascertained. Therapy will take 12 to 18 months, during which time they live their lives in the assigned gender. Also, during this period, they may have started taking hormone pills. He monitors them closely, and discusses with them various issues likely to affect them. "The issues include problems pertaining to their identity card, passport and insurance. It may not be smooth sailing but many transsexuals think that SRS will solve all their current problems. Once they have successfully completed this therapy, a report will be made certifying their suitability for SRS, if that is what the patients desire," says Dr Ho. It is to be noted that SRS is meant for non-Muslims only.

He says that while society has a negative image of transsexuals, it forgets its own role in perpetuating this negativity. "We stigmatize them and deny them opportunities. Then we stereotype them as sex workers. But what kind of choices do they have?" he asks.

Dr Ho is not championing the cause of the transsexuals, even if he comes across as doing that. He is merely reluctant to define people from a narrow perspective. "Society has to learn to accept people who are different. They may be different, but they're also the same as the rest of us, with basic human needs. Give transsexuals the same dignity and rights we would expect

Continued on Page 25



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.

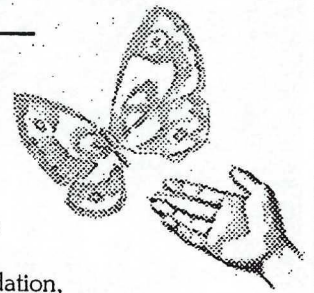


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Thank you!



Dilemma of the 'Mak Nyah'...

Continued from Page 24

others to accord us. No matter who we are, we all need self validation." In educating the public, Dr Ho points out that transsexualism is not something that happens late in someone's life. Usually, the transsexual would have been aware, from an early age, his inclinations towards feeling and behaving like the opposite gender.

He urges social workers dealing with transsexuals to change their own mindsets, overcome their own ignorance and work with an open mind. "No two transsexuals are the same, just like no two human beings are the same. They have their roles to play in society, but unfortunately, they're not judged by their talents but by their looks," he laments.

While agreeing that education and skills training can equip transsexuals with more coping tools, Dr Ho acknowledges it is how they use these tools that will make the difference in their lives.

So what are the implications for the social work profession? Dr Teh says while social workers have undoubtedly improved the lives of many communities, unfortunately transsexuals and other sexual minorities seem to have been left out. "Social workers need to have a good understanding of sexual diversity in society and the issues surrounding this," she says.

They also need to understand that transsexualism is defined differently in different cultures and religions, and that their feelings and perceptions of the sexual minorities could be culture and religion-specific. "They need to be clear that helping transsexuals does not mean they are going against their own religion or culture, but that they are providing quality services for the community." She says the immediate role of social workers is to provide a safe zone to encourage transsexuals to tell their stories. The more they talk, the more they will reveal their feelings, pains and problems. They need help to replace negative, self-blaming thoughts with positive, loving ones, and self-destructive behavior with healthier lifestyles.

Social workers and other concerned parties can provide this help, working within the legal and religious framework of the country.

SYLVIA GUERRERO HONORED BY FOUNDATION

NEWARK - Sylvia Guerrero, the mother of a transgender Newark youth who was killed after others at a Newark party discovered the 17-year-old was biologically male, is the recipient of a Special Courage Award presented by the Colin Higgins Foundation.

In awarding Guerrero a \$5,000 grant, the foundation cited her work as "a mentor to transgender youth" and her "travels around the country to educate communities about transgender issues and advocate change."

Guerrero also will receive a scholarship to attend the 17th annual National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Creating Change Conference.

"Sylvia has endured unthinkable tragedy, yet still finds the strength to make a difference in the lives of others through her advocacy work," said Catalina Ruiz-Healy, manager of the foundation, established by screenwriter, director and producer Colin Higgins in 1986 to further his humanitarian goals.

Gwen Araujo, who was born Eddie Araujo but was living as a young woman at the time of the slaying, was killed in October 2002. The murder trial of three men charged in the slaying ended in a hung jury last June, and a new trial is slated to begin in May 2005.

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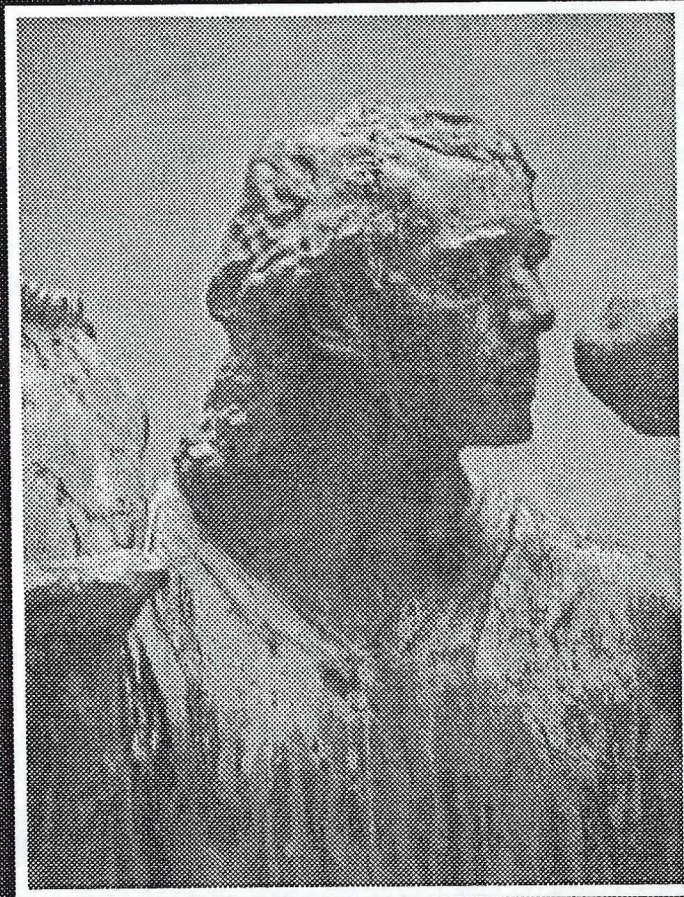
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