

# TATS 2000!

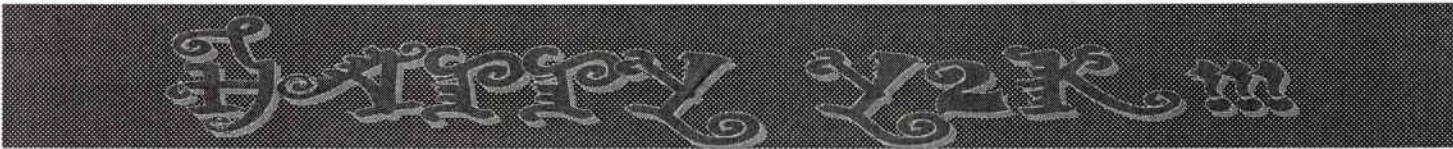
★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support ●

Volume 8, Issue 1

Houston, Texas

January, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

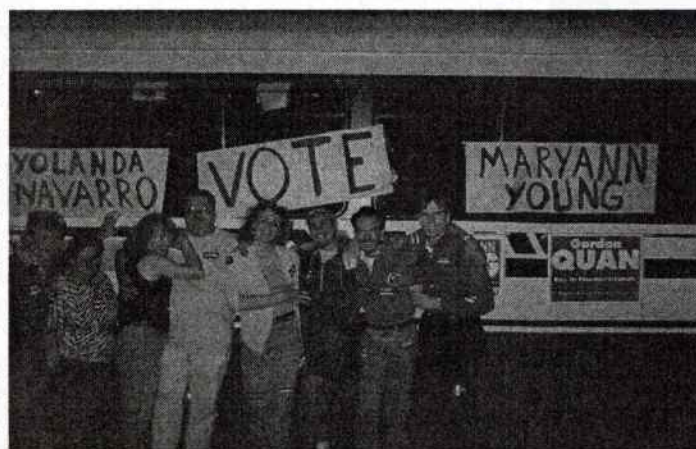


## Elections End; Not With A Bang, But A Whimper

In what became a rather lackluster city election year, the runoffs finished with a tinge of ennui. It seemed the community as a whole was more concerned with getting them over with, rather than the final results. Expectedly, the elections brought in maybe another friend or two. However, (with apologies to T. S. Eliot) we missed a big opportunity in getting a couple sure friends of the community elected: namely Yolanda Black Navarro and MaryAnn Young.

Of any, MaryAnn's run was the most heartbreaking. In the race for City Council, District C, Young was edged out by Mark Goldberg for the seat - by a mere 26 votes! The actual final tally was 4,915 to 4,889.

It wasn't without an effort on the part of the Caucus, and at least a couple of stalwart TATS members. This year's participation,



The Get-Out-The-Vote Bus Crew: (L-R) Scott Simpson, Gina Wiley, Jessica Redman, Dave Roberts, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Terrence O'Neill, Sean Carter & Mike Bodin late on the eve before the runoff election.

though, paled in comparison to the Parker campaign of 1997. That notwithstanding, there was one distinctive exception to the lacking effort: the 'Get Out The Vote' bus the night before the runoff election.

A coup de grace by Caucus presidential nominee, Sean Carter; it was a bar-tour party bus to both encourage the Montrose-area bar patrons to vote the next day, and to publicize the Caucus in a fun and friendly manner. Both Jessica Redman and myself managed to hop a seat on the 'kegger' express, and had a blast in the process!

We made a quick run-through of every bar in the Montrose - and a few outside as well! Passing out Caucus voter cards, and passing out the word about the Caucus; we turned a number of heads! It was Jack Kerouac and the Merry Pranksters of the millennium's end - without the Acid-Test, Electric Kool Aid. While we may have lacked the hallucinogenics - it was

strictly beer on this trip - we certainly didn't lack the energy!

First stop for the party bus was the Pacific Street bars: Montrose Mining Company, where we got to watch a male stripper, and JR's which kicked us revelers out! We did Mary's, Crossroads Books and the Chances / New Barn complex at the Waugh end of 'the Curve.' Minutes later, Sean, Jessica and I were dancing our butts off at Club Rainbow.

After a brief stop at EJ's, we dashed over to the Briar Patch in West University. It was a very warm, somewhat older crowd in a nice little neighborhood piano bar. We

(Continued on Page 5)



The Caucus Band of Merry Vote-Hucksters: (L-R) Terrence, Scott, Gina, Jessica (standing in back), Dave, Mike & Sean ride the 'Kegger' Express.

### MEETING SCHEDULE:

- January 8 Social Meeting at: Desiree Walton's @ 3:00 PM
- January 22 Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM
- February 12 Social Meeting at: Desiree Walton's @ 3:00 PM
- February 26 Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM

T. A. T. S.  
P. O. Box 142  
Bellairé, Texas 77401

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**HOW TO REACH US:**

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 780-4282 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.geocities.com/tatspage>

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

So what happened? It's now the year 2000 ... Y2K and all that cataclysmic jazz. And we're all still here. So much for predictions!

Our Chicken Little counterparts were all saying this would be the end ... stock up on survival stocks - and ammo! Arm yourselves to the teeth; and prepare for utter chaos and anarchy, insanity and depravity, devastation and doom. Widespread panic, geophysical havoc, graphic horror, nuclear winter, miraculous intervention and destruction in the form of hailstones from the sky were supposed to occur. So what the hell happened?

Looking around now, it's just another day in our mundane (or maybe not-so-mundane) lives. Those few "Earth Will End Tomorrow" types are walking around kinda sheepishly; perhaps saying "Wait 'til next year!" Meanwhile the rest of us are reasonably unimpressed. The Earth didn't 'end tomorrow' - in fact we didn't even get an extra day off from work!

So where did this 'Y2K' big-bang, sha-boo shoo-bop, go? It went the same place Christmas and Rock & Roll and most every Super Bowl and Halley's Comet and the Soviet Cold-War Evil Empire went. It went into the more-hype-than-reality trashpile. It became a Madison Avenue marketing vehicle for some sector of the business world; and even before the event happened, people were already overly tired of the mega-hyping. The hype became the event, and the actual event paled in comparison.

Some of you may remember Skylab back in 1979. It was one of our orbiting satellites - one of many, it was reported - that would soon fall from the sky on some unsuspecting city or town. Reports had it projected to fall somewhere in heavily populated Southern California, leaving a crater of death and destruction. Some people were beside themselves, searching the skies for a clue. The reality was that it burned upon re-entry and ended up hundreds of rock-sized pieces - none much bigger than a fist - and spread over a wide area, including a small town in the Australian outback. Hype.

The 50's had the same kind of frenzy, only much worse. The Cold War had literally hundreds of thousands of homes installing bomb shelters for the inevitable. And the inevitable never came. And we still had to wake up in the morning and go to work, and pay our bills, and do the yard work on the weekend ....

Marketing will do that for you. So will the



media. A lot of survivalist businesses really cleaned up. Supermarkets, too. There's probably a few credit card companies who will reap the benefits in the upcoming year when all those who banked on no computer records after the New Year.

But the reality of the situation is usually quite

different from the hype. When Prince first sang the words "tonight I'm gonna party like it's 1999," It sounded both exhilarating and vaguely foreboding. Back in the early 80's, the year 2000 was still a ways off. Well... here we were in 1999. Was it giving us an impending sense of doom? Did we party like it was this year? Sounds kinda stupid, doesn't it? "Tonight I'm gonna party like it's this year!"

Usually the things to watch out for are not those things that are hyped; it's those more gradual, everyday things that you usually tend to overlook. It's life's little sleight of hand that while we focus on the hyping, the unnoticed things are eating away at the good things. Lesson to be learned - if you want to do something effective, don't give it a big build-up: hype it heavily, and you give it every opportunity to fail to live up to expectations.

My Y2K was nice, if unremarkable. The only thing noteworthy of my night at Spy (with Marissa and Bonnie) was the over-inflated \$50 cover charge. The club's patio provided a perfect vantage of the fireworks; but they weren't 'Power of Houston'-style stunning. And Spy's idea of breakfast buffet - mushroom omelets and ziti pasta with Prego® sauce - left much to be desired.

Talk about the principles of marketing! Captive audience plus a special night means 'charge what the market will bear.' And they did! Then again, it was better than falling for the 'Y2Kaos'

*(Continued on Page 14)*

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

**Larry Neumeister, AP staff writer**

**David Elliott, Washington DC**

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**Elaine Herscher, Houston Chronicle**

**Katrina C. Rose**

**Marissa Carter**

**Monica Roberts**

*for submitting humor*

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**Desiree Walton**

*for submitting photos*

**Katrina C. Rose**

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# NGLTF EXEC. DIR. KERRY LOBEL TO LEAVE IN APRIL

By David Elliott

Citing a strong sense of satisfaction in goals met and a desire to take on new challenges, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Executive Director Kerry Lobel submitted her resignation, Dec. 3, 1999, to the organization's board of directors and staff after five years of leadership in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement. The resignation will take effect April 7, 2000. A copy of her letter of resignation is attached.

Lobel first joined the staff of NGLTF in January 1995 as deputy director, and became its executive director in December 1996. Under Lobel's leadership, NGLTF has nearly doubled its budget and staff; strengthened NGLTF's focus on state and local organizing; expanded the Policy Institute, NGLTF's think tank; and championed the inclusion of many diverse constituencies and people in the politics and program of the GLBT movement.

"When I began my tenure at the Task Force, there were a number of goals I wanted to accomplish," Lobel said. "With the help of a talented staff and board of directors, the generous support of our many members and donors, and the partnership of so many local, state and national organizations, we have met every goal. I am proud of our achievements over the past five years, and feel that this is an ideal time for me to move on to other challenges. I celebrate this transition knowing that the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is stronger than ever."

Lobel helped expand the political focus of the gay and lesbian movement to include bisexual and transgender people, and to address issues such as racism. "No one should be forced to leave a part of him or herself at the door in

order to participate in our movement," she said. Under her leadership, NGLTF strongly championed the rights of transgender people, supported affirmative action and other racial justice remedies, supported immigration rights, and advocated for elders, youth, rural and local activists and working class GLBT people.

Under Lobel's leadership, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force produced the following results:

\*\*\*\*Increased NGLTF's budget from \$2 million to \$3.6 million, and increased staff from 16 to 34 in a three-year period.

\*\*\*\*Helped launch the Federation of LGBT Statewide Political Organizations to now cover all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

\*\*\*\*Organized Equality Begins at Home - the largest grassroots mobilization in the history of the GLBT movement.

\*\*\*\*Expanded the NGLTF Policy Institute - the "think tank" of the GLBT political movement - from one staff person to eight full-time staff and four research fellows today. Lobel also strengthened the Policy Institute by naming Urvasi Vaid as its director.

\*\*\*\*Worked with people-of-color communities to raise issues of racism within the GLBT movement

\*\*\*\*Dramatically expanded the annual NGLTF Creating Change Conference, held every November, which grew from 800 people



NGLTF's Lobel "left an indelible mark."

in 1994 to 2,500 in 1999.

\*\*\*\*Increased funding for NGLTF's programs by opening the door to mainstream foundation funding.

The staff and Board of Directors, under the leadership of co-chairs Jerry Clark and Rachel Rosen, will immediately begin a national search for a new executive director.

"Kerry Lobel has left an indelible mark on the gay, lesbian, bisexual and

transgendered movement," said Clark. "She saw early on that the strength of our movement rested with organizers at the local and state level. She has been tireless in her efforts to build local, state and national partnerships and fearless as an advocate for voices traditionally left out of the GLBT movement, including youth, people of color, elders, people of faith, bisexual and transgendered people."

"NGLTF and our movement will forever be stronger because of Kerry's leadership," said Rosen. "Her passion for multi-issue organizing and coalition-building is reflected in Task Force programming and the many public positions that NGLTF has taken over the last several years. Her commitment to activists living in the country's smallest towns and largest cities will live on long after her tenure because she has institutionalized this commitment within NGLTF. We have never been stronger or more vibrant."

(Ed.: We will all miss Kerry's presence at NGLTF. Thank you so much for your efforts Kerry!)

## In Memoriam of Our Beloved TATS Members



*Carolyn Patek*  
1960 - 1997  
TATS President:  
'95 - '96:  
from Lung Embolism



*Damian Drake*  
1973 - 1994:  
from Self-  
Immolation

*Stephanie Rhyme*  
1963 - 1998:  
from Gunshot Wound to  
Stomach in Police Stand-off



*Joe 'Skip' Wood*  
1945 - 1997  
Beloved of Jessica Wicks:  
from Meningoencephalitis

*Sophie Patterson*  
1964 - 1999:  
from complications  
with AIDS

*Dee Skene  
McKellar*  
1942 - 1997  
JCTLEP  
Secretary &  
Local Activist:  
from a sudden  
Heart Attack



# THE QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED LATER

By Anne Casebeer

Recently, in 2 successive weeks, I traveled to visit 2 very special people in Texas, then a week later had the treat of being able to welcome one of those people to BGB's Christmas Banquet and monthly meeting. The chance to spend time with Vanessa Edwards-Foster was special and thought provoking, and it meant a lot to me to be able to have members of BGB met the person that, for me, symbolizes how a leader of our community should act, what they should be; in fact, what more human beings should be like. I was also able to see for myself how my very special friend Amy McCorkle was doing in Texas, and was able to fill in many of life's little loose ends for her, at a time when she had many of them hanging like fringe from a suede jacket. More importantly, after talking to these 2 people, two of the finest individuals that anyone could know, I know more, indeed the truth, about myself now.

How did this unplanned trip happen? Envision this bit of dialogue, if you will, prefaced with the knowledge that I was at work:

AC: (Phone rings) Hello? Amy? What's wrong? You say what? (as the color drains from AC's face).

No kidding! Ohmigawd, you say you haven't done what? You can't do what? You don't have any what?

Amy, let's see, I'm at work and L.P.'s here, so I can't deal with this now, but deal with it, I shall.

What do I do now?

LP: AC, what's wrong?

AC: It's Amy, Larry. She's in trouble.

LP: Do you need to go there? Don't you have an airline pass you can use? This weekend's covered, isn't it?

AC: Well, yes, it can be, but

Video Vault Chorus (hacking altos, with cigarette coughs): It's Covered, It's Covered, Get The F\$#& Outta Here!

AC: Well, if you say so....

So, that next day at 6:15 PM, I began an unusual spur-of-the-moment odyssey by climbing aboard a Continental Airlines plane for Houston with a suitcase, a briefcase slung over my shoulder, and my 80-pound toolbox. I landed a couple hours later at Bush Intercontinental, rented a Ford Ranger from Budget, and sped off towards San Antonio, a 200-mile drive. I had maps downloaded from the Internet, so I knew where Amy lived, but I'd written down the wrong phone number for her, so she had no idea I was coming. I ended up knocking on her door, in a nice complex near the San Antonio airport, around 1:00 AM

To say she was surprised would have been a major understatement; she nearly knocked me over with a massive hug, and we proceeded to Whataburger for some late-night cuisine and conversation about her problems.

The next day was productive, with perfect 70 degree-and-sunny weather. I got under the hood of (Amy's roomie/writing partner) Missy's '93 Escort,

discovered a cracked head, and then tracked down a reliable mechanic who could install a head that I planned to obtain and prepare back in Kentucky. I

drove Amy to her doctor

appointment, then worked on her computer to make it

emailable. A trip to Sam's Club and a local grocery filled her 'fridge. We then

went to dinner in downtown San Antonio to a fine Mexican restaurant, Mi Tierra. It

was a delicious end to a very productive day with the person that I respect more than

anyone else in this world.

Amy had to work the following day, so I hugged her goodbye, put on a casual skirt and sweater, and set out for Houston in a driving rainstorm that continued for the entire 200 mile run. It gave me plenty of time to consider my feelings regarding the day before. I cannot and will not fail to be there for her. I

was there for her in 1995 and 1996, when she was having flashbacks and fugues that reenacted abuse done to her in her youth. After overcoming this problem, she was there for me during periods of depression, and forced me to seek help for my gender conflict, which has brought me to this present

crossroads. Now she needed me again, but to a degree, I suppose I needed to be needed, and needed her as well. Our relationship transcends friendship; rather we simply function as much like siblings as 2 non-related people can. Also, while driving, I had time to contemplate her answer to a question I'd asked, one that will come up later in this article.

Before I realized it, I was in the western suburbs of Houston, and arrived at Vanessa Edwards-Foster's house, to a warm welcome. We chatted briefly, settled in on the upstairs couch, and then proceeded to the TATS meeting at Desiree Walton's delightful antebellum, festively decorated house that afternoon. I found TATS to be a warm and friendly group. I al-

ready knew Vanessa and Jessica Redman (didn't know that Jessi could cook THAT well, however!), but it was nice to meet others, including a group of girls

from Galveston who are setting up a TS group. We discussed at length the mechanics of organizing a group and some pitfalls to avoid. The conversation continued afterwards at the Lobo Coffee Shop in the Montrose area of Houston, the "alternative" part of town. I wish the CATS group of Galveston well in every way.

Vanessa, Sarah DePalma, and Monica Roberts each host a radio show on KPFT. It's called "After Hours", airs at midnight Saturday nights, and rotates each week between GLB and T hosts. Vanessa, Sarah, and Monica rotate the monthly T show, which is

on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, so that each of them hosts a show every 3 months. This was Vanessa's night to host, and she had lined up guests, in this case family members of TATS members who are supportive. They didn't make it to the show, so Jackie Evelyn Thorne and I ended up filling the guest slot for Vanessa. We stuck to the family theme, and I got the chance to speak of the support of my mother and late father, as well as Amy. Jackie, the new president of GTC, was much more at ease on the radio than I, and I was happy to let her speak more, but Vanessa did a good job of making certain that I got my 2 cents in. The time passed quickly, and Jackie and I spent another hour talking on the patio outside the station, finding common ground in those eternal TG subjects of aviation and automobiles (yeah, really femme, but I don't care).

Sunday was a day of rest. I had the chance to talk to Vanessa's Mom, who is very kind, open, and welcoming. It was a lazy day spent drinking coffee, talking, and enjoying some good weather around the pool. After the weather deteriorated, Vanessa and I enjoyed some good pizza and Shiner Bock at a local pizzeria, then it was time to head back to the airport for the flight home. I made it to Bush Intercontinental in plenty of time to meet with Monica Roberts for a few minutes of conversation, then I boarded the plane, where I was again left with my thoughts over what Amy had told me.

One week later, I was welcoming Vanessa to Louisville. Dawn, Angela, and I escorted her to Impellizzeri's, a pizza deli that is owned and operated by a neighbor of mine, for a taste of their excellent pizza and breadsticks after her Friday evening landing. Saturday, we prepared for the banquet on Sunday, showed her a bit of the town, and talked - a lot. She joined us for our regular Saturday meeting, and I was again enthralled as she advised BGB members considering transition on the right and wrong ways to decide when and how to do so. I've always believed in giving BGB members as many different perspectives

(Continued on Page 12)



Vanessa (L) and interim guest, Anne Casebeer (C) at KPFT on Dec. 11. Jackie Thorne (R) was the other last-minute guest on that show.



Janet Casebeer (in wheelchair) is flanked by her daughter, Anne (R), and Vanessa during the BGB Christmas Banquet.

# FLYING BY THE SEAT OF MY PANTS: VANESSA GOES TO KENTUCKY

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

I should have known it would be this way, although everything turned out great in the end – except for the added fatigue. And being further behind schedule. But then again, few things have been done this month that I initially set out to do. Life has a way of doing that.

So anyway, Friday rush-driving my no brakes and I'm looking at way to the of traffic was I was gonna time making



Look, Ma...! No Pants!!!

My mom, wheedled into was a basket ever gets on the Houston. Hates passion! I told Beltway never and it's a more or less –

Used to be, that was true. But I haven't ridden the Belt lately, apparently too long! So much for

there I sat: In hour traffic, mom's car with no insurance; and 6:00 and only half airport. If the rest like this (it was!), have a helluva my flight.

who I'd giving me a ride, case. She rarely freeways in them with a her "Mom, the gets much traffic; straight shot – to the airport."

my 'never gets traffic' line.

We got to Bush airport with barely enough time to explain directions to my mom on how to back home. She didn't seem too confident, and I was a bit frantic at that point because of the time. I gave her a quick kiss, and off I ran. My flight was in final boarding when I walked up – talk about flying by the seat of your pants!

The flight was uneventful. I tried to begin writing my speech for Sunday night (my schedule that week was beyond jam-packed), but was coming up blank. I jotted down a few talking points of what Anne said to talk about – my experience. Yet I was coming up way short! Ooh boy, this was gonna be a stretch.

Sooner than I thought, I was landing in Louisville. Word to the outsiders, it's not pronounced the way you would expect in Texan: LOUIS-Ville. It's not even pronounced LOUIE-



At the BGB Christmas Banquet: Barbara Bertrand (L-R), Dawn Wilson & Vanessa Edwards Foster

Ville. The locals call it LUA (as in Kahlua) Ville. Actually LUA-vull. To be safe, just try to avoid saying the name of the town.

Once on the ground in Louis (pronounced Lua) –ville, the tremendous trio – Dawn Wilson, Anne Casebeer and Angela

Bridgman were waiting to whisk me to dinner. We'd stopped at a place I'd heard mentioned frequently by the Kentucky BGB girls: Impelleri's. A pizza place owned by Anne's cross-the-street neighbors of the same surname. Yes, it was very Italian, and very good! The bread sticks were literally swimming in olive oil and romano cheese! You could make a meal on those alone, much less the pizza!

After dinner, we did a quick tour of the rest (Continued on Page 13)

## CAUCUS BUS GETS OUT VOTE ....

(Continued from Page 1)

ones who were all impressed with what we were doing! After a round of drinks at Briar Patch, it was back up to Midtown.

First stop in Midtown was the dark, foreboding-looking Venture-N. We split up to wander through the Venture-N labrynth and managed to separate and lose each other – there were rooms and hallways and hidden spots all over that bar! After some doing, we finally

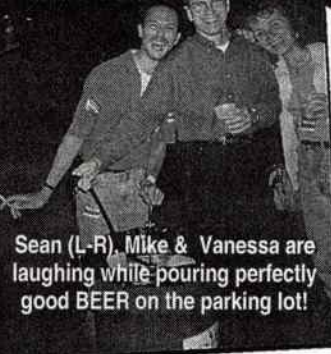
managed to corral ourselves and herd everyone back onto the bus for the next destination: the Brazos River Bottom. BRB was the liveliest spot that night: JoAnn's place was packed with two-steppers.

After the BRB, we bid the party bus adieu, and Sean Carter, Mike Bodin, Dave Roberts, Scott Simpson and Gina Wiley too. From there, die-hards Jessica, Terrence O'Neill and I proceeded back up to Pacific Street where we (after a few false starts) struggled our way into Pacific Street Station and distributed the last of the Caucus voter cards. It was reminiscent of two years earlier when Annise Parker, Kathy Hubbard and I broke the 'male-only' tradition and passed out Parker buttons.



GLPC 'Kegger' Express!!!

What's Wrong with This Picture???



Sean (L-R) Mike & Vanessa are laughing while pouring perfectly good BEER on the parking lot!

After amortizing our stacks of cards, and chatting up a few of the interested Pacific Street guys; we danced our butts off until the wee hours. Speaking of wee, we even had some very kind gentlemen stand guard for us in the ladies room –

◀◀◀ The Caucus' Merry Vote-Hucksters take a photo at the Briar Patch, while an unidentified patron (L-R) horns in on the shot, along with Vanessa, Jessica & (seated) Terrence, Dave, Sean, Mike & Scott

Heads or Tails? Prez-to-be, Sean Carter smiles with a couple T-girls who work their butts off!

but I won't get into that. Let's just say it was sticky in there. (Ask Jessica for all the details!)

Overall, it was a successful PR coup for all

involved. The Caucus folks truly enjoyed having Jessi and I on the bus. And Jessi and I were happy to be on board and do our part for the Caucus. We're truly accepted into the fold. And we also made quite a mark with the gay / lesbian community just by showing that we, too, can bust our butts for the Caucus and causes benefiting the community!

We may not have made enough progress getting GLBT friendly candidates into City Hall, but we did take the opportunity to further strengthen the ties within our own community. And that's a victory in its own right!

# THE END OF THE BEGINNING

By Marissa Carter

Winston Churchill, one of my favorite countryman's all time Statesmen said the following after the battle of Britain



Before and after: passport photos of Steve Carter on the left, and Marissa Carter on the right.

in WWII. "This is not the end. It is not even beginning of the end. It is however, the end of the beginning."

This summed up succinctly how I felt the first day I began living full time as a woman. A milestone. In hindsight, I look back on that time as the first day I truly felt free, when I didn't have to put on male clothes, check my attitude at the door and hear the awful booming of my resonating voice. I got my nails done and went shopping, like every other girl.

That is not to say that burying Steve had been easy. It was tough to say goodbye to a lifetime of work and scientific accomplishment. Every memento, every artifact reminded me of the crazy life he lead. But it was over. Even my parents finally understood that on a visit I made in mid September. To my surprise, my father on his second appearance at my mother's called me

Marissa. A major attainment, considering that he usually confused my male name with my brother's.

My joy that week though was muted as I prepared for my last, but most extensive facial surgery in San Francisco. Yet there was something subtly different compared to my trip last December as I flew out, walked through the pre-op procedures and pigged out on pizza (my last supper). *I was doing it as a woman.* The recovery, brutal as ever, was made that little bit easier by not having to masquerade or pretend to be someone I was not.

It was during my stay at the hotel in the Bay city that the relationship I had started with a lady in Arkansas became serious. Bonnie helped me through that awful time as did Caren Burns and her spouse who flew out for a weekend to chauffeur me around between doctors and clean me up when I came out of the hospital. I looked ready made for the part of Bride of Frankenstein.

Shortly after I returned, Bonnie flew to Houston and spent several days nurturing me back to some semblance of health. She has now moved here permanently and has the unenviable task of being my nurse (I had some complications from the orchidectomy a few weeks ago) until I can fully recover - I am very pleased with the results to date though, I can assure you.

God brought this special woman into my life to help me through the rough months through December where I am still trying to find a new

job, secure an agent for my book and become physically fit - not an easy task which often leads to days of frustration and depression. In return, I am taking care of her in many ways, and that is very satisfying. It has been truly a Texas Tornado rollercoaster, and I don't even see the light at the end of the tunnel as I write, yet I feel my second life has begun. And considering the odds when I started down this pathway almost three years ago when I had my stress-induced heart attack, it is further than I had ever believed possible.



Marissa recovers just after facial surgery in a San Francisco hospital.



The author, Marissa, in a recent photo. "This is not the end. It is not even beginning of the end..."

## Porcupine Roadkill, Canadian Mist and Moonbase Alpha

By Katrina C. Rose

(Near Lake Winnipeg, Manitoba) I'll get the weird one out of the way first. 'Porcupine roadkill?', you're asking. Well, out in the wilds of Texas, 'dillo road kill is the norm; in the cities, canine and feline. As for the provincial highways heading north out of Winnipeg, Manitoba? Well - I don't know if dead porcupines are actually the norm. I only saw one, but such roadkill is so odd (at least to this gal) to see that I just had to mention it.

It got your attention didn't it?

Moonbase Alpha? Well, there are certain things in my life that I'm somewhat ashamed of - even though I'm very honest about them. One such bit o' shame is that, as a young 'un, I was actually a bigger fan of Space: 1999 than I was of Star Trek. Maybe the plot was a bit preposterous (a nuclear accident on the moon blasts the

moon, along with a moonbase and its occupants, out of Earth's orbit; okay - it was a lot preposterous), but the soap scum on either Martin Landau's or Barbara Bain's shower has more acting ability than William Shatner had in the 1960's or ever will have. And, aside from the occasional truly wonderful Trek episode (like 'the City on the Edge of Forever,' written by Harlan Ellison), Trek: the First Generation was crap. So was Space: 1999, but you have to give it to the producers for being able to sell an idea that crazy and keep it on the air for two years.

But why am I rambling about it? Well, in the series pilot, the accident that sent the moon out of earth's orbit occurred on September 13, 1999.

I'll save all of you the trouble on coming up with your own cute comments - yes, I was hoping to have a certain something leave my or-

bit, so to speak, on September 13, 1999. Alas, it didn't happen.

In the Texas Association for Transsexual Support newsletter, my dear friend Vanessa Edwards-Foster bid me farewell by wishing that all of my dreams come true up north.

My dream of gaining a job as a lawyer in the Land of 10,000 Lakes still may never come true - although my current job is a good start. One dream that has come true was one that didn't occur when I first planned it several years ago: a Labor Day weekend in Winnipeg and a visit to the shores of the giant lake of the same name.

There's no way that I can avoid a refrain from one of Supertramp's best songs: Rudy. Rudy thought that all good things come to those that wait;

But recently, he could see, that it may come, but too late.

(Continued on Page 12)



**CHRISTMAS TIME & HOLIDAY PARTIES USHER IN 1999**



**XMAS AT SALVATION ARMY**



**TEXAS TG LOBBY EVENT  
DRAWS 52 TO AUSTIN**



**50th  
SOCK HOP '99**



**BRENDA THOMAS  
WINS APOGEE**



**UNITY BANQUET SETS ATTENDANCE RECORD**



MARCH 21-27, 1999  
**equality begins at home**  
TEXAS



at's marches,  
lobbies,  
testifies before  
house hearing at  
ebah, texas



Sarah DePalma Speaks at EBAH Rally

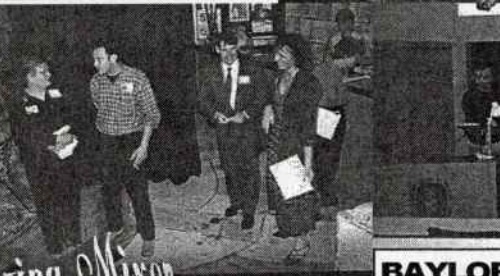


**THE 60'S**  
**PSYCHEDELIC**  
**REVOLUTION**  
**HAPPENING**

SAVINGS - 7 PM  
APRIL 10, 1999

Bellaire-West U. Karate School  
6603 S. Rice Ave. Bellaire, TX  
(between Brindwood & Bellaire Blvd. at the former location)

Home-Hosting: TIFACTY  
The Texas Political Action Coalition of Therapists  
Sponsored by: NCTCO for Gay/Queer Community



BAYLOR PANEL RATED TOPS AGAIN!



Fun-Net Spring Mixer



Sam Houston State Univ. Panel



TATS Returns To CAPITOL HILL



AIDS WALK HOUSTON



Virginia Prince Award Winner: Phyllis Frye

Virginia Prince Visits Houston



Pride '99



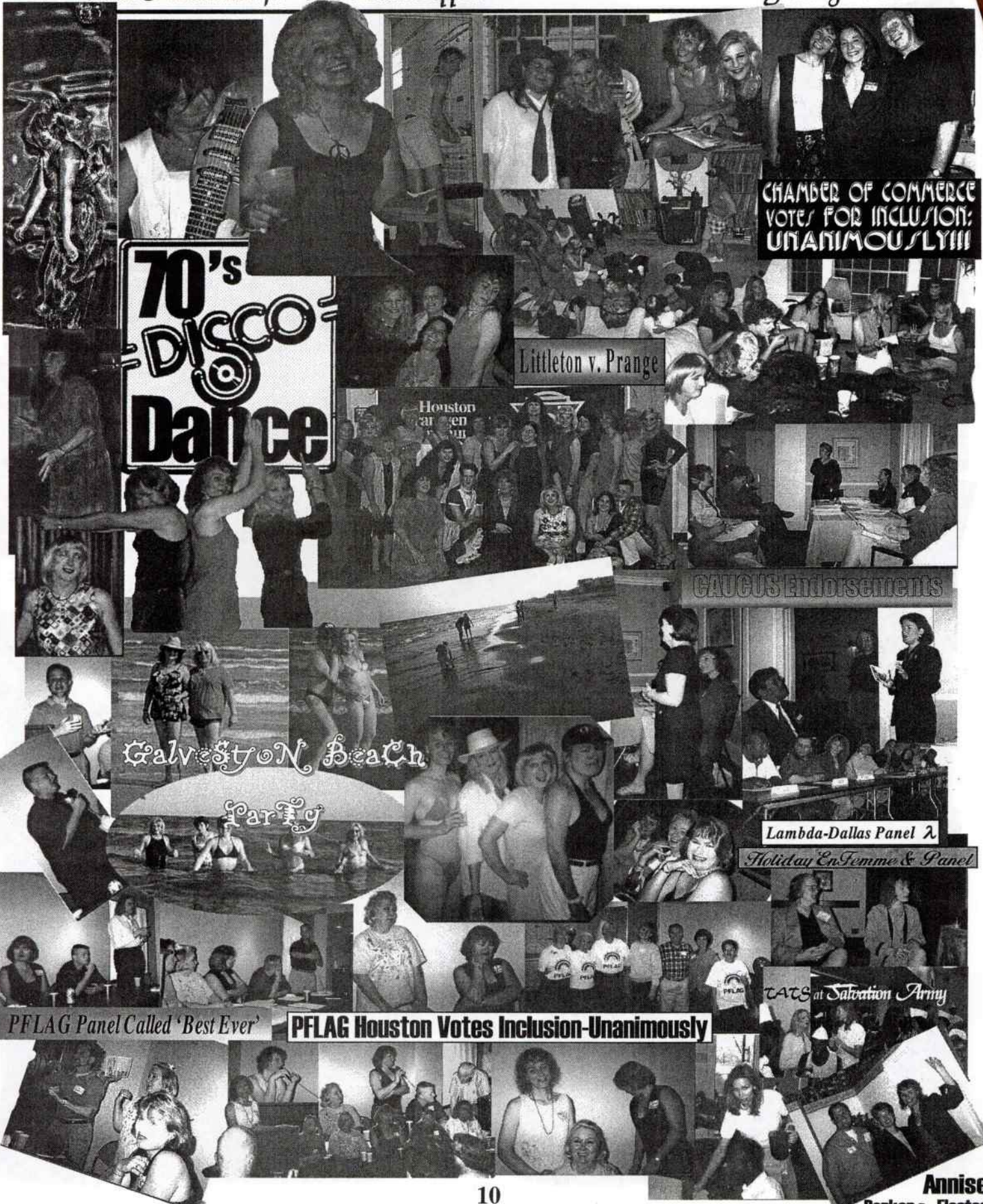
Pool Parties



History!

CAUCUS Votes TG Inclusion - Unanimously!





70's  
DISCO  
Dance

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
VOTES FOR INCLUSION:  
UNANIMOUSLY!!!

Littleton v. Prange

Houston  
Women

CAUCUS Endorsements

Galveston Beach

Party

Lambda-Dallas Panel 2

Holiday EnFemme & Panel

PFLAG Panel Called 'Best Ever'

PFLAG Houston Votes Inclusion-Unanimously

TATS at Salvation Army

Annise  
Parker Re-Elected

# 1999's TOP STORIES FROM AROUND THE NATION & THE WORLD

## Court Rules Against Christie Littleton, Texas Transsexuals Now Declared Male In Eyes Of Court

SAN ANTONIO — Judges found for the defendant in Littleton v. Prange, and wrote an opinion stating transsexual surgery does not create a woman.



### New Zealand Mayor First Transsexual Elected To Parliament

Former stripper and prostitute, turned mayor Georgina Beyer became the first transsexual worldwide to be elected to a national office.

### AUSTRALIAN TRANSSEXUAL ELECTED TO CITY COUNCIL

KALGOORLIE -BOULDER, an Out-back mining town became the first to elect a transgender to city council. Leigh Veris-Beswick, raised in this town with a bit of a wild west image, was elected despite being a former stripper and madam one of the famous brothels on the Hay St. red light district there.

### IOWA BECOMES 2<sup>ND</sup> STATE TO ENACT TG INCLUSIVE NON-DISCRIMINATION

This Midwest state became only the second to sign a non-discrimination bill with "gender identity" included.

### KENTUCKY LEADS WAY AS LOUISVILLE, LEXINGTON & JEFFERSON COUNTY VOTE TG INCLUSIVE ORDINANCES!



"This has been a great day!" stated Dawn Wilson, the premier TG activist in Kentucky. Immediately after the third Fairness group proposal with TG inclusion, she gushed, "I am honored to be a part of the [Civil Rights Laws] fight!"

### OTHER TG INCLUSIVE ORDINANCES IN 1999:

- Seattle, Washington
- Portland, Oregon
- Dayton, Ohio
- Toledo, Ohio
- Missouri (Hate Crimes)
- Australian state of Tasmania

### Shameful Non-Inclusives

- DeKalb, Illinois
- Maryland\* (note: MD's F5JC cut out TG during negotiations. The bill died & the lege won't consider it this session.

### 1<sup>st</sup> TS's Elected in Florida, New York

Diane Arnold was elected to the Democratic Executive Board of Directors in Broward County, FL.

Melissa Sklarz was elected a Judicial Delegate for the State Supreme Court in Greenwich Village NY

### GERMAN MAYOR OUSTED AFTER TRANSITIONING

QUELLENDORF Mayor Norbert (now Michaela) Lindner was voted out of office before his term ended because of his transgender status.

### California Teacher Fired After Transition, Settles Out of Court

Teacher Dana Rivers was fired and filed suite against the school board.

### PLAY FEATURING TRANS WOMAN

A play about Nancy Reagan, entitled 'Just Say No' featured Olympian Greg Louganis as Ron Reagan, and transsexual Alexandra Billings as mama, Nancy

### A Trend? TG Bank Robbers

Gender-bending robbers were caught after heists in Pennsylvania and Nova Scotia. On a worse note, a group of soldiers in Sierra Leone donned wigs and dresses to kill 52 insurgent rebels.

### TG Attack Trial Tests Calif. Hate Crimes Bill

3 Incidents in LA in a Month

Hector, Javier & Antonio Bautista went on trial for one of three attacks occurring along Santa Monica Blvd in a month. They attacked Mari Mar and three other TG's with baseball bats outside of a fast-food place.



### PROVIDENCE HAS A BAD YEAR

Board Chair of Tiffany Club of Boston, Kimmy Stevens, was attacked by numerous attackers in a Providence RI punk club for wearing an rainbow ribbon pin.

On Thanksgiving Evening, Diana Obidowski was brutally beaten after leaving a gay bar in Providence.



### Rita Hester\*

BOSTON MA - Died of a heart attack after suffering 20 some stab wounds in an attack in her apartment. No arrests have been made.

### Lauryn Paige\*

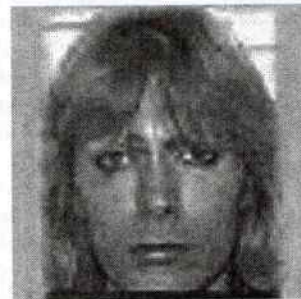
(fka: Donald Scott Fuller)

AUSTIN TX - This 18 yr. old was stabbed 13 times by an assailant who



picked up Lauryn and a friend along S. Congress (an area known for prostitutes). One of the slash wounds on the throat was 9" long & 3" wide.

## The Faces of TG Murder



### Tracey Thompson\*

CORDELE GA - Beaten to death with a baseball bat and left for dead on a rural Georgia dirt road. The force of the blows were so hard, it shattered the bat. Police have no leads on this case



### Chareka Keys

CLEVELAND OH - Ruled a homicide, this 19-year old was killed by a blunt trauma to the head. Her body was found at an abandoned factory. Police still have no leads in this case.

### Other murders in the National News

### Steven Garcia

HOUSTON TX -Killed by a single gunshot wound to the back of the shoulder. Garcia, an M2F, was walking in the North Montrose about 3 AM last February. According to a witness, they heard a car that passed by - then a single shot.

### Unknown TG

HOUSTON TX -A Caucasian M2F, this unidentified person was shot after a dispute in a seedy hotel parking lot on Old Spanish Trail.

### Emmon Bodfish\*

ORLINDA CA - A very private F2M, he was found bludgeoned to death in his home. No arrests have been made and police have no leads.



### Tacy Raino Ranta

BALTIMORE MD - This stalwart activist in It's Time Maryland! was killed be a gunshot wound to the chest in an apparent crime spree. Apparently, it was an incident of pure fate as the assailants reportedly had no idea that Ranta was transgendered.

**QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED...**

*(Continued from Page 4)*

on issues as possible, and the timing was right - for me as well as for several of our members. After dinner at KT's with the rest of BGB, we returned to the house, where I had the chance to talk to Vanessa about my personal issues. I needed that perspective; she didn't tell me anything I didn't already know, just made me answer some questions for myself, but in a way that was necessary at the time. I hope that I can learn from her style and grace in the manner in which she can help others find their way for themselves.

I was decidedly pleased with the way the Holiday Banquet went. The Holiday Inn Broadway provided good service; Cindy Lee did an excellent job in organizing the event, and it appeared that everyone had a low-key good time. My Mom even enjoyed herself, and I appreciate all those who took the time to talk to her during the banquet. I crossed a personal bridge, in that I actually took her back to the nursing home en femme; the nursing home was a place I'd always avoided previously. I do not have to do that any more.

As Vanessa boarded the plane Monday morning, I realized that the past 2 weeks had been an epiphany of sorts for me. It started out with my attempt to help a friend who needed it. That effort to help one friend allowed me to see another one, and also resulted in sage advice from one that was corroborated by the other. After time to contemplate further, more was learned. Most of all, I basically did it for myself, helped another in the process, but couldn't have done it without Vanessa's questions, questions that others had asked me before, but that only she connected the dots on. Sometimes, the intention to help others can result in the helper being helped disproportionately. Such it is with this condition of the human spirit known as transgenderism, as it is with many other conditions of the spirit and personality; you have to do it for yourself, but the village can help.

So, I'll answer the question that was deferred earlier. I'm a TS. I'm starting on that road in 2000. Amy says that I have her unequivocal blessing, as she has my support in her battle against her problems. Without knowing the special Ms. McCorkle, you can't know what that means to me, but I think many of you do have a good idea. I have the blessing, although reluctant, of my mother. Most of all, I know I've made the decision with all angles considered. It will be a slow, careful transition. There are other transitions I must make in 2000 that don't involve gender identity. But it will start, and will happen. Patience is a virtue.

*All of this worrying about computers crashing in the year 2000! It doesn't concern me. I've got the advanced model. It's been crashing like clockwork since 1993.*

**Is Louisville Tree Changing Genders?**

**From David Williams**

*Edited from the Louisville Courier-Journal. Courtesy of The Letter - Kentucky's GLBT newspaper.*

**F**or most of its adult life--now 150 years and counting--a giant ginkgo tree in Louisville's Cave Hill Cemetery was presumed to be male. Thought to have been grown from seed provided by Kentucky senator Henry Clay, the tree is one of the largest known ginkgos in the world.

But in the past ten years, as it approached its dotage, it's been doing something few other ginkgo's are known to have done: sprout berries, an activity performed only by females. The prolific fruit seems to be growing from one branch--called a sport or witch's broom--about fifty feet up.

Only six other ginkgos are known to have possessed both male and female traits: four at the University of Virginia in a 1982 survey, and two in the whole of Japan in a 1931 survey.

Peter Del Tredici, director of living collections at Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, says such gender shifts are actually not that unusual. "Maleness to femaleness is a continuum, not an absolute distinction," he notes. "Biology is much more flexible than we give it credit for." He thinks the Louisville tree may be suffering a "breakdown of communal support systems" as a result of old age.

"I think it's a cool tree," adds Lee Squires, the cemetery's superintendent.

Ginkgos are among the oldest known species of trees, and one of the toughest. A ginkgo at ground zero in Hiroshima in 1945 was shattered by the first atomic bomb but sprouted leaves eighteen months later.

*A lower cost alternative for the Y2K conversions? Remove all computers from the desktop by Dec, 1999 and replace them with an Etch-A-Sketch. There are many sound reasons for doing this:*

- 1.) No Y2K problems 2.) No technical glitches 3.) No more wasted time reading and writing emails.

**Frequently Asked Questions from the Etch-A-Sketch Help Desk:**

- Q: My Etch-A-Sketch has all of these funny little lines all over the screen. What do I do?  
A: Pick it up and shake it.
- Q: What's the shortcut for Undo?  
A: Pick it up and shake it.
- Q: How do I create a New Document window?  
A: Pick it up and shake it.
- Q: How do I set the background and foreground to the same color?  
A: Pick it up and shake it.
- Q: What is the proper procedure for rebooting my Etch-A-Sketch?  
A: Pick it up and shake it.
- Q: How do I delete a document on Etch-A-Sketch?  
A: Pick it up and shake it.
- Q: How do I save my Etch-A-Sketch document?  
A: Don't shake it.

**PORCUPINE ROADKILL....**

*(Continued from Page 6)*

That porcupine? Waaaaay too late for him. If he was dreaming of even getting across the highway, his goal was too lofty.

My desire to have my genital surgery on September 13, 1999? That's gone forever. I might even have to wait five more years - but I certainly hope not. Even so, I am around to do the waiting - no thanks to the HRC.

My journey to Winnipeg over a Labor Day weekend? It was just a vacation. Five years to wait to see the Assiniboine Park Zoo and a giant lake really is inconsequential considering the changes I've made during that time.

The southern edge of Lake Winnipeg is about an hour north of the city - and I apparently found the perfect place to just sit for a bit and look at the vastness of it while listening to the wind. Near the town of Ponenah, just off of Manitoba Hwy. 225, sits a little park - and I do mean little: a small patch of well-tended grass, a bench and a marker commemorating a Canadian athlete who won some gold medals at the '96 Olympics (an athlete whose name I didn't recognize and whose name has since escaped me.)

Yes, I just sat, listened to the wind and thought of new friends I've made in the North Star State, old friends far away who I hope to see again one day when the Lone Star State gains its freedom from the religionist scourge currently occupying its government - and of those lost forever around Labor Days of late like Sophie Patterson who died a few weeks ago and Dee McKellar who died two years ago.

Sophie would have probably found the scene boring. Dee would have been scurrying around snapping photos. I was calmed by it all - not free from tears, mind you, but still quite calmed (although, yes, to be honest, I snapped some pix as well before I left.)

'But Kat,' I'm sure you're wondering, 'what about the Canadian Mist? I thought you were sober?' Yes indeed I am - and Labor Day weekend is my sobriety anniversary (6 years now and counting.) But, there is an alcohol-free type of Canadian mist - the type that blows in off of a giant Manitoba lake toward a small park where a Texasotan transsexual is taking a few minutes out of a hectic vacation schedule to gaze at a blue-gray arctic sky. I hope I can always remember that peaceful feeling.

More likely, though, I'll just remember the \$20 (Canadian, but \$ nonetheless) that I flushed away in the slot machines at the McPhillips Street Station Casino later that evening in Winnipeg.

Vacations - gotta love 'em.

## VANESSA... KENTUCKY

*(Continued from Page 5)*

of Bardstown Rd. – the nouveau hippie / yuppie / gay boulevard a-la the Montrose's Westheimer. It was a really neat little stretch, dumping us into downtown Louisville. I got a quick tour of the gay bars and local tranny hangouts, and even got a ride across the bridge into southern Indiana. While there wasn't much of note to see in Indiana (only one of Anne's former Video Vault locations), we did drive by the riverfront and caught a spectacular view of the Louisville skyline at night – quite nice. One quick swing through Frankfort Ave. (also known locally as Dyke Heights – you can figure why), we returned to Anne's abode.

One thing struck me as odd: all the houses in suburbia were small. Some, downright tiny by suburban Houston standards. They were all perfect squares and rectangles, but looked to be only about 1000 to around 1700 square feet. It wasn't until I walked into Anne's that I realized why. Basements! Everyone up there has real, live, honest-to-goodness basements. I'm not talking about crawl spaces like they have in North Texas. I mean the big, stand-up-in-'em, multi-room basements. In essence, it's nearly every bit as large as the upstairs. People live in them, as does Anne.

At Anne's, we chatted about NTAC into the wee hours of the morning. We slept in a bit the next morning, but I realized I never got a chance to sit and write on my speech that night. Damn! I'd *have* to find time that day. Saturday morning, Anne did the formal breakfast thing with pancakes and the works. Then it was running errands and a stop to the Video Vault Anne's "Anthony" manages.

Okolona, where the store is located, is supposed to be redneck territory. It's not Texas redneck – the obvious redneck, Pasadena-style – that we're used to. I looked hard, and in all that time saw only one vehicle up on blocks. No trailer homes, None of the little shack style places with chickens, or a head or two or cattle grazing in the front yard. Or trucks parked diagonally across the front yard – totally disregarding driveways and their more uniform constructs. However, it was vastly different than Baltimore's redneck area; which resembled ... well, any other northeastern, inner big-city neighborhood. All two-story rowhouses. Baltimore couldn't even relate to streets without sidewalks or curbs, with the ubiquitous southern-style ditches. I guess everyone has different concepts of 'redneck.' But I digress.

We next went over to visit Anne's mom in the nursing home. Janet Casebeer had suffered a few strokes, the last of which caused her to break her hip. She's lost a little of what her former sharpness once was, but she was very matter-of-fact and candid in conversation. She was expectedly a little confused, but also aware of what was going on ... and frustrated. She talked

of the things she was once able to do, and her desire to continue doing them. Yet her limitations bothered her. She missed even just simple things, like candy canes. She was a very good chat; quite accepting, too. As I listened to her, I could see a lot of my grandmother in her; right down to the same pink sweats.

Once we made it back, Angela was in a bit of a tizzy over being left behind. She mentioned her abandonment issues, and I commented I thought she came down a bit hard on 'Anthony' – that she was reading too much into what happened. We ended up in an impromptu 'feelings' session and settled things. By then, it was time to ready for the BGB meeting that night.

We headed for downtown Louisville to the First Unitarian Church, where they have their meetings. On the way there, Angela played me a tape a school chum of her produced. Both Angela and he became stand-up comedians – only one of them changed gender! Her friend, as it turns out, is the guy who does all the Christmas song parodies, such as 'Police Stopped My Car' (sung to the tune, Feliz Navidad) and one supposedly written for Angela after she told him of her transition: 'Walking 'Round In Women's Underwear.'

The BGB meeting theme was a movie: *Some Like It Hot*, with Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis in drag. Around the beginning of the meeting, Dawn called me out to chat with a member that had had a bad experience on a Chicago subway early in her transition. She was wanting me to do the Dear Abby thing with her, but I found she was pretty well together. In fact, she had just transitioned on her job two weeks earlier; and was on cloud nine! And as tiny as she was, I couldn't see how she could have problems in the first place!

Then another newer member, Kimmy, (who ironically lived in Crystal Beach not long back) came out; and I sat and did a Dear Abby thing with her as well. How I got to be some kinda expert, I'll never know. I just winged it; giving them the possible and the realistic, as opposed to the optimistic.

After the meeting, the group went out for late night dinner at KT's before it was home again. We chatted in Anne's basement until the wee hours again! This time, Anne was the patient du jour. I proffered this time. Anne's got a bit of something a few of us can recognize – taking on too much responsibility and too much pressure, and not allowing herself a chance to live. Anne was the backbone behind the IFGE

convention in Louisville early this year, as well as being president and editing two newsletters and remaining active in the Kentucky Fairness lobbying, etc. Add to that her family, and her love, Amy's, problems, and you can see a plate that's long been overflowing. If there's anyone in the national TG community that deserves a break, it's this lady.

After dragging my carcass upstairs to bed, I awoke a few hours later to realize: 'I haven't written any speech yet. At all!' My original plans were to do so that afternoon. Then Angela's mom called. They had quite an extended conversation, and I found myself being beckoned to the phone. "Talk to my mom," Angela said. I had no idea what to say, but I winged it. After my attempted Dear Abby thing, she left feeling (I guess) somewhat better about her holiday blues.

Next, it was errand time to pick up shoes for Anne's mom, pick up Erica and Bonnie (BGB members), and pick up a microphone. Then we changed into our evening wear, loaded the stereo equipment into the van, cleaned up after loading the stereo equipment in the van (notice the chronological error in our planning), and proceeded to the Holiday Inn / Downtown.

Once there we unloaded and set-up the gear, and sat back and relaxed while taking in the 12<sup>th</sup> floor view of the downtown skyline. And I took in the room, and thought about my upcoming speech ... and the fact sank in that I HADN'T WRITTEN A SPEECH!!! My first speech, and I hadn't even written one!!! True, I had written down some talking points. They were in my notebook ... back at Anne's house. Wonderful planning.

Here I was at Kentucky's version of the Unity Banquet. I'd just finished calming Anne down with the words "Nothing's perfect ... just do your best and wing the rest ... try to enjoy what the spontaneity brings." Now I was a basket case, and trying not to show it. Sure, nothing's perfect – but I never even gave this one a shot! I tried to compose something in my mind while talking with folks, and meeting new ones. It was a lost cause: my mind was a muddled mess.

I got into an extended chat with Barbara Bertrand, one of the regular BGB lobbyists in DC. Before I knew it, dinner was well under way; and the awards were passed out. Then Angela got up to do her stand-up comedy act. As her routine progressed, it became more aware to me that there were precious few titters coming from the room. As Rodney Daingerfield used to say, "This is a tough crowd!" Hello, Panic!

*(Continued on Page 14)*



**Vanessa sings (or speaks) for her supper at the BGB Annual Christmas Banquet in Louisville.**

## NEW YORK TRANSSEXUAL FILES SUIT AGAINST POLICE

By Larry Neumeister (AP)

NEW YORK — A transsexual woman has filed a lawsuit alleging that police stormed her apartment and terrorized her family because they disapproved of her gender change. The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan on Nov. 23, said the problem arose Nov. 24, 1998, when Nancy Lamot called 911 asking for medical assistance for her son, who was born male but was living as JaLea, a transsexual woman.

The lawsuit said ambulance workers arrived and looked at JaLea, now 28, but left because she was fine. Afterwards, two police officers arrived at the apartment and also left when they learned there was no emergency. As they proceeded down the stairwell of the Bronx building, they passed JaLea in the hallway and were told that she was the "male" whose health status involving some medicine had prompted the emergency call.

Upon learning that JaLea was a transsexual, the police officers went into a rage, calling her profanities and "transtesticle," the lawsuit alleges. Two police officers forced their way into her apartment, spraying Mace and beating the inhabitants, which included JaLea's mother, her brother, and a visiting neighbor, the lawsuit says.

JaLea was then taken to a psychiatric ward at Bronx Lebanon Hospital and held overnight while her mother, brother, and the visiting neighbor were arrested and charged with felonies carrying sentences of up to 15 years in prison. All charges were later dismissed.

The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages.

At a news conference Tuesday, JaLea recalled "a lot of screaming, a lot of cursing" from the encounter a year earlier. She said she recalled one police officer looking at her "like I did something to him. He looked at me with hate."

She said she had once taken and passed the test to become a city police officer, but now knows she could not wear the badge. "I'm scared of them," she said.

### EDITOR'S RANT

(Continued from Page 2)

hype and staying home doing nothing.

Oh ... my computer crashed. Not once, but twice in the same week! But it had nothing to do with the "Y2K bug" — there's Microsoft Office 2000 loaded and a Y2K compliant Windows program on it. 'Twas just a simple corrupted operating system file from Windows not being compatible with other programs.

So much for the Y2K fiasco. We now return you back to your regularly scheduled, mundane chaos.

## SF Transgender Laws Called Ineffective

Elaine Herscher, *Houston Chronicle*

SAN FRANCISCO — A law protecting San Francisco's transgender community has been largely ineffective, according to Supervisor Mark Leno, who said, November 16, that he wants to create a task force to help enforce anti-discrimination laws and educate city employees.

"The Bay Area, despite what some think, is not a safe place for transgendered people, and even San Francisco struggles with this," said Leno, who plans to introduce legislation at Monday's board meeting.

Leno and his supporters say that transgendered people frequently are targets of violence and that all too often police don't take their complaints seriously. And, they say, the abuse is not just on the street but in restaurants, at work, or in the doctor's office.

"Unfortunately, a law is not enough to change minds and hearts, and transgendered individuals continue to face discrimination, especially in the workplace," Leno said.

The city's Human Rights Commission defines transgendered people as those undergoing or having completed some change in gender identity: preoperative and postoperative transsexuals, "drag queens" and "drag kings," feminine men or masculine women. About 6,000 San Franciscans identify themselves as transgendered.

Since 1995, when "gender identity" was added to the list of those protected under the city's anti-discrimination law, transgendered people have lodged more than 200 complaints with the commission, said Larry Brinkin, coordinator of the commission's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and HIV Unit.

Lisa Middleton, a transsexual woman who serves on the commission's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Advisory Committee, said she was fortunate her employer was supportive when she began to identify as female. Others are not so lucky.

"We're all adults here. We have jobs. We have bills to pay," Middleton said. "And to have to think, which do I sacrifice — my job or my identity? It's not the kind of choice that anyone should have to make."

Transgendered people are often turned down for jobs or earn marginal incomes. The median income for San Francisco's female-to-male transsexuals is \$1,100 a month; for male-to-females it's only \$744, according to a Department of Public Health report published in February.

A guy walks into the psychiatrist's office wearing only shorts made from Saran Wrap.

The psychiatrist says, "Well, I can clearly see you're nuts...."

## VANESSA...KENTUCKY

(Continued from Page 13)

What the hell am I gonna talk about!?!? Relaxed as I thought I was, my mind was racing now! Oh, if only to have the Phyllis Frye gift of gab! Now it was my turn. Deer in the headlights!!! Ack!!!

Long story short (I know y'all don't think I can do that!), it actually wasn't bad. I got a round of laughter early on. Then another. After a few more rounds, Angela quipped that I was getting more laughs out of my material than her act! Too bad I didn't have any material, except for what I was wearing! And actually, that didn't even feel like it was there either! But the audience appeared to like it (either that or they were very graciously polite!) Another one pulled out by the seat of my pants!

Once back at Anne's, we got a late night message from Kimmy: she needed to talk. To me. From deer in the headlights to Dear Abby. I promised to get her in contact with one of our local AA TG's and wished her well, with a bit on encouragement to stick it out.

After another late night chat, we hit the bed about 1:30. Flight out was at 7:15, meaning I had to be up by 4AM. At one point I heard something beeping, and got up to see what it

Vanessa stuffs her face in Louisville



was; but after I got in the hallway it stopped. I went back to bed, and was almost asleep when it started again. While I decided it must be Angela's clock, I saw three clocks — none of which had the correct time. So I took a shower, washed my hair, and laid back down; not knowing what time it was. The beeps continued intermittently until I dozed off, not waking until I heard a knock at the door from Anne. "It's 10 minutes until 6!"

I laid there thinking "I really didn't hear what I just thought I heard." After it sank in, I scrambled around locating my stuff and re-packing, and threw on a bit of make-up for the trip back. Good thing for the early shower! I got a quick hug from Angela before she left for work; then was whisked to the airport by Anne and Dawn. We arrived right on time, about 6:45!

I bid them goodbye and watched as they walked off down the airport concourse. They appear kind of a Mutt & Jeff: but they're close friends who make a great team. They're also great friends to have as well! They do everything they can to make you feel a part of their group. As Anne stated in her introduction of me, 'when we first met, we struck an immediate friendship ...' With these girls, it's small wonder. I'll always feel like I'm a part of BGB ... even if I don't have a seat left on my pants!

THE TOP TEN TRANSGENDER STORIES OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

By Monica Helms

1920 - The Catholic Church bestows sainthood on Joan of Arc.

— 1952 - Christine Jorgensen becomes the first known person to have a sex-change operation.

— 1969 - Stonewall riots in New York City are started by transgender individuals.

— 1975 - Richard Raskind shocks the pro tennis world by changing genders and becoming Renee Richards.

— 1980s and 1990s - Studies done on the human brain shows a possible physical cause for transsexualism.

— 1993 - A Female-to-Male Transsexual, Brandon Teena, is murdered in Nebraska.

— 1993 - Minnesota becomes the first state to pass an anti-discrimination law that includes Transgender language. It gives birth to It's Time, America!

— 1995 - A Male-to-Female Transsexual, Tyra Hunter, dies after a car accident because of inadequate medical care from a hospital and a health care worker on the scene, in Washington D.C.

— 1999 - A Texas court rules Christine Littleton's eight-year marriage null and void, because she has XY chromosomes and so did her husband. In the eyes of Texas law, that made it a "same-sex marriage."

— 1999 - Georgina Beyer becomes the first Transsexual elected to the New Zealand Parliament.

Wisdom From The 1800's - The Quotes of Mark Twain

"Sacred cows make the best hamburger."

"We should be careful to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it - and stop there; lest we be like the cat that sits down on a hot stove-lid. She will never sit down on a hot stove-lid again - and that is well; but also she will never sit down on a cold one anymore."

Truth is stranger than Fiction but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't.

Activist? Moi? Oui!

By Monica Roberts

One of the most satisfying aspects personally of my transition has been my work as a gender community activist. I got a big laugh out of a recent September 'After Hours' show when Sarah DePalma told a story about when someone called Vanessa an activist for the first time and she got this semi-horrified look on her face. Then Sarah went on to mention me on that same show as an activist and it was my turn to get the semi-horrified look on my face!

As proud as I am now to be considered a T-community leader and working as an activist on our community's behalf, I have to admit that activism was the farthest thing from my mind in October 1994 when I wrote Dr.Cole and the Rosenberg Clinic asking for clinic information and the first open date on his busy schedule for an appointment. By April 1995 I was in the program, starting my transition and preparing to clear room in my work schedule so that I could attend my first Rosenberg Clinic summer group meeting in June 1995.

At that meeting, I met Sarah and the late Dee McKellar. I was invited to do a guest spot on 'After Hours', which I did in August 1995 and later met Phyllis Frye at the winter group meeting in December. I had admired the work that these ladies were doing on behalf of the T-community, but at that time in my life I was still sorting out my own problems and the word 'activist' had in the gender world of 1995 the same negative connotation as the word 'liberal'.

So how did I become an activist? Well, here's my yellow brick road to activist status! My parents had always taught us that you were to give back to the community to make it stronger. I had my mom as a great example of that, who is active in her sorority, and two politically active grandmothers. One grandmother was a precinct judge, and my other grandmother not only was a volunteer in Texas House Rep Al Edwards' office, she has taught Sunday School at my home church for over 30 years. Family dinners at our homes always included political discussions and yours truly was even a 22 year old Jesse Jackson delegate in 1984. I got as far as the Texas Senate District 13 convention in my attempt to get to the state and national Democratic Party conventions.

By 1997 my life was stabilizing and I was becoming comfortable enough to get elected to the TATS Board of Directors. I was going to let the TATS board be the extent of my giving back to the community but fate intervened. I had a subscription to

Transgender Tapestry which began an Out and Proud Transgender List with the Fall 1997 issue. Number One was Phyllis, and other people that they listed were Dana Priesing, Dr. Jude Patton, Tony Barretto-Neto, James Green, and Melinda White-way. As I read this list I began to wonder, who are the African-Americans on it? I turned the page and I saw Dennis Rodman and RuPaul! I was a little ticked off at that point because I felt that Tapestry was feeding a stereotype (and that's a very sensitive subject with African-Americans!).

Here's a list of 100 out Transgenders and the only people they could find to represent me were an entertainer and a basketball player, and never mind the fact that they hadn't included Dawn Wilson or Dr. Marisa Richmond, who had both founded organizations at that time!

To be fair to Tapestry, I only had the two issues that included Numbers 1-50 on this list, but that article was the nudge I needed to begin to get involved. I was also concerned about the increasingly hostile rhetoric coming from the Religious Right, horrified over the increasing numbers of transgender people being murdered, and concerned that many of the murdered TS's share my ethnic background, and the job discrimination that all transgender people face.

The final straw that pushed me into making plans to attend Lobby Day 1998 was hearing about the Tyra Hunter case. That fueled my determination to do something on behalf of the gender community, I felt that African-American TS's had to get involved in this fight and not sit on the sidelines, and if it meant that I was going to be the only African-American TS involved in fighting for our rights, then so be it!

When I read that Tapestry article in 1997, I asked a question that I have repeatedly asked myself since 1988: Where are the African-American transgenders who are out and not entertainers? I got the answer to that at Lobby Day 1998. I met Marsha Jackson of Chicago and another lady who has since become a friend, Dawn Wilson. I began to hear about other African-Americans who are involved in the transgender rights movement such as Dana Turner, Sharon Franklin Brown, and Yosenio Lewis, and later at NGLTF's Creating Change I met Alexander Goodrum.

It has been an interesting journey to this point in my life. I have done two national and one state lobby days, participated in a TATS panel at Baylor College of Medicine, was invited to do another earlier this year at the IFGE Convention which I unfortunately couldn't attend, am helping to put together a new national lobbying organization

(Continued on Page 18)

**THE TOP IS UN-FORESEEN CONSEQUENCES OF THE "MILLENNIUM BUG"**

15. IRS demands a hundred years of interest from stunned taxpayers.
  14. "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall" song gets stuck in infinite loop.
  13. At the stroke of midnight, Windows 99 turns back into DOS 1.0, the Pentium V turns back into an 8088, and the Handsome User is left holding a beautiful glass mouse.
  12. Internet Movie Database now lists "1901: A Space Odyssey"
  11. Residents of Indiana have to figure out if they're off by 999 years, 364 days and 23 hours, or 1000 years and one hour.
  10. Bob Dole's age erroneously listed with only 2 digits.
  9. Mel Brooks's "2000 year old man" skit stops being funny.... Oops, too late.
  8. Sales of Coca Cola jumps drastically after original cocaine-laden formula becomes legal again.
  7. Software engineers point out that since computers think it's almost 1900, we technically have to "Party like it's 1899," which, frankly, doesn't seem like much fun.
  6. Microsoft declares the year 1900 to be the new standard of the "Gatesian" calendar.
  5. Jesus shows up late for His second coming, blames it on COBOL programmers.
  4. Computers temporarily fooled into thinking Strom Thurmond is only 103.
  3. First Top 5 List of the year? "Reasons No One Would Ever Assassinate President McKinley"
  2. Using a computerized adoption service, Michael Jackson mistakenly takes home some octogenarians.
- ...and the Number 1 Unforeseen Consequence of the "Millennium Bug"...
1. Unexpected demand for COBOL programmers results in severe understaffing of fast-food restaurants.

**A Drunk on a Bus**

A drunken man gets on the bus late one night, staggers up the aisle, and sits next to an elderly woman. She looks the man up and down and says, "I've got news for you. You're going straight to hell!"

The man jumps up out of his seat and shouts, "Good heavens, I'm on the wrong bus!"

**Man says to God: "God, why did you make woman so beautiful?"**

*God says: "So you would love her."*

**"But God," the man says, "why did you make her so dumb?"**

*God says: "So she would love you."*

**Historical Millenium Problems**

*Translated from latin scroll dated 2BC*

Dear Cassius,

Are you still working on the Y zero K problem? This change from BC to AD is giving us a lot of headaches and we haven't much time left. I don't know how people will cope with working the wrong way around. Having been working happily downwards forever, now we have to start thinking upwards. You would think that someone would have thought of it earlier and not left it to us to sort it all out at this last minute.

I spoke to Caesar the other evening. He was livid that Julius hadn't done something about it when he was sorting out the calendar. He said he could see why Brutus turned nasty. We called in Consultus, but he simply said that continuing downwards using minus BC won't work and as usual charged a fortune for doing nothing useful. Surely we will not have to throw out all our hardware and start again? Macrohard will make yet another fortune out of this I suppose.

The money lenders are paranoid of course! They have been told that all usury rates will invert and they will have to pay their clients to take out loans. Its an ill wind....

As for myself, I just can't see the sand in an hourglass flowing upwards. We have heard that there are three wise men in the East who have been working on the problem, but unfortunately they won't arrive until it's all over.

I have heard that there are plans to stable all horses at midnight at the turn of the year as there are fears that they will stop and try to run backwards, causing immense damage to chariots and possible loss of life.

Some say the world will cease to exist at the moment of transition. Anyway, we are still continuing to work on this blasted Y zero K problem. I will send a parchment to you if anything further develops.

If you have any ideas please let me know,

Plutonium

**INTEROFFICE MEMO**

To: Management  
From: Computer Center

Our staff has completed the 18 months of work on time and on budget. We have gone through every line of code in every program in every system. We have analyzed all databases, all data files, including backups and historic archives, and modified all data to reflect the change. We are proud to report that we have completed the "Y-to-K" date change mission, and have now implemented all changes to all programs and all data to reflect your new standards:

Januark, Februark, March, April, Mak, June, Julk, August, September, October, November, December.

As well as: Sundak, Mondak, Tuesdak, Wednesdak, Thursdak, Fridak, Saturdak

I trust that this is satisfactory, because to be honest none of this Y to K problem has made any sense to me. But I understand it is a global problem, and our team is glad to help in any way possible. And what does the year 2000 have to do with it? Speaking of which, what do you think we ought to do next year when the two-digit year rolls over from 99 to 00?

We'll await your direction.

**YELTSIN, CLINTON and GATES**

Submitted by Desiree Walton

Yeltsin, Clinton and Bill Gates were invited to have dinner with God. During dinner he told them "I need three important people to send my message out to all people - Tomorrow I will destroy the earth."

Yeltsin immediately called together his cabinet and told them "I have two really bad news items for you:

1. God really exists and
2. Tomorrow He will destroy the earth."

Clinton called an Emergency meeting of the Senate and Congress and told them "I have Good news and Bad News:

1. God really does exist;
2. The bad news is tomorrow he's destroying the earth."

Bill Gates went back to Microsoft and happily announced "I have two fantastic announcements:

1. I am one of three most important people on earth and
2. The Year 2000 problem is solved."

**Y ask Y2K?**

**TATS Tidbits** By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• One little rumor I gleaned from my trip to Kentucky: the religiopolitical moralists are rumored to have pre-filed a motion that will make birth certificate, and name and gender marker ID changes a thing of the past (Kentucky is currently one of the easier states to obtain this). This of course is part the fault of the Littleton case ruling in San Antonio (the marriage occurred in Kentucky), and also backlash against the domino-effect gains made by Kentucky's Fairness.

Fairness and, as you may remember, passed trans-inclusive non-discrimination bills in Louisville, it's surrounding Jefferson County, Lexington, and is attempting to do the same in Bowling Green. A non-inclusive sexual orientation bill passed in Henderson as well. Now the religio-politicos are trying to undo the city and county ordinances by passing a state referendum outlawing all such bills. In essence, they want the state to take away the powers of the cities and counties to self-determine. All is not lost, though: apparently the legislators in the state will not let this bill fly through, and the governor is reputed to support the Fairness amendments.

• Even some companies are trying to turn the clock back. Mobil, as a result of its merger with rather stodgy and unaccepting Exxon, has now rescinded its former same-sex partners benefits to comply with Exxon's policy. Additionally, Mobil's policy banning discrimination based on sexual orientation has also been removed. In doing so, they may have become the first major U.S. employer ever to roll back a nondiscrimination policy and the second to end domestic partner benefits.

As a result of this development, and Exxon's huge presence in Houston; a number of the local GLBT activists have planned a silent protest that will meet on January 28 in front of Exxon's downtown headquarters at 800 Bell. Organizers are asking anyone with an Exxon or Mobil credit card, and supports non-discrimination and partnership benefits, to come to the rally and cut up your credit cards to let them know how you feel. Additionally, anyone not supporting these policies is urged to stop all purchases from Exx/Mo and use other brands or convenience stores. For more info on the silent protest, Email Dan DiDonato or Ray Hill at: dan@preferredgraphics.com or rayhill@uechononet.com, respectively. You can also voice your opinion to Exxon directly at their website: www.exxon.com/contact/index.html.

• Not all states are trying to turn the clock back, the way Texas has. The Vermont Supreme Court ruled on Dec 20 that gay couples must be granted the same benefits and protections given married couples of the opposite sex. The court said the Legislature will determine whether such benefits will come through formal marriage or a system of domestic partnerships.

Said the court's justices: "We hold that the state is constitutionally required to extend to same-sex couples the common benefits and protections that flow from marriage under Vermont law."

• Apparently, some cities are progressing as well. The latest addition to the list? Dayton, Ohio. Reportedly, Dayton (known in Ohio to be a rather conservative city) passed its own trans-inclusive non-discrimination amendment as well. Another victory for Ohio! And still none for Texas T's ... and counting.

• Did you know? ... ten years ago this past month, on Dec. 18, 1990, famed SRS surgeon, Dr Stanley Biber of Trinidad Colorado was elected to city council? How many city councilmembers do you know that can perform a sex change?

• From Katrina: when and where was the first case of a legally recognized change of gender? 1931 in Switzerland - pre-dating England's Corbett ruling by almost 40 years.

• Las Vegas Review / Journal "That's according to Paul Harris, author of 'The Queer Press Guide 2000,' who says publishing aimed at gay men and lesbian women is the fastest-growing media niche in the Western world. There are more than 400 gay publications worldwide, everything from the glossy mainstream Advocate to an Australian publication aimed at gay aborigines. Other unique publications include TATS, a Houston-based magazine for Texas transsexuals; Joey, a gay publication similar to Seventeen; and The Gay Airline and Travel Newsletter, which caters to gay flight attendants."

• According to the Kansas Federal District Court, the family of a transgendered prisoner murdered by other inmates cannot recover under a wrongful death action based on the Violence Against Women Act. The inmate

was beaten to death by other inmates, who singled him out because he regularly dressed and acted as a woman (i.e., his gender expression).

While dismissing for failure to exhaust administrative remedies, the court opined that the claim was invalid because VAWA was intended solely to deal with violence against women and because none of the defendants were charged with committing the violence.



• According to the Ottawa Citizen, Canada's national animal is sexually confused. A research team at the University of Guelph's Ontario Veterinary College recently dissected 11 male beavers and found that they all had uteruses. They found the same curious biology in the majority of beavers in three other locations as well. The finding wasn't such a surprise to the researchers, whose routine post-mortems in the last few years have turned up a very high percentage of such "pseudo-hermaphrodite" beavers.

• An excerpt from Rolling Stone's December 30 issue: The fundamentalist Christians still have difficulties with alternative sexualities, but no one else cares. Except for transvestites: we're still way out on the fringe. What we need are boring transvestites screaming about the ruffians making noise too late at night: "I'm trying to get some sleep and I'm holding down a job here. Shut the fuck up!" Then transvestites will be accepted like gavs and lesbians and bankers, though there will always be nuts who keep hollering. — Eddie Izzard, *Rolling Stone Magazine*

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**ACTIVIST, MOI? OUI!**

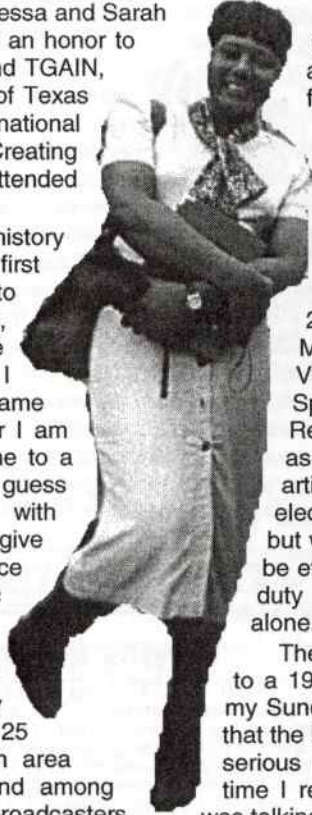
*(Continued from Page 15)*

(NTAC), and am now one of three TG co-hosts on 'After Hours'! (Vanessa and Sarah are the others) I consider it an honor to not only represent TATS and TGAIN, but Houston and the state of Texas when I travel to national conventions such as the Creating Change Conference I just attended last week.

It's funny that I made history on November 13th as the first out transgender of color to co-host a radio program, especially when I did the guest spot in August 1995 I wouldn't even use my last name on the air! Four years later I am proudly stating my full name to a regional radio audience. ( I guess going toe to toe with congressional staffers will give you that kind of confidence boost!) It's also ironic because as a child I wanted to get into radio, since I had ample opportunity to watch my father, who did radio for 25 years here in the Houston area and is considered a legend among African-American radio broadcasters. Now I'm on KPFT!

Although this is pretty much my personal story as to how I became an activist, this

article isn't about me tooting my own horn. I'll bet if you sat ten of us down in a room and asked the question why are you an activist, you'd get ten different answers!



The transgender rights movement belongs to all of us and at its most basic level it is a fight for constitutionally guaranteed human rights. We activists are battling to ensure that these rights are codified into law at the local, state and federal levels so that future transgender people won't be dealing with this situation in 2099! We are fighting to show Mr. & Ms Middle of the Road Voter that we are not the Jerry Springer-hyped demons that the Religious Right tries to portray us as. We are also your voice to articulate your concerns to our elected leaders and to the media, but we need your help too..We can't be effective if you don't do your civic duty and VOTE! We can't do it alone...this is a team effort.

There are days when I think back to a 1976 conversation that I had with my Sunday School teacher. He told me that the Lord was preparing me for some serious work in my future, but at that time I really didn't understand what he was talking about.

I think it's starting to become clear that this might be what Brother Broussard was alluding to in that little chat he had with me.

**Now that you've survived the Millennium & Y2K Scare, Some ... COMFORTING THOUGHTS**

- ◆ If you sneeze too hard, you can fracture a rib. If you try to suppress a sneeze, you can rupture a blood vessel in your head or neck and die.
- ◆ Nearly a third of all bottled drinking water purchased in the US is contaminated with bacteria.
- ◆ Rats multiply so quickly that in 18 months, two rats could have over 1 million descendants.
- ◆ You are more likely to be struck by lightning that to be eaten by a shark. You are more likely to be infected by flesh-eating bacteria than you are to be struck by lightning.
- ◆ The soft plastic headphones used on airplanes create a warm, moist environment in the ear canal that is ideal for breeding bacteria. Wearing headphones for just an hour will increase the bacteria in your ear by 700 times.
- ◆ On a plane, if the passenger in your seat on the incoming flight had serious gas, then you are sitting on a cushion full of disease-causing microbes.
- ◆ More people working in advertising died on the job in 1996 than died while working in petroleum refining.
- ◆ Regulations, implemented on July 16, 1969, make it illegal for U.S. citizens to have any contact with extraterrestrials or their vehicles.

*Just some food for thought. Happy New Year!*

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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 8, Issue 2

Houston, Texas

February, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## TATS SPEAKS TO T.A.A.F.T. CONFERENCE

By Desiree Walton

The Texas Association of American Family Therapists had the opportunity to learn about transgenderism at this year's conference, held in the Adam's Mark Hotel in southwest Houston. The conference was held from January 26 through the 29<sup>th</sup>.

TATS Vice President, Desiree Walton presented along with family therapist Denise O'Doherty on the subject at transgenderism and the family. There were only six pre-registered, but when the lecture began there were over 14 people attending. Thanks goes out to the girls running the Tri-Ess booth who talked the lecture up to the conference attendees.

The day before the presentation, Denise asked how many people were signed up. The answer was 5 - Yes 5! Hearing this, Denise was temporarily discouraged. Judy Daniels and Brandi Welch Williams of Tri-Ess responded by working all that night to direct therapists to the lecture the next day. We showed up the next day and, to our surprise, 14



Desiree Walton (L) and Denise O'Doherty (seated) at the Texas Assn. Of American Family Therapists Conference at the Adam's Mark on Jan. 28.

people were there!

The room was set with anticipation when Denise began the presentation with definitions of transgenderism. She also spent time educating the group about the many facets of transgenderism. From crossdressing to intersexed, to the transgenderist. She discussed the importance of support through support groups, therapy, family and friends. Denise provided handouts that contained information about web related sites that would assist in therapists understanding and

## TATS Member, Karen Peppard Dies

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Information recently reached us about the passing of long-time member Karen Peppard. Karen, a member of TATS since 1997, was found in her apartment on Gustine, Nov. 16. Her death was ruled a suicide.

After being unable to contact her for some time, Michelle Cole managed to contact Karen's mother and discover her death. Apparently, though her name was legally changed, she was listed as her former name - William - on obituary listings. Her family reportedly didn't approve her transsexuality.

Though she didn't publicize it much, Karen was having problems - the difficulty of securing a job, then keeping it. On top of that, her apartment was kick-burglarized twice in a two-week period; whereupon she lost most all of the few valuables she owned - TV, VCR and computer.

gathering more information to aid the treatment of transgenderism.

Many questions were asked throughout the presentation. Questions about transitioning on the job, what kind of expectations a transsexual has to face, the difference between a transsexual before surgery and after surgery among many other questions.

(Continued on Page 7)

## EFFIGY IN ERROR?: CHRISTIE LITTLETON SPEAKS

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Something that has been eating at me for some time is the ease to which our community, at times, jumps to conclusions. We are often rather quick to condemn. Perhaps this is something that derives from our previous experiences with others reacting to our transgender identities. Nonetheless, this mercurial process of judgment is something that is bound to seriously undermine the community, if not recognized.

One stark case of this has been the national transgender community's vilification of Christie Littleton. Upon first hearing of this - a 'woodworked,' long post-operative transsexual, who married and was suing over her late husband's estate - I too was immediately angry. Angry at her

short-sightedness in not asking for help, or even notifying the TG community. Angry at the perceived elitism-by-disassociation with transgenders. Angry at what she did to transgenders nationwide by pursuing a case that would draw this kind of focus. Angry at how it impacted every transgender in Texas, including me!

There are many who continue to feel this way, and burn Ms Littleton in effigy for what's transpired. Then more of the facts came out; and I began considering some things:

She basically did what all transsexuals of that era were told to do: become a woman - not a transgender, and get on with life. Though that's

(Continued on Page 4)

## MEETING SCHEDULE:

February 12	Social Meeting at: Desiree Walton's @ 3:00 PM
February 26	Meeting NGLTF & HGLPC: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM
March 11	Social Meeting at: Desiree Walton's @ 3:00 PM
March 25	Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM

T. A. T. S.  
P. O. Box 142  
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**HOW TO REACH US:**

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 780-4282 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.geocities.com/tatspage>

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**U**2K's Doomsday has come and gone; and we're all still here. Nothing apocalyptic happened – except for the idiot in North Houston who rigged up his tank with what looked like a standard issue cannon and machine gun, then proceeded to drive down his street blasting what looked and sounded to neighbors like mortar volleys and machine gun strafing. He did it as a joke, but imagine the moistened pants in the neighborhood after that incident! But for most of us, the year's beginning was a less stressful!

One thing the new year didn't do was change our status quo. We've still got our normal everyday concerns and responsibilities. We've also got our usual stresses, as can be expected. Money, careers, family and / or love – these are just some of the more garden variety tension-builders. Road rage, being victimized and death are more serious versions of stress. How about a different kind of stress? Well, there's always the low-flying planes spraying chem-trails of undetermined mixture over – not only Houston – the nation and many other countries around the globe. The major media ignores it, and everyone asks questions to which we receive no answer. Stress of not knowing.

Stress is a part of every American's life; however, for our community it can be that much more acute. Beyond just the normal everyday variety stress, there's the added tension of going out and making a decent presentation on a daily basis, workplace stresses that are not present to the non-transgendered community, and the ever-present internal clocks ticking away while we wait (hopefully not in vain) to get our finances in order to finish our transitions successfully.

We were given a new kind of stress by our State Supreme Court as a result of the Littleton decision. This, of course, affects the trans-genders statewide in a myriad of ways: marriage, employment, health coverage, even the possibility of our state legislators to react and make it impossible for us to adhere to HBGDA guidelines.

A downside to stress is the responses by those ensnared in it. Occasionally, it can produce an impetus that was needed to take positive action. Often, though, it can produce action that is not well thought-out – more reactionary and / or panicky. Those type reactions can get one into trouble very easily.

With the Littleton case, and the potential

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Chillin' (literally!) at the Exxon rally.

looming for a further conservatizing of our legislature, we are faced with a very real fear – the inability to choose our gender identity. There exists a possibility that we could have the door slammed on our freedom to be who we feel.

Some in our community have become concerned about a noticed tendency

for some to expedite their transitions in order to beat the legislators to the finish line. In other words, some are getting name and gender I.D. changes, go full time, and even getting birth certificates changed in record time. But at what cost? Are they truly ready for what the 'real life test' holds for them? Or are they jeopardizing their future?

Well before all of the recent hubbub, I began hormones. I did them because I just felt it was time. There was a hitch: I had to begin my transition much earlier than I was ready, because of my physical 'attributes' becoming obvious. Within six months, I'd lost my job; then spent over 20 months searching for employment during 1996 and 1997's booming economy. I managed to keep my house, but lost over \$5000 in savings and lived off of credit cards for over a year. I'm still paying for that! In retrospect, it was too early to begin my transition.

Karen Peppard had her share of transitional problems: chronic unemployment, family estrangement.... Because of her income, she lived in a not-so-nice area. During September, she'd had been kick-burglarized twice in two weeks, losing what few items of worth she had: her TV, VCR, and her computer – her connection with

*(Continued on Page 6)*

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

**Gwendolyn Ann Smith, San Francisco, CA**

**Brandon Wolf**

**Chris Jimmerson**

**Harlen Howe**

**Desiree Walton**

**Jessica Ann Redman**

**Katrina C. Rose**

*for transcript of interview on After Hours*

**Sarah DePalma**

*for submitting humor*

**Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV**

# B-R-R-R-AVING THE COLD AT THE EXXON EQUALITY RALLY

By Brandon Wolf

Approximately 125 members of Houston's GLBT community braved bitterly cold winds this afternoon, to rally for the GLBT employees of Exxon Mobil. I was impressed from the moment I came to the rally site. Flanking the park as one entered were six full-size flags, waving briskly in the winter wind, each in a different rainbow color. The park is sort of a "natural" amphitheater, and it was filled with an impressive gathering of Houston GLBT movers and shakers.

Most everyone there was bundled to the max, with coat collars pulled up around the ears. Despite

Ess, who held the full size Harris County Democratic Party flag.

The speeches were stirring, each in their own way. Alan Eyler, who works at Exxon/Mobil, spoke about how deeply touched he is by this outpouring of concern for him and all other GLBT employees at the newly merged company. He said that more had been done for the GLBT employees at Exxon, by this organized protest, than had been accomplished in the last six years by the employees themselves.



Caucus President Sean Carter (L) and Vanessa Edwards Foster freeze their ta-tas off in the arctic wind!

Community icon Ray Hill was there, looking more handsome than I think I have ever seen him, and there was a wonderful look of pride in his eyes throughout the rally. Deborah Bell did a great job keeping the speakers moving; and most speakers spoke quickly – no one wanted to linger on much of anything for long!

Texas State Representative Debra Danburg gave a stirring speech,

and drew a lot of response from the rally participants. And I loved Ray Hill's comment that, "Debra and An-nise were exactly what we keep electing them to be."

After the rally, all participants hit the streets, and walked about eight blocks to the Exxon Building. We marched around it twice. I discovered from (former Caucus President) Clarence Bagby that Exxon had let all their employees off for the afternoon. So there wasn't much activity at the building. There were about two dozen HPD officers, guarding all the entrances to the building.

As we circled the Exxon Building, we chanted "What do you want? Equality! When do you want it? Now!!!" and then "Equal Pay for Equal Work!" Caucus Prez Sean Carter led the cheers at the front of the line. But halfway back we could no longer hear him, so a sec-

The shivering crowd at the Exx / Mo Rally



## EXX/MO RALLY "AWESOME"

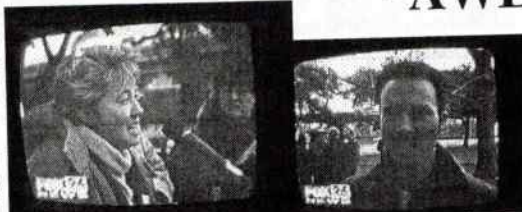
By Harlen Howe

For those of you who weren't able to make the rally today, IT WAS AWESOME. In spite of the cold, there was a great turnout of about 120 people.

Debra Danburg, An-nise Parker and Ray Hill met with the ExxMo people before the rally, at their request. Nancy Ford was in attendance as was Deborah Bell. The new president of the Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, Sean Carter, led the way. Vanessa Edwards Foster was there as well, as wonderfully enthusiastic as always. I wish I had her energy.

It may not change minds today, but it's a wonderful start on changing them tomorrow!

Media blurbs on the rally: (top) An-nise Parker, Sean Carter & (R) Ricky 'Rainbo de Klown' Hurt make the news.



(Above) Dan Meador cranks up the tunes for the crew, Ed Lane, Dan Di-Donato, Mitch, Tim Burns & Alan Eyler. (R) Harlen Howe cuts ribbons.

the protection, that wind still tore right through you, and chilled you to the bone. Kudos to Caucus Vice-President Mike Bodin for holding a full size rainbow flag throughout that bitterly cold rally. Without gloves!!! I wish I knew



who the person was who held the other rainbow flag, because he deserves recognition too. Plus, there was a third brave volunteer, Julio Friedmann of GCTC & Tri-



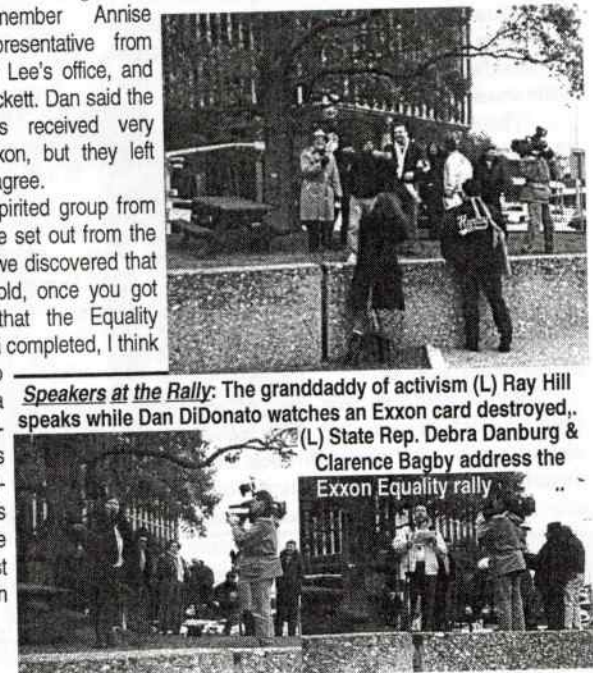
Protesters Julio Friedman (L-R) Demo Party Chair Sue Schechter, Laura, Terrence O'Neill and Caucus VP Mike Bodin support the cause.

tastic job. He will be lucky if he has a voice after this!

On the return to the rally site, organizer Dan DiDonato told me that Exxon flew in two high-powered vice presidents today, from Dallas, to meet with the Equality Team (Sean Carter, Ray Hill, Dan DiDonato). Also present in the meeting were Debra Danburg and Houston City Councilmember An-nise Parker, a representative from Sheila Jackson Lee's office, and attorney Jeff Pickett. Dan said the delegation was received very warmly by Exxon, but they left agreeing to disagree.

It was a spirited group from the moment we set out from the rally site, and we discovered that it wasn't so cold, once you got moving. Now that the Equality Rally has been completed, I think Dan DiDonato deserves a really big high-five! He's worked tirelessly on this project since the new first broke back in December. Kudos, Dan!

Speakers at the Rally: The granddaddy of activism (L) Ray Hill speaks while Dan DiDonato watches an Exxon card destroyed. (L) State Rep. Debra Danburg & Clarence Bagby address the Exxon Equality rally





## CHRISTIE LITTLETON SPEAKS....

(Continued from Page 1)

been updated some to allow for some transgender identity, it's still what is basically the guidelines HBGDA Standards of Care instruct.

She transitioned in the 70's – not much in the way of transgender groups, much less activism in those days. After so long away from the community, how could she know how to get in touch with transgender groups? Our groups not exactly widely advertised or broadcast.

As a ten-year post-operative transsexual, she was legally married. After seven years of marriage her husband dies of what was felt to be malpractice. Now if genetically born females lose their husband of seven years in similar circumstances, are they not allowed any form of legal redress? As Christie was approaching nearly 20 years of being a female, why would she not feel the same?

And if we are all indeed affected directly by the court ruling on Ms. Littleton's case, is Ms. Littleton really the primary culprit? Or is it the judges' interpretation of the law?

KPFT Radio Host, Sarah DePalma managed to corral Ms. Littleton for an interview on the January 8 show on After Hours. "I've taken a lot of crap the past couple weeks over the Christie Littleton (interview)" Sarah mentioned. "And I've gotten several Emails from people who just want to have her barbecued. And I'm just absolutely not gonna do that!

"What happened to her was not her fault. The woman had her surgery done in the 70's, for god sakes, at a county hospital – I think it was called San Antonio General. The county basically paid for her surgery. She was ten years post-operative when she met her husband. She had her own successful business – she had a life!

"She was following the advice she was given. It was 1977 – times were different, Phyllis was still trying to work her way into the court system... In 1977, [transitioning] was all hush-hush. The psychologists told people, once you get your surgery, go woodwork and have a good life. And that's what she did!

"There was no reason for her to come looking for activists. She had no way to know that her husband was going to die.

She had no way to know that the judge was going to rule the way that he did.

"Christie was just a person who had a life, and was in love with a husband. The husband dies, and she thinks she has the right to sue like anybody else in this country. And the judge comes up with this entirely bizarre ruling.

"Her whole focus was her husband and her business – which makes her pretty much an average American. She was following the American Dream, and it became the American Nightmare.

"And she's not a closet case: I asked her if we went to Austin, and went to the legislature to fight for this, would you testify? Her response was "Hell, yes."

"She didn't have much of an educational back-

ground, and really didn't fully understand what the ruling meant. She didn't even know why there was a need for a chromosome test – she didn't what they were! And for that we're gonna barbecue this woman? Not as long as I'm alive. I'm sorry, she's a victim."

### The After Hours Radio Interview:

"I am originally from San Antonio, (but) I happened to meet my husband in Kentucky," Christie stated. "I happened to have a car accident, (and) for medical reasons I was transferred to Kentucky for medical treatment. During the process, I met my husband Jonathan Mark Littleton. He was from rural Kentucky, came to Lexington looking for work and resided in a motel that I happened to reside in right before my medical treatment. And we were introduced in the lobby of the motel."

"We dated for a long – well, we actually became friends for about a month. And that friendship led us into being roommates. And then two weeks after we became roommates, I had to go for surgery. And during the recovery of the surgery, my husband nursed me back to health – which took several months. During that process, we fell in love.

"We were married for about 6½ years. We lived together for six months prior to our marriage. During that time when he was nursing me back to health, and during the courtship; when he admitted his true feelings to me, I admitted my little secret. And exposed to him my past life, and he understood and accepted and he asked me to marry him.

"So he knew you were post-operative and basically said, 'I don't care?'" Sarah asked.

"Exactly," Christie replied. "I believe that until the day he died he was in disbelief that the surgery ever took place. He could say there was no tracks of my past. He could never understand how I was ever born that way, because I was so feminine in his eyes."

"When he proposed to me, I said yes – as long as we could reside in San Antonio where I have my friends, my family, my clients and my business – I'm a hairstylist, and I needed to reopen my business. And he agreed that my life was that important to me, so... he moved all his belongings with me to San Antonio, and helped me reopen my salon.

We were married on Dec. 31, 1989 and he passed away on July 30, 1986.

I had been taking him to the doctors – several doctors – prior to his death. I believe they call it embolism. It's a blood clot, it got stuck in the lungs in his main arteries and caused his death. I would explain to them he had blood clots and they disagreed and would treat him for something else. The day before he died, I took him to this Dr. Prange, in my opinion, he misdiagnosed him. He just didn't give him the proper medical care, and just gave him a bottle of Ibuprofen for pain – which contains aspirin, which is a blood thinner – which is an enemy to a blood clot. Within 14 hours, he passed away.

"As a wife, if I say I feel my husband is being treated wrong, and I ask for proper treatment and

it's refused, as a wife I defend my husband. My husband has two children from a prior marriage. I figure since I lost my husband, and my step-children have lost their means to ever see their father again, I wanted to get justice so that we could arrange some kind of financial stuff for my step-children... and for myself.

"But then it went out of my control. Instead of looking at it as a woman looking for justice on her husband's wrongful death, they turned it around and made it a gender issue. They forgot about the hurt that my husband went (through), the medication that he got, they forgot about the pain and suffering that I went (through). All they remember is the gender issue.

"I really don't know how they found out (about her being transsexual). I think that during questioning, two female attorneys questioned me some things under oath. And they asked me my full name, and I gave them my full name. And they asked me if I had gone by any other name, and I told them my female name before marriage. They pursued it to go until the day I was born, and they brought that issue up.

"Those are two things – they're two separate issues – the court took the privilege of merging together. Instead of taking my malpractice case to heart, which was the main issue, they found a loophole to keep the doctor from being sued with malpractice. So they decided to bring in the gender issue. I don't know how they combined them together. I also don't know how they came to the conclusion of it being a same sex marriage. Because, no way it's a same sex marriage.

"The judge ruled it didn't matter that you were post-surgical seven, eight years," Sarah reminded. "It didn't matter that your husband had accepted you as a woman, and that your step-children accepted you as a woman; that as long as you had male chromosomes, you were male."

"I've got right in front of me the petition to the Supreme Court." Christie replied. "Hopefully, I will come up successful... We're born human beings and Americans, and we all have rights. We have rights to fall in love and marry. And if the court is just to all human beings in America, they will vote my way. If for any reason they vote against me, or throw my case, or refuse to hear my case, I would continue to fight as far as I can to have my rights acknowledged.

To tell you the truth, neither of the judges – neither from the first court, nor from the fourth court appeal – none of the judges above ever questioned me personally. Not one of them has ever gave me one minute to listen to... what I have to say or what I felt. How they came up to the conclusions of what my chromosomes are – I don't understand it, because I've never been asked to be tested for them. So how he comes to that conclusion is still a mystery.

I believe they already had their minds set up to do what they wanted to.

When asked if she would go before the Texas Legislature and explain the case to some of the

(Continued on Page 12)

# OUR BACK YARD TREASURE: A VISIT WITH SARAH DE PALMA

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Recently, I had the chance to catch up with one of our local community's stalwarts of activism. Most everyone in Houston's transgender community, and a good number in the greater GLB community as well, know the name Sarah DePalma. Many know her because of her involvement in activism and TGain – even more for her radio show at KPFT's After Hours, with host Jimmy Carper. The majority of us know of her – but how many actually know her?

Our fiery, pint-sized advocate, with the befitting red hair, towers over the virtually all of us when it comes to her acumen in the political arena. It's hard to think of anyone else with the ability, and the chutzpah, to sit down with Steve and Sherry Radack – very conservative conservatives – and have them listen. Something else many may not be aware of: Sarah single-handedly authored and submitted the TGain amicus curiae brief for the Littleton v. Prange case last September. She also recently scored a coup by having an interview with she who the case was named after: the heretofore unreachable Christie Littleton.

I recently had an opportunity to catch up with Sarah to sit for a chat.

## The Wonder Years ...

I didn't really have a childhood.

I was the youngest disc jockey in the state of Connecticut at age 13. Naugatuck CT – its claim to fame was that naugahyde was named after this town. They had a big chemical plant there ... and every Saturday they would put in, like, 100,000 gallons of ammonia, and I forgot how many gallons of latex. And we were in a river valley, so it would get so bad your eyes would tear, the laundry would turn ash gray. And I remember complaining about it once, and somebody said, "Shut up. That's the smell of money." That's true.

I was working at a (radio) station at a daytime only station and they had a kiddie show there, and I was the kid! I got that because my next-door neighbor was the disc jockey. Well when my voice changed, and they needed somebody who could work an odd shift – say maybe 45 minutes or an hour or something – I got it. It was at WOWW radio – Wow radio! Which is the ironic thing about it because they would play, like, Mantovani and Mitch Miller and stuff. There was seriously nothing 'Wow' about it.

One time I was working in commercial radio in the sixties ... in Waterbury. And I was working in this station that sat up on top of this huge granite mountain – in the middle of the woods, basically. The second night that I was there, the biggest rat I ever saw in my life crawled out from underneath (the control panel). And I'm screaming and I'm yelling while I'm on the air, "It's a RAT! It's a RAT! Oh my GOD, it's a RAT!!!" And I'm not

thinking about the fact that I'm on the air. I was screaming like crazy. And the rat is totally oblivious to me, and I'm just going berserk. So I quit the next day.

And the program director thought it was just hilarious: he heard me yelling 'it's a rat' and was wondering "what the hell is he doing?"

## Early Activism...

I can actually pinpoint the day I became an activist: I was in third grade, and this was just after the McCarthy era. We had just gotten through reading about the constitution, and there was this lady there who would come in twice a week with a magic marker and she would mark out subversive words in the dictionary. And I walked up to her and said, "I know you can't



cally.

## Freedom Ride

I went down south, I think it was 1966... or 1967, I went down with a group of Episcopalian and Unitarians, so I went down with a good group of liberal people. All of whom were white interestingly. But we went to Tupelo, MS. The day we arrived in Tupelo,

we were met with a lynching. I mean they had to cut this man out of the tree. So I knew I was in the south.

And we were told from the start, "Don't tell the FBI anything. The church blows up? You didn't see it." So that's the way we went about our business.

They had just opened up a new bus station there and were real proud of it. They had what was called 'refrigerated water,' which was cooled water – which they thought was a pretty big deal. And on the inside of the bus station it was just wonderful. When you went to the back – the back of the bus stations were for blacks – [there] was an outhouse and a well with a dipper attached to it. That was their version of 'separate but equal.' I just wasn't buying any of that. Separate was for sure, but the equal part they were not so good at.

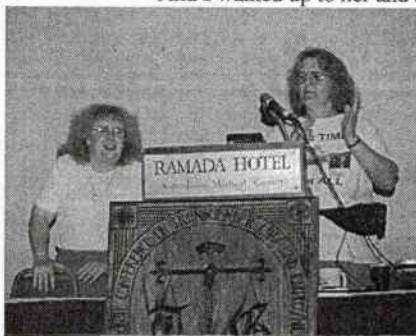
Couple of nights later we stayed in a small town in Mississippi and we were met by a sheriff, who told us we shouldn't stay. But we had a bunch of rooms booked, and we knew no one else was gonna rent to us. So we chose to stay. We had several calls during the night from the Klan threatening our lives. The night after we left, the Klan burned our hotel down. That way, no more 'yankee, carpetbaggin', nigger-lovin' scabs' can come from the north and tell them how they ought to live their lives.

And we stayed there for about two months. And it was a hell of an experience – I've still got scars on my left leg from where a dog bit me. A police dog bit me down there.

What you see on the news, that was only the half of it. The real battles weren't fought in the big cities, the real battles were fought in the small towns. Because after the activists left, the people

had to deal with the Klan close up and personal. And a lot of them were not real happy to see us. In their eyes, we were stirring up trouble, and then

(Continued on Page 7)



Sarah (L) and Phyllis Frye in July, 1996 at the ICTLEP Law Conference in Houston.

do that, because we just studied the constitution in school and they told us about freedom of speech." And I got sent to the principal and sent home.

So I learned two important lessons early. One was – adults lie. And the second one was – your freedom doesn't mean squat if you don't work for it. I was in fourth grade the year of the Cuban Missile Crisis. I remember John Kennedy coming on, and I was young, but I was old enough to understand the words 'nuclear missiles.' They had shown us a couple weeks earlier a film "Nuclear Power Is Our Friend." At the end of this, they were showing us "Duck and Cover."

By the time I got into junior high school, I already knew about adults and what adults had said. And I learned pretty early that they had forked tongue. I put that together with the fact that I was raised Pentecostal until I was 14, and then I got smart.

By the time I was 14 or 15, my parents truly believed I was going to Hell. They had no control over me, really: I had an independent paycheck. You tell people you were 14 or 15 the first year you went south as a freedom rider, and people say "they didn't take people that young." Well the truth is, nobody knew I was that young. They all thought I was 17 or 18 years old. So I got away with murder basi-



At the 1997 Annisse Parker campaign with Vanessa (L) and Sarah Fox (R) of Columbus OH

# BICENTENNIAL TRANS?

BY KATRINA C. ROSE

**M**y editor doesn't approve of my getting personal and political when I do movie reviews. I hope she'll indulge me this one time, however.

I'm quite sure that she wasn't expecting an Angry White Transsexual™ review of Robin Williams' latest flick. On the other hand, I wasn't expecting to leave the theater crying like I haven't cried in years – and that's after crying more during the last year or so than I ever thought possible.

Nevertheless, Bicentennial Man hit home with me – and I'm sure that it will for some of you.

Officially, though, its not a transsexual tale. It's a robot tale. And, no – no robot changes genders in the movie. Yet, the quest for recognition – validation, even – of change is the common thread running through all the years of the movie's storyline.

Early in the new millennium, the Martin family gets a playmate – a robot who comes to be known as Andrew (Robin Williams.) Andrew and the youngest Martin daughter (played as a child by the overly-cute little girl from certain soft drink commercials with which I'm sure we're all familiar) grow close; the older daughter, however, tries to kill him soon after his arrival.

Gradually, Andrew gets in touch with himself. And, not unlike the reaction to a transsexual who begins the journey to where she should have been to begin with faces, some accept Andrew while others are repulsed. The older daughter never sees Andrew as anything more than, well, a thing.

Even the family patriarch, seemingly a Ward Cleaver for the positronic age, who can be credited for inspiring Andrew's humanity is initially offended when the now-not-so-robotic robot asks for his freedom. Not unlike transsexuals who have friends and loved ones who accept the crossdressing so long as it goes no further, Andrew's master was horrified at the logical end result of educating a robot into self-awareness: the desire for personal freedom and true autonomy, even just in principle.

Andrew had no particular desire to leave the Martin family; he simply wanted to be free.

And, not unlike transsexuals – irrespective of whether they have any desire ever to marry someone of the now-opposite-sex – Andrew ultimately seeks government recognition of the reality that he is human, though simply not an average human.

And, sadly, not unlike what far too many transsexuals are told, Andrew is told that despite all that he truly is, has done and has become, he is not good enough to be legally recognized and to be able to share the essence of his being with his true love in the same way that other people are allowed to

I'm sure that, by now, you're wondering whether Bicentennial Man ever manages to come to a happy ending. Well, a reviewer isn't supposed to give away the ending. Of course, I could divulge what happens at the end, but I don't think you'd be any closer to knowing whether the ending is truly happy or not.

I saw it – and I still can't decide. However, I can make a few definitive statements about the movie.

If you like Robin Williams in general, then you'll like Bicentennial Man. Even if you don't ordinarily enjoy Williams, this isn't typical fare for him. He gets a few opportunities to rattle off some jokes, but this is not a comedy vehicle for him masquerading as a movie – it's a movie.

If you like Asimov-ian robot tales then you'll like Bicentennial Man – though you'll certainly have flashbacks to sci-fi literature class (yes, there are such things – even at the Texas A&M of the mid 1980's) and ever-so lengthy discussions of the deeper meaning of Asimov's "I, Robot" and the three laws of robotics.

If you're transsexual or have a loved someone who is, then you'll like Bicentennial Man – though you'll likely leave the theater crying because you know that none of us have 200 years to wait.

If you're not transsexual and you can watch Bicentennial Man and come away not understanding what transsexuals face when we seek recognition of our existence, then you're just not human.

## EDITOR'S RANTS...

(Continued from Page 2)

to us in the cyber-TG world.

Karen had expressed a desire to move to a safer neighborhood, someplace with some sanctity. She was, however, unemployed. What job she did have recently was extremely stressful and made nearly intolerable by her ex-boss.

Karen last attended a meeting at my place in October. Her mood belied the fact of what was apparently churning beneath the surface. She spoke with my mom, but gave no indication of being desperate. She apparently couldn't talk to her unsupportive family, who apparently buried Karen as her old self: William.

Watch your reaction to stress very carefully. Clichéd as it sounds, it's true: Stress Kills.

## Walking the Dead Tackles Transsexualism, Queer Art, Aging Alcoholic Queenism, Bad Documentaries

By Chris Jimmerson

Veronica was just a sweet little girl in a pretty dress until she grew up to become a lesbian called Ronnie. Then, Ronnie became a man named Homer, forever altering the course of her/his life as well as the lives of her lover, mother and gay boyfriends.

Opening on February 18, 2000, Unhinged Productions will present the Houston premier of

Veronica / Ronnie/Homer's story – Walking the Dead, by Keith Curran. Filled with scathing but hilarious dark comedy, the play promises to challenge the way we think about gender identity and what it means to be lesbian or gay.

Unhinged Productions is a non-profit, 501(c)3 theatrical production company dedicated to producing and promoting plays addressing lesbian and gay themes. The company also works with emerging gay authors to develop their works.

Walking the Dead will play Fridays and Saturdays

at 8 p.m. from February 18 through March 18 at The Atomic Café, 1320 Nance. A "pay what you wish" performance will be offered on Monday, February 21 at 8 p.m. For tickets, directions to the theatre or more information call 713-398-7577.

(Editor's Note: Our own Sidney Pye was the continuity consultant on the female-to-male perspective for the lead actress in this production.)

Veronica was a sweet little girl in a pretty dress. She grew up to be a lesbian called Ronnie. Then, Ronnie became a man named Homer.

UNHINGED PRODUCTIONS presents

## Walking the Dead By Keith Curran

A play about Transsexualism, Queer Art, Aging Alcoholic Queenism and Bad Documentaries

Opens Friday, February 18 @ Atomic Cafe, 1320 Nance, 8pm Plays Fri. & Sat. through March 18

Tickets \$15 adults ~ \$10 senior & student w/ I.D.

Call 713-398-7577

Directed by Chris Jimmerson

Featuring: Ann James, Todd Greenfield, Michael Johnston, Dodd Bates, Joey Berner, Becky Byars and Barbara Jones

**SARAH DE PALMA....**

*(Continued from Page 5)*

leaving them with the aftermath.

**Back Home in Connecticut....**

I'd already started growing my hair, and I'd already decided I was going to be a hippie. It's a funny thing, when you start getting out of the small town, your eyes get real wide. This was the sixties when the whole country was really nuts. I mean, really, the whole country was just crazy! I spent my summer having police dogs turned on us, and firehoses turned on us, and being met by the Klan and, just, really terrible things. Then I'm supposed to go back to this small town in Connecticut and be a good little boy!

By that time I had hair down to the bottom of my neck. They had all these rules that guys weren't supposed to have sideburns down beyond the middle of the ears. Their hair wasn't supposed to touch their neck. My response was essentially, 'fuck you and the horse you rode in on.'

I was in constant trouble the whole time I was in school. And they just didn't know what to make of me. I was earning my own living, and my parents had no control over me. I was doing these things that people much older should have been doing. I actually led a protest out into the main area of the school over a dress code. But we got the dress code removed. I think that was like my junior year of high school.... So I was kind of a hero in this school.

**Abby Hoffman & War Protests....**

Working in radio, I'd already begun to meet with some of the people. I'd done an interview with Jim Morrison of the Doors, for example. I'd begun to meet some of the rock & roll people of that era. And they were talking to me like I was in my twenties. So, I was learning things in high school that kids weren't supposed to be learning - and I was learning it on a first-hand basis! And that's actually the first time I heard of Abby Hoffman.

Abby Hoffman was coming through Connecticut for something, and I tried to get him for an interview and couldn't. So I went to this rally he was holding and I thought, "damn I like this guy! He's good show-biz." And he was! He was a show-business activist, he really was. And I thought 'this was pretty cool,' so I started following Abby Hoffman's kinda stuff. Which in the sixties was okay, but it didn't make you popular with your principal or your parents or your minister or any of those things. And I was like the only kid in my high school that was a hippie.

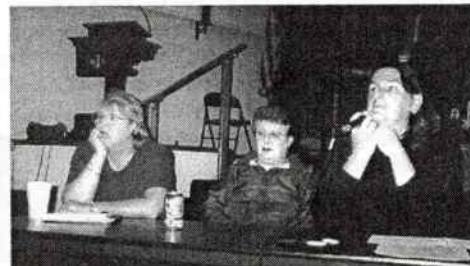
I got involved in the anti-

war kinda stuff. And between 1968 and 1970 I got arrested 45 times. But I was only booked once! See, the way that it worked was they'd arrest three, four, five hundred or a thousand of us; and they would herd us into this high school gym. And they'd send some white-haired judge out to say, "I have kids at home your age. Now go home and behave!" And that was it!

The only time I ever got booked was in Boston. I put a flower in the barrel of a National Guardsman's rifle. And they charged me with defacing federal property. It actually came to trial and the case was dismissed. First of all, the National Guardsman said there were no bullets in the gun. And second, (he testified) "the only reason I'm in the National Guard is I didn't want to go to Viet Nam." That kinda ruined the trial real fast.

**Levitating the Pentagon....**

I was with Abby Hoffman when we went to Washington DC ... in an attempt to levitate the Pentagon. Now the theory was - I know that it



**Sarah (C) with Jessica Wicks (L) and Marie Denise Gallagher at the MCCR panel in Oct.**

sounds stupid now, but at the time it was the anti-war stuff - and the theory was that if we could all ring the Pentagon and hold hands and contemplate, maybe we could make the Pentagon go away. And if there was no Pentagon, there'd be no war! Stupid theory, I know - but it was show biz, is what it really was. We were trying to make a point.

Well, Abby Hoffman had brought this Shawnee Indian medicine man with him. Which was cool! And he'd built a little campfire right there by the door, and he was doing incantations, and everything was fine until he threw some sort of sparklers on the fire.

The next thing we know, the National Guard - in full battle dress - comes up over the top of the hill, and we just got the shit kicked out of us. I got my nose broken in two places - and I got off pretty easy! They tear gassed us... it was a mess. Afterwards, their excuse was that we were using 'explosive incendiary devices.' And I was like, "Yeah, those sparklers must've scared the hell out of those National Guardsmen!"



**Sarah (back center) with Terrence O'Neill (L-R), Clarence Bagby, Carl Smith, Phyllis Frye & Vanessa Edwards Foster (crouched) after the historic Caucus inclusion vote last July.**

I was supposed to go to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and didn't get to go because I had mono. Which probably was a good thing, because I'd have had my nose broken again!

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**TATS SPEAKS AT T.A.A.F.T....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

After case studies presented by Denise, she turned the floor over to Desiree Walton. Desiree spoke of her experience dealing with the transgender journey, through the family. Starting with herself as a child and the way that her parents dealt with it through today and how she handled her children with the subject, telling anecdotes of ideas her children have come up with. For example, after peeling from a sunburn, Desiree's daughter asked if that was her boy skin going away and her girl skin coming in. Desiree spoke of the confusion growing up not knowing who she was, that she first had to understand herself before she began to transition and her experiences that have happened during the first year of the real life test.

The floor was then open for more questions from the conference attendees. The hour and a half presentation turned into over 2 hours, with people staying after, and continuing to ask questions.

Attendees were asked to rate the presentation. Some initial responses were they wanted more time on this subject. Some therapists approached both Denise and Desiree requesting them to present again next year, some requested that we brought back as keynote speakers. Rumor had it that the head of the Texas Association of American Family Therapists requested that we come to his university and present to his students.

Nevertheless, the presentation was a success. People walked away knowing more about the subject of transgenderism, they have a contact number to find out more information if needed, and Denise and Desiree decided this might be a show that they take on the road, offering this to other conferences, corporations and soon, there will be an audio tape available for purchase.



**Sarah (front left) prepare for the '99 Pride Parade with Katrina Rose (back) & Sarah Connell at right**

## Unity Banquet Date Set

By Jessica Ann Redman

April 8 is the date set for the TG community's evening-long gala: The Unity Banquet. This year's event will be held at the Westchase Hilton on Westheimer at Briarpark, on Houston's westside.

"This, our seventh annual banquet, will be a night to remember," said Jessica Ann Redman, spokesperson for the group. "The event will kick off with a multimedia presentation celebrating the past six annual banquets, a cocktail reception, a seated dinner, comedienne Leslie Townsend, door prizes, music and dancing. The highlight will be the awards ceremony, honoring the outstanding members and supporters of this Gender Gifted Community."

This year, the event is sponsored by the members of HCDA, the Tau Chi Chapter of Tri-Ess, GCTC, TATS and CATS (Community Awareness for Transgender Support.) Ticket prices will be around \$40.00 each.

"This year's function has been organized by the members of the Unity Committee which has representatives from each of the groups," said Desiree Ann Walton, Unity Committee facilitator. "Each year this event has grown. After last year's huge crowd, we wanted to bring our community the best event ever to launch the millennium."

Voting for the Apogee begins this month.

## SARAH DE PALMA....

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### The Woodstock Era....

I did Woodstock and all that stuff. It was great. I was one of the idiots who had a ticket - I was working at a radio station, and they were giving away tickets because they were afraid nobody was gonna come. Which is ironic now. And I actually surrendered my ticket to get in. And I would kill to get that back, because it'd be worth a fortune now.

By the early 70's, I'd pretty much had my fill. I'd been a conscientious objector with the Army. I had a college deferment. But besides that, I'd actually gone to them in advance and told them I was gonna be a conscientious objector, because you had to register up front.

Within a year from my graduation, we had had three dead in Viet Nam from my high school. That's actually how I got involved with the anti-war stuff anyway. A guy I'd worked with in radio, he'd been drafted, and came back six weeks later with his face blown off. My fear wasn't so much that I'd die, my fear was that I wouldn't die!

I started talking with veterans that were coming back, and they started telling me how we were bombing rice patties, and not strategic targets, like posts. And after a while, you start getting suspicious and saying "Wait a minute. Maybe the government is lying through their damn teeth."

After my senior year, my birthday came up number 2 in the lottery. So it was guaranteed I was gonna be called. So it comes time, and they have a swearing in ceremony. They say, "every-one who is prepared to take the oath, step forward." And I didn't. And it eventually went to court. Finally, after I got married, they sent me a letter saying they decided I was too short.

And afterwards, I sued under the Freedom of Information Act, and I had discovered - like a lot of people - that I had made one of Nixon's enemy lists. You didn't have to do much to get on it. He basically said, that anyone arrested for "anti-war activities - draft 'em."

### Moving to Texas....

I got married in 1973, to Jackie. And we had a daughter, and the marriage lasted seven years.

I had been working at J.C. Penney in Connecticut, and Texas was just booming in the early seventies. So they came to me and asked me if I was willing to transfer... to Texas! The day they asked me, it was -3° and snowing, and Texas sounded pretty good! So I got here

thinking cowboys and Indians, and big cactus.

And instead I land in Bryan TX in a downtown J.C. Penney that still had a wooden staircase up the backside. And you talk about culture shock! People were driving around with bumper stickers that said, "Welcome to Texas. Now Go Home." "Freeze a Yankee in the Dark, Cut Off Their Oil."

Texas A & M was literally down the street there in College Station, so I decided "I'd apply there!" - not knowing anything at all about Texas A & M. All I knew was it was a big school. I got in under an exception program (and) I got accepted.

### The Realization of Being Gay....

The end of my first semester, I had pretty much realized my marriage was not for me; and I realized I was gay. And I took on a male lover. That was actually during my time at Texas A & M when that all happened.

Well, I saw this add for this gay group that was meeting in the Unitarian Church. This sounds so stupid now, but I didn't know what gay people looked like! Honest to God, it's true! So I thought I'd go park in the lot and see when they're going in. Well of course, they didn't look like anything different. I got up my courage enough to wait until the meeting started, and then I'll sneak in the back. Well they had a guy there that was at the door. And I walked up, and he said "Hi, how are you?" And I literally ran out of there screaming! It was three months before I got the courage to go back.

With my luck, the same guy was there: his name was Tom Johnson. We ended up being very good friends, but Tom said, "you know, I don't mind the fact that you left screaming; but did you have to be so noisy about it?" And so that was my introduction to gay people. Very strange, but true.

I had had an early inclination (of being gay) when I was back in high school. My parents had a cottage in Cape Cod, and I had had a really hot

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**SARAH DE PALMA....**

*(Continued from Page 8)*

love affair with a person to remain unnamed from North Carolina. I lost my virginity to him on the deck of a sailboat in the moonlight. So if you gotta lose your virginity, that's the way to go! He's now married with four kids, by the way.

In high school was the first inclination I had of being transgendered – I just didn't know what it was. My mother could not keep me out of her clothes: she literally had to lock the closet to keep me out of her clothing. And there was a lady that we'd met in the church, actually. She had a son named Adrian, who was also a crossdresser. Mrs. Fullerton, God bless her, must've realized how badly we'd needed that. And so she actually lent us her clothes. She taught us how to do makeup, and what was the proper kind of perfume to use; and I think I must've been 13, maybe 14 at the time.

In the meantime, I was trying to prove how butch I was. I was captain of the tennis team, I was shortstop on the baseball team, and I was on the swim team, you know ... I was just hiding. After I got married the same kind of stuff surfaced. She came home and caught me in her clothes one night. Of course, I swore on a stack of bibles that I wouldn't do it again – and of course I did.

**The Gay Activist....**

I thought being gay and dressing in (women's) clothes was the same thing. When I was at Texas A & M, I actually took on a male lover. He and I were together for quite a long time. So I got more and more involved with the gay community.

There had been a case filed in court on behalf of gay student services – it had been filed for quite a while before I got there. It had already gone to one court and (the gay student services) had lost. They had appealed it upward, nothing was happening with it. So when I got there, I guess

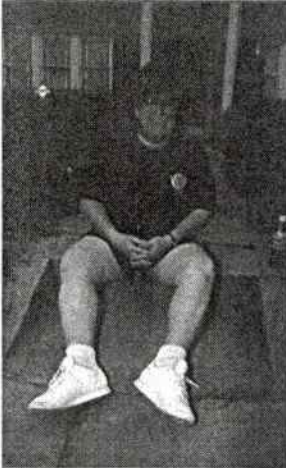
because of my activist background, I got elected as the student leader of the ACLU at Texas A & M – which is a little bit like being named communist in the middle of a right-wing party!

So we decided we would try to raise money for gay student services. We took it back up to court. Once the student body got wind of that, they got pretty ugly. Remember, this is Texas A & M in the eighties that we're talking about – '83 & '84. Sheets began coming out of windows with signs saying "No Fags." Bumper stickers were everywhere with sayings like, "Steers and Queers, No Place But Texas." I don't know who all the men were who were in the bathrooms in G. Rollie White Coliseum with glory holes. I guess they were imported from Austin. It got real ugly.

Then I got elected president of gay student services. That's when it got seriously ugly!

In the meantime, it became obvious that we were going to get this case heard, because we had raised enough money to do it. Things began to become threatening. I started getting bricks through my picture window. They spray-printed my car, and finally poured sugar down my gas tank. Signs began going up on the main streets of College Station, saying "(using my name) is a fag." My daughter had to see all this. And we actually had to move her out of a public school because she was getting threatened by the other students, because she was my daughter. It was just incredible.

Members of the gay student services went across the street when they saw me coming, because I was too dangerous to be associated with. To me it was just nuts. What finally had brought it all to a head was that somebody had slit the throat of my dog and spread the blood on the door. And I took that to be a threat.



**Sarah relaxes a bit before the start of the '99 Pride Parade**

member of the band and the corps of cadets.' You turned it over and it said, 'My name is Phyllis Frye, I'm a transsexual lawyer....' We had to get a police escort to get her off the campus.

Well the students, they decided they would hold a 'Beat the Hell Out of the Faggots' rally at the football field. And several thousand people showed up for it. We were smart enough – we taped it. And we used it as evidence when we went to the fifth court, and said, "This is what we mean when we say 'intolerable conditions' upon the campus." They believed us.

There was a Christian group called Maranatha on campus – this was just after AIDS had just come out. And they were always talking about gay student services, and finally we said, "Hey, let's just have a debate, and we'll split the proceeds 50/50." We'll have the students in, and we'll have the press in ... and they wouldn't debate me! Fine.

Two weeks later, a friend pulled me out of class and said, "you better get down to the student center. This guy is saying he offered to debate you and you wouldn't show up." Now he'd never met me.

So I show up, and – sure enough – this guy's got like this ten foot wooden cross behind him. This is a state school here, folks! He's standing there next to this wooden cross, and he's telling people how he offered to debate me and how I wouldn't show up.

So, I walk up and said, "Actually that's not the way it happened. (And I taped the phone call, and I can prove what I said.) But if you want to debate – no problem! Let's do it right here, right now, right in front of God and everybody – what's the first question? And he took his cross and walked away. So, I learned an important lesson from 'so-called Christian right-wingers' right there.

I'd had Phil Gramm as an economics professor. I remember he came up with this equation that filled three blackboards, showing where polluters had the same rights to the river as the fishermen did. And even the Aggies were not buying that story!

Anyway, he decides to run for Congress as a democrat. I thought the guy was a wolf in sheep's clothing. So, he'd come to campus and made a statement that gays should not be teachers. So I got up and wanted to know exactly what basis that was on. His response was: 'because I said so.' And I said, "well if you told us to jump off a bridge, should we do it?" Well that made the front page of the newspaper. The next thing I knew, that had this set up like I had just embarrassed the hell out of Phil Gramm.

There's kind of a funny post-script to this story. Phil Gramm's press guy's name is Larry Neal. Larry Neal was with Phil Gramm there at the time. Fast forward many years later to the Lobby Day in Washington DC: Dee McKellar, and I and

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**Sarah at a recent TATS meeting.**

So I had some friends in College Station who hid me until the verdict came down. And the A & M students were not happy campers. I actually got booed when I graduated, which for me was actually one of the prouder moments of my life.

Finally, after several years, the case was finally heard in the fifth circuit court in New Orleans, and the court

ruled that Texas A & M had 'violated our freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right to equal access to public buildings.

It wasn't long after that that there was a lawsuit about getting women into the band, and giving women their senior rites. So I just sort of got the ball rolling.

**Texas A & M, and Phil Gramm....**

We once had a Free Speech Day, and we had invited Phyllis (Frye) and Ray Hill up, and I'd never met Phyllis – the gay student services had invited her up. I was with at the ACLU table. Well she nearly caused a riot. She went into the student center and was handing out these pamphlets. On one side it said 'My name was Philip and I was a



**SARAH DE PALMA...**

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two other people went to go see Phil Gramm. As luck would have it, Larry Neal was the one who came out to talk with us. So we made our pitch about transgender issues and stuff, but Larry Neal kept going "DePalma ... DePalma ... where do I know that name from?"

By this time I was fully transitioned... and I said, "do you remember this person who debated Phil Gramm in his first term?" And he said 'yeah,' and I said "that's me." His face dropped about a foot, and his eyes bugged out of his head, and I thought Dee was gonna fall off the chair - she couldn't hold herself, she was laughing like crazy. Needless to say, Larry Neal threw us out. But it was the happiest moment of my life!

**The Epiphany: Transsexuality...**

Now when I was living in College Station, the only gay bar I knew was Mary's. So I used to drive down from College Station to Mary's on the weekends. Talk about cutting your teeth the hard way, Mary's in the eighties is not like the Mary's it is now. Mary's is really tame compared to what it was.

My lover was killed in an auto accident - he was killed by a drunk driver. The driver was drunk and came up the entrance ramp, so he had nowhere to go.

So I came to Houston, and I knew no one. And I'd just lost my lover. In fact, I moved to Houston almost the exact moment the (gay / lesbian rights) referendum was taking place. So I started making contact with people who were involved with the referendum, and initially that's how I started getting in touch with the gay community here.

One night I had to go to College Station to see my daughter; and coming back I heard the Larry King show, and he had three transsexuals on the show. That was the first time I was ever aware of the word transsexual. I pulled over to the side of the road because I didn't want to lose the signal, and they got through talking and I thought 'that's me.'

I spent all this time and energy thinking I was a gay male, and none of it really fit - none of it really worked, but I never could figure out why it wouldn't fit. Even then, I wasn't sure; and the internet didn't exist yet. So I had to do all my research in the Houston Public Library - which by the way was, then, a complete joke as far as dealing with that kind of issues. But it began being discussed more on television, I began seeing more of it...and it began making sense to me.

I had been crossdressing the whole time I was married. In fact - kind of an odd thing - when my wife sued for divorce, she sued for my female wardrobe and got it! Then she promptly gained twenty pounds and couldn't wear any of it!

**TG Groups, Awareness in Houston...**

I saw an ad in the back of the TWIT, and it

said: If you think you're transsexual, call this number. That hooked me up with Jackie Thorne. Jackie remembers coming up to the Heights and meeting me for the first time. And I was just thoroughly desperate.

I was living this little two-room apartment. She came up and took one look at me, and she could just see 'desperation.' So the next time she came, Jackie brought some clothes and a wig - because I'd had nothing. And she showed me a little bit about make up, and she took me to a couple of Tri-Ess meetings. And I went to a couple of Tri-Ess meetings, and those meetings were just- Tri-Ess was just not where I needed to go. This was about '87.

So she took me to a GCTC meeting, and I thought 'hey, this is pretty good! Gee, I might keep going back to this.' So that, actually, is where I met Phyllis, and Dee McKellar, and Jennifer Lytwyn and a lot of others who are all probably woodworked by now! One time, Phyllis had invited me up to her lake home; and I told her I remembered her coming up to Texas A & M. And that's how I got involved with Phyllis.

**Being a Transgender Activist...**

Maybe my background in activism would not let me sit still and not become an activist on transgendered issues. Especially as I began learning more about how the laws were written. Actually, I had had an incident just before I met Jackie Thorne that probably helped prompt all this: I had gone to the Garden Party. My next-door neighbor and I had gone as a couple: he was in full leather and I was in wedding dress. Anyway, I drink almost not at all; in this case I didn't drink at all. So I left this bar in the Montrose, and this cop was following. I wasn't worried about it because I knew I hadn't done anything.

He waited until I was all the way out into Center Street - the darkest area just before you get into the Heights - and he pulled me over. Theoretically he pulled me over because he said the light over my license plate was out. And he's got me out doing a DWI test in the middle of the street in a wedding dress and heels. And these other cops are driving by, and looking at me and laughing and having a good old time. And the cop is talking the whole time, "Well, you're just my kinda guy." And the whole time I was getting madder, but I knew better than to say anything to a cop in Houston - so I just kept my mouth shut.

When it came time for the court hearing, I showed up. I was plenty pissed. And the whole time he kept going to the judge, (saying) 'I caught her in Montrose' (wink, wink, wink). Finally the judge said, "I don't care if you caught her on the dark side of the moon, what did she do?"

So I got up and told the judge what happened. And the judge said, "well you know officer, this isn't the first time we've had complaints about you. But it damn sure is gonna be the last." And it taught me real quick what it

was like to be transgendered in Houston. I really think that's what led to my being a transgender activist.

**Queer Nation and Act UP...**

There was a gay man from my church who was beaten to death - Paul Broussard - and that's what got me active in Queer Nation (and) Act UP. The one person who really stands out in my mind (from Act UP) was Brian Bradley. He was the most fearless activist - and fierce! He made me look like silly putty. He would just go into trials and break up trials. He was just unbelievable, just totally fearless.

It was during that same time period that I started my transition. Interestingly, when I transitioned, it came as a shock to a lot of people; because a lot of people didn't know what was going on. And Brian Bradley was the first person to come up to me after this and say, "I don't understand this, but I'll support you." Ray Hill was the second. That was actually where I think I met Ray Hill. And, yeah, there was one other person at Act Up I remember - whose name is Leslie. And, yeah, she was a piece of work. She didn't make my life any easier. We probably should just leave it at that.

In fact, a large part of why Act Up and Queer Nation were created was because the Republican Convention was coming here. And we wanted to be able to... make our presence known, shall we say? The Houston Gay community had become the focus from all around the country. At that time, Queer Nation was well organized around the nation; so we knew hundreds of people were coming.

**It's Time, Texas... and America!**

I didn't have a huge role in (the beginnings of It's Time, America). That was a meeting that was held when the Law Conference was held here in Houston. We had Karen Kerin, Jessica Xavier, Riki Ann Wilchins, me, Phyllis and another woman from Minnesota, Jane Fee. Karen Kerin was really the driving force behind all of that - and Jessica Xavier. Jessica Xavier borrowed a computer, and stayed up all night drawing up by-laws for the creation of It's Time, America. As soon as we came from the meeting, we created It's Time Texas. It's truly the oldest statewide (TG rights) organization in the nation.

Karen Kerin really got the ball rolling: she was the president for a while. But in a lot of ways Karen was probably not the ideal president. She was one of those people who works fabulously behind the scenes, but that wasn't necessarily what was required at that moment - what we really needed was an organizer. When Karen Kerin stepped down, it became apparent to me that no one was going to step in. And it seemed to me that that was a terrible waste.

We had worked really hard, and I said, "Well, shoot then, I'll do it." So I contacted Jessica and I said, "well I don't want to be usurping power here, but what do we do?" I said, "I'm

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## SARAH DE PALMA....

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willing to take it temporarily." So we put it to a vote and I became executive director of It's Time, America. (During that time) we put together the first constitution; we put together the first by-laws. We incorporated in 18 states while I was in there. I think the biggest thing that we did when I was there, was making it known that we existed.

But I never intended to take it as a permanent position. It ate up all my time: Lori had to send me Email to get my attention. I had It's Time, America for about a year and a half. That's was more than enough for me! I was glad to get out from under it: it was burying me.

My life was all out of whack; I was all activist and no person. I was out of work for a long time, and I needed to go interview. I finally just had to step down and say 'I have to get out of activism for a while. I can't just be an activist: I have to be a person, and a spouse' ... I had responsibilities.

### National Politics....

I had no idea how much sniping there would be when you became the national director. To me, it's amazing anyone takes a job for any period of time because your sniped at constantly from people in your own community who think they're smarter than you – even though they're a thousand miles away and don't have the slightest clue. At a national level, there were a lot of people in a power struggle who didn't want to see us succeed; and thought it was a terrible idea – especially since we were patterning ourselves after the Gay Task Force (NGLTF). How Jessica ever tolerated it as long as she did... I just think Jessica's a saint.

I look up to Jessica Xavier. Jessica is exactly the opposite of Brian Bradley. In so many respects, Jessica will work behind the scenes; she will sit down with anybody – I think she'd sit down with the devil if she thought it would advance the cause. And yet Jessica is diplomatic. She's effective. She's a lot of things I wish I was. I'm not necessarily diplomatic, and I have a terrible temper. I have a tendency to tell the legislators where to go with it.

For one thing, I can't stand sniping. The national level – if they ever stop sniping, they'll get somewhere. It's pretty much personality-driven, instead of issues-oriented. There's too many people with giant egos, and small minds; and I just don't have any tolerance for that. And because you've got a lot of people who really can't make a difference, there's a lot of horizontal hostility. I use the HRC as an example of that.

I was one of the first people in the meeting when we went to the HRC. And I sat between Phyllis and Riki Ann Wilchins – which should tell you something! It was quite a fire-breathing session. Yes the HRC has been a bunch of horse's asses. But I don't know that there's anything we're gonna do directly to change that.

So my attitude is: 'why are we wasting our time on something that's a very small chance of success, when we could be concentrating on things we can achieve today?'

I think the hardest thing I've had to learn about being an activist is: no matter how clear an issue looks to you, you can't make other people see it with the same clarity if they don't want to. That's been very frustrating to me.

### The Return to State Activism....

I had actually worked as an aide to Sen. Lowell Weicker before, so I had some background in Washington experience. But since TGAIN has restarted, I have paid virtually no attention to the national level. I'm really enjoying working at the state level. I have a lot of freedom doing what I do. I've been very pleased. In Louisville, in Cedar Rapids, at the

city level and in the state levels, I've seen a lot of that philosophy come true.

Now I don't mean we should ignore Washington, but Washington is just a den of vipers. And it takes far more firepower and a lot more money than we're ever gonna have. If you don't have the money to make a difference, then you're wasting your time. It's sad commentary, but true.

My interest has pretty much always been at the state level. If you asked people, nine out of ten couldn't tell you who their state legislators are. But these are the people who are enacting laws that affect you directly. At the state level, you don't need any money at all: what you need is some courage. And we've got that!

### The Local Groups vs. Activists....

Four or five years ago, we (activists) were easy targets. It's true that (Phyllis and I) have worked together over the years. And we've taken on some issues sometimes when we probably should have kept our mouths shut. At the time it looked like the right thing to do. The thing that I'm most proud of is that I'm not the only one doing this. Really, for a long time, Dee McKellar and I held the fort. I've been real proud of the way a lot of people in TATS and even in GCTC have stood up for the issues. It's a big change and a huge relief to not be the only one.

Transgenders in Houston are spoiled. They've had good transgender organizations in place for many, many years. This is a city with five well-known national activists. Very few cities can claim one, and we've got five! And if you start adding in people like Brenda Thomas, and ... we've got an incredible community here!

The hard part about being an activist – and you know this – is that you feel like nobody is really understanding what you're doing, and no one really gives a damn either. And I have to keep reminding myself that no one put a gun to my head to make me do this.

I had tried to stay out of it. I said, "I've been a political activist since I was sixteen. That's



The author (R) and her subject: Sarah (L) & Vanessa hang out by the pool at the January meeting.

enough, I'm out of it." But, like an old racehorse, when the bell rings I want to run. So I really couldn't stay out of it. I kept looking around and seeing things that we needed to be doing, and places that we needed to be; and I thought that "as long as I don't have to do it by myself now, maybe it won't be so bad." That has been the best

thing! And I know Phyllis is enjoying being in retirement!

### TG Radio on After Hours....

That was all Jimmy Carper's doing. What'd happened is that I'd been an invited guest by the co-host. And she didn't show up. Jimmy didn't know me from a hole in the wall. So we did the show; and when it came time to do the second half, he said, "Why don't you stick around and do the second half with me?" One thing just sort of led to another, and I ended up doing the show for five years! We had a lot of interesting guests, from people like Martine Rothblatt, Dallas Denny, Jessica Xavier, Karen Kerin and Dianna Ciccattello – it was kind of a list of who's who in transgender politics. And Christie Littleton, yeah. My next show is going to have the transsexual teacher from California, Dana Rivers.

We had Kate Bornstein live in the studio one night. She's a tall person to start with, and she shows up in full leather, wearing a top hat. And everyone in the station just kinda stopped... and their jaws kinda dropped. But she was fun! She actually got me to blush... and shut up – which is not easy!

There was one show that always sticks out in my mind, though – it was on shame and guilt. I always thought that was the best show we ever did, because you didn't have to be transgendered to understand. Shame and guilt is universal, and in our community it's epidemic. We got a letter later from a person in Galveston who told us that they had been sitting in their garage with a loaded revolver, trying to decide whether to kill themselves or not. And in the course of that discussion on that show, we had talked that person out of suicide. It gave me goose bumps. The one thing we did more than anything is get people over the idea of saying 'I'm the only one.'

**CHRISTIE LITTLETON SPEAKS....**

*(Continued from Page 4)*

committees there, Christie's reply was, "Yes I would. I wish somebody would give me a few minutes so that I could explain my feelings and my thoughts. Someone that could hear my side."

"I don't understand since my surgery was... funded by the government, it was a government program, it was done by government doctors. Government judges and lawyers that took part in changing my name, and my gender. It has all been done legally. I would've thought somebody bringing up my gender would have happened twenty years ago, when the surgery was not done - not twenty years later, and after a marriage. Annuling my marriage should've been done before I applied for the marriage license. Not after a successful marriage, and 20 years of womanhood.

When queried why she'd never thought of contacting transgender organizations, Christie answered: "I never knew about transgender organizations or anything. As a matter of fact, for years I thought I was the only one around, until I met some other girls. All these girls that I have met, have worked themselves into very normal lives and gone into secret lives and didn't want anybody to know about their personal lives. And nobody talked about it: it was a hush-hush subject. The only time I ever talked about it was when I was in a relationship with a man and I needed him to know. (W)hen I met my husband, when our relationship was growing; I thought there was something he need to know before the relationship went on. And that's about the only time we talked about it. I explained it to him, and he understood. He heard it, accepted it, and then said let's never talk about it again.

"And now they're telling me I don't have a right to fight for his wrongful death. Not only are they telling me that I don't have the rights to fight for what other wives should have.... I must never meet any person that I may fall in love with and share my life with. By law, they're telling me that I'll never be able to marry again; and that, to me, is very unconstitutional. And very inhumane to ask a human to stay away from marriage.

"At the same time, they're also telling me that if I do fall in love, I will have to live in sin under common law because I don't have a right to marry and lead a decent life with men.

"None of the judges or the lawyers have ever asked me what I felt to lose my husband. All they know is what they want to go what is legally the law now. And they didn't even follow the legal law in the right procedure.

"And (the courts) don't understand how two people can have a relationship and fall in love ... they don't understand the hurt of when you meet somebody and when it's taken away - the absences of their experiences, their holding, the conversations we had. If I ever needed consoling from my husband, I can never ask him for that any more. He's gone. The courts just can't understand that it's not just my husband that is gone, it is my life-time partner that they took away from me.

**San Jose Case is First Trans Murder of 2000**

**By Gwendolyn Ann Smith**

**A** transgender youth by the name of Alina was discovered in the trunk of a car by San Jose police on January 16th, making her the first victim of transgender violence in 2000. According to "Remembering Our Dead," a website that tracks trans-based murders, a total of twelve individuals were reportedly killed in 1999.

21-year-old Scott Santino, has been arrested on suspicion of murder and is being held by police without bail. Officers found Alina's nude body, wrapped in sheets in blankets, in the trunk of Santino's 1981 Cadillac. Though autopsy details were not available, it did appear that she had suffered injuries to her neck.

**A woman was complaining to the neighbor that her husband always came home late, no matter how she tried to stop him.**

**"Take my advice," said the neighbor, "and do what I did. Once my husband came home at three o'clock in the morning, and from my bed, I called out, 'Is that you, Jim?' And that cured him."**

**"Cured him!" asked the woman, "but how?"**

**The neighbor said, "You see, his name is Bill."**

**TATS Tidbits**

**By Vanessa Edwards Foster**

The American Boyz are pleased to announce the Fourth Annual True Spirit Conference to be held at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, Alexandria, Virginia, on February 18 thru 20, 2000. This three-day conference focuses on the social, physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational health of all gender variant people on the FTM spectrum and their significant others, friends, families, and allies.



Conference fees range from \$40-\$80. registration form are available via the internet at <http://www.amboyz.org/TSC/TSC2000reg.html> or, request a conference flyer via U.S. mail from The American Boyz/True Spirit 2000; 212A South Bridge Street, # 131; Elkton, MD, 21921.

GenderPAC announced the formation of a new Executive Director's Developer's Circle. According to GenderPAC Exec. Dir, Riki Ann Wilchins, members of the Developer's



**GPAC's Dana Priesing & Riki Wilchins (L), get cozy with HRC's Nancy Buermeyer & Gina Reiss (H) and Calif. visitor Dana Rivers (C)**


Circle agree to give a minimum of \$1,200 a year, or \$100 a month. (Is it

just me, or does this sound just like a beginner's version of HRC's Federal Club?) In exchange, they get special invitations to GenderPAC fund-raisers, events and retreats, and work closely with the GenderPAC staff on the projects they're helping to fund.

Nice try... but HRC members and transgenders enjoy a vastly different reality. It fails to recognize that most all T-folks are just eking by, while paying for the second wardrobe, hormones and required therapy out of pocket. And that doesn't even touch on the dynamics of landing a job in the first place! When lobbying takes a back seat to raising funds, it's time to close up shop. Seems like someone's been drinking at the HRC well a bit too much....

Speaking of HRC, Executive Director Elizabeth Birch publicly acknowledged that she favors adding 'transgender' and 'bisexual' to HRC's mission statement in a conference in New York in November. Don't hold your breath though... I heard the same in person at a luncheon for Liz back in June of 1998. This past fall, the same Ms. Birch was quoted in a Chicago interview, saying TG inclusion in ENDA will "never happen."

It's funny, but the talk is that Elizabeth herself is the roadblock to inclusion. The most telling quote came from HRC Communications Director, David Smith; who added, "Many people on staff share Elizabeth's view on inclusion as do many people on our board." Notice the wording, and the avoidance of 'supporting inclusion' in favor of the legalese, 'share Elizabeth's view on inclusion...?' Is it real, or just more verbal 'sleight of hand'? We shall see....

  
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**TATS Tidbits (Continued from Page 12)**

Dr. Sheila Kirk announced her retirement, effective on New Years Day of this year. The national transgender community's most famous gender-gifted surgeon, who created TSMC (the first-ever Transgender-specific facility created by a transsexual) in Pittsburgh just over a year ago, has called it quits in order to focus on personal pursuits. (Did you know she was a classical pianist?) "For the last 15 years, I have dedicated myself to helping my Community," Dr. Kirk stated in a press release. "But, now it is time, to turn my focus to my private life. And most importantly, to spend these days with my LifePartner, Pamela." Drs. Manders and Futrell will continue the day-to-day operations at TSMC.

**2000 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*The Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce advocates the interests and visibility of the development and stability of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and appropriate heterosexual individuals and organizations.*

• Next time you see Phyllis Frye, congratulate her for another first: she just was appointed to the board of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Our Phyllis is, of course,



the first transgender to sit on the Chamber's board of directors. Kind of a far cry from a year ago! You've come a long way, baby....

• With Phyllis' election, we now have TG's on the board of the Chamber, yet another officer voted into the Caucus, and a TG as the T-Cord (transgender coordinator) of PFLAG. All these groups a year ago didn't have us in their mission, officially. A huge sea change. Kentucky did so a year ago, and had great success legislatively. Maybe HRC should take note of this. Maybe ... but not likely.

• Houston's Largest PanSexual Leather Group would like to invite you to join The Houston PEP sponsored: TransGendered(TG) Leather group. For details on HPEP TG, please see the web site, <http://www.hpep.org>, or email [tg@hpep.org](mailto:tg@hpep.org) for information on meetings. TATS' (Lady) Marie Gallagher is one of the hostesses of this new group....

• Finally, the US takes its rightful place alongside TURKEY. With Britain's turnabout, the United States and Turkey are the only NATO members that ban acknowledged gays from military service.

• While stumping during the presidential campaign in Iowa, Vice President Al Gore was stumped by a question about gender rights. Karen Mass, a transsexual and jet systems designer, pressed Gore on anti-discrimination protections for transgendered men and women. Noncommittal, Gore said, "I'll have to learn more about it." Mass said she took his answer to be a 'stepping away' from such issues.

• A body, found in the backyard of a Portland home on Christmas Eve, has been identified by police as that of Todd Alexander Asay, who worked as a female impersonator under the name of Lindsey Alexander. Todd/Lindsey was last seen alive in May of 1986, and was suspected to be a homicide victim by Portland police. The Medical Examiner's office determined that the remains were, indeed, of Todd/Lindsey. Lindsey was 25 years old at the time of the disappearance.

Police have also already determined a suspect: a man currently in custody for the murder of his ex-wife. Both victims were shot to death.

• Do you really want to hurt me? Boy George is back in the news, this time for having a ball—or nearly having a ball. A huge mirrored disco ball fell from the ceiling of a concert hall in southern England and nearly killed George during a sound check. The singer took the near tragedy in stride: "It would have been both ironic and glamorous to be finished off by a four-foot glitter ball," he told The London Sun. The ball caught him in the ear and also caused him a minor back injury in the fall; but trooper that he is, George performed later that night.

• The January edition of Discover features a lengthy, well-written article about intersexuality by Emily Nussbaum. It details how being born with ambiguous genitals affects the person, how families react and procedures followed by the medical community. It starts: "Meet Emma, one of 65,000 babies born each year

neither male nor female. Once surgeons made them into females. Now parents wonder if these infants shouldn't be left untouched."

Although not mentioned specifically, the article provides a possible explanation for transgender people when it goes into the sex-determining role of chromosomes and hormones: how the two working together do not always produce absolute male or absolute female humans. Comments to Discover on the article can be directed to: Stephen L. Petranek, Editor in Chief, Discover, 114 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011-5690; or Email: [editorial@discover.com](mailto:editorial@discover.com)

• CLEVELAND, Ohio — David Rivenburgh, 36, of Euclid, OH was found dead in the back yard of his Coulter Ave. home with a bullet wound to the chest. Dr. Elizabeth Balraj, the county coroner, said that the wound appeared to be self-inflicted and that she would issue a formal ruling next week. Euclid police Lt. David Brooks said Rivenburgh left a note that expressed sorrow for killing himself and mentioned what a good person his wife was. Prosecutors quoted police as saying the note also said: "I can't live with the impending doom."

Assistant County Prosecutors said Rivenburgh was indicted in August on 12 counts of sexual battery and 12 counts of coercion. He was accused of demanding sexual favors from a transsexual whom he supervised as part of the probation department's Mentally Disordered Offenders project.

• Quote of the month: "Affluent queers will push for just enough social change to cover their own asses, and that will do the rest of us about as much good as any other charity fuck. Real activism is a much more arduous, risky, time-consuming, and (dare I say it?) democratic process." — Pat Califia

*(Continued on Page 14)*

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# TATS Tidbits

(Continued from Page 13)

- **KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan** – Doctors report that three sisters undergoing treatment for a rare chromosomal anomaly have broken off contact with the hospital. The three siblings were raised as girls until puberty, when the anomalies became apparent, said Dr. Juan Cheng-chao. Juan conducted tests on the young woman and discovered that in fact she had male chromosomes, together with a developmental defect marked by failure of the testes to descend into the scrotum.

Her two younger sisters, who checked into the same hospital at the ages of 14 and 12, respectively, were found to have the same condition, which Juan described as a first in Taiwan, and probably the world. Dr. Juan was then tapped to head up a research team to study the case of the three "sister men." After receiving medical treatment and counseling, all three decided to undergo sex change operations to allow them to continue to live as women. However, they soon stopped attending the hospital for follow-up treatment, and the hospital has been unable to contact them.

- **BANGKOK, Thailand** — Pirinya Kiatbusaba, a 19-year-old transsexual kickboxer, had his long-wished-for sex change operation recently. She won as much notoriety for her flamboyance in the ring as she did for her fighting prowess. "I am so happy," she stated in an interview. "Unlike before, I can say with confidence that I am a woman." Pirinya will now turn her pursuits towards entertainment and modeling.

- The first transsexual ever elected to national office, Georgina Beyer was born additionally disadvantaged because she's Maori (an indigenous

and marginalized ethnicity that makes up 10 percent of New Zealand's population.) "I am proud," she declared to the press, "if it motivates people like myself in all minorities who struggle to achieve their dreams against the adversity of society's disapproval and discrimination." She also claimed that her win showed that Kiwis are "over the gender thing."

- **PRETORIA, South Africa** — The South African Parliament will be considering a bill in the coming months, to update and expand the nation's laws respecting transsexuals. The Realignment of Sexual Orientation Bill is expected to deal with areas including marriage, taxation, insurance, succession, and even rape.

Although current laws already allow transsexuals to obtain some documents reflecting their changed name and sex, their status in many areas has remained undefined, and as the Law Commission's Justice P.J. Olivier remarked, "The law cannot disregard reality."

- **Oxford University Students Union** are in the process of producing the second edition of their *Careers for Queers Handbook*. The Handbook aims to inform students of the policy of employers towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered employees and applicants. It will be aimed at students throughout the UK and will emphasize the personal experiences of employees as well as the formal equal opportunities policies of employers.

- The editors are looking for graduate lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered employees to write about experiences (both good and bad) at work. If you are interested, please contact Michael van Gelderen via email: [michael.vangelderen@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:michael.vangelderen@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk) or Peter Gibb at: [peter.gibb@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:peter.gibb@some.ox.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can write directly to Oxford University Students Union, 28

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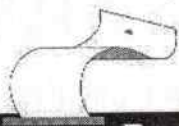
- **CALGARY, Alberta** – A sex change planned by an employee of the Calgary Police Service is causing a stir within the rank and file in the traditionally testosterone-driven cop culture. The unnamed 25 year old employee, who is not a member of the front-line force, started coming to work dressed as a woman about six months ago and has at least another six months to go before the gender reassignment operation to remove the male genitals and create female ones can go ahead.

Deputy Chief Jack Beaton, who oversees human resources issues, said the department immediately took steps to educate other people in the workplace. "We're quite proud she stayed here and wanted to go through the transition here – that tells us the police service is on the right path," said Beaton of the service's progressive approach to the unique situation. Other employees have responded well to their co-worker's change in wardrobe and identity, said the person, though a unisex bathroom was designated for her use only.

- Even the most hardened detectives didn't know Const. Peter Cousens' secret after working with him for 28 years. But it became clear when Cousens, now known as Cynthia Cousens, waltzed into her retirement party last November wearing a dress and with her transsexual lover at her side. Cousens, 49, is the first transsexual who's ever served on the Toronto Police force, police officials said.

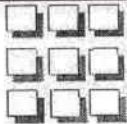
- Cousens, a 28-year veteran of the force, said in an interview. "This is something very rare for an officer to do in any city." Cousens spent most of his 28 years with Toronto's finest at 14 Division, one of the toughest, busiest precincts. "Most of my colleagues were very supportive after they found out," she said.

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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support ●

Volume 8, Issue 3

Houston, Texas

March, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## NTAG, TG GROUPS CONVENE AT NGLTF TRANSGENDER AGENDA MEETING

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Gender-various group leaders, and supporting organization heads met at the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force sponsored and hosted National Transgender Agenda Meeting. The Feb. 11 meeting, co-sponsored by PFLAG and HRC, brought together individuals from various organizations such as LLEGO (the national Latino LGBT organization), Lambda Legal group, the Gay / Lesbian Medical Assn, National Youth Advocacy Coalition, the Columbia University School of Public Health, the City University of New York, Family Pride Center, the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, the and the ACLU's National Office. Also attending was legal expert Chai Feldblum from the Georgetown University Law Center.

Gender groups were obviously well represented: NYAGRA (from New York), the Intersex Society of North America, FTM International, Soulforce, the Metropolitan Gender Network, TGAIN (Texas Gender Advocacy & Information Network) and most notably NTAG (the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition) were all in attendance. Curiously though, GenderPAC was missing in action on this discussion.

NTAG had the largest presence in the room and on the phones, with a total of ten members participating. Monica Roberts, Sarah Fox, Ph.D., Michael Gray, Chelsea Goodwin, Rusty Mae Moore and Vanessa Edwards Foster all made the trip to NGLTF's Washington, while Yosefio Lewis, Katrina C. Rose, Deni Scott and Dawn Wilson participated via phone.

NTAG had the largest presence in the room and on the phones, with a total of ten members participating. Monica Roberts, Sarah Fox, Ph.D., Michael Gray, Ph.D., Chelsea Goodwin, Rusty Mae Moore, Ph.D. and Vanessa Edwards Foster all



One of the 'breakaway groups' at NGLTF: (L-R) Robert Sember of Columbia University, Adam Tenner of NYAC, Vanessa Edwards Foster of TATS, Robert Schlittler of PFLAG National, Pauline Park of NYAGRA & Margarita Guzman of NGLTF discuss TG issues.

made the trip to NGLTF's Washington, while Yosefio Lewis, Katrina C. Rose, J.D., Deni Scott and Dawn Wilson participated via phone.

A wide number of topics were covered in the four-hour conference: Intersexed gender mutilation, transgender youth issues, health concerns, minority and recent immigrant transgender representation, reforming of the gender identity diagnosis, and private sector education and coalition-building. Obviously a large portion of the meeting dealt with legislation - especially pertinent to employment non-discrimination. From the polled sentiment, it was obvious that employment was the key issue among transgenders.

The logistics of the phone conference calls were the only kinks in the entire presentation. The meeting was overwhelmingly well-received, and many came away with a sense of laying groundwork for dynamic future. The usual time constraints were minimized by facilitator Deb Kolodny's deft adherence to the agenda and movement of the discussion. Most encouraging was the sense that virtually all participants were pretty much on the same page.

Feelings from the meeting were positive. "the meeting was a very good start to build alliances and learn more about what others are doing and just how many strong allies the trans communities

(Continued on Page 8)

## Unity Banquet Tickets Going Fast

Unity Banquet 2000 takes place on April 8, and tickets are going fast! The Westchase Hilton will be the site of our seventh annual banquet. The newly formed Unity Committee promises this year's banquet will be a most special one.

"This will be a night to remember," said Jessica Ann Redman, spokesperson for the group. "The event will kick off with a multimedia presentation celebrating the past six annual banquets, cocktail reception, door prizes, a seated dinner, a stand-up comic, music and dancing. The highlight will be the awards ceremony, honoring the outstanding members and supporters of this Gender Gifted Community."

The event is sponsored by the Unity committee and its members from HGDA, Tri-Ess, GCTC, CATS and TATS; and ticket prices are \$38 each.

"This year's function has been organized by the members of the Unity Committee which has representatives from each of the groups," said Desirée Ann Walton, Unity Committee facilitator. "Each year this event has grown. After last year's huge crowd, we wanted to bring our community the best event ever to launch the millennium."

### MEETING SCHEDULE

March 11	Feelings Meeting at: Desirée Walton's @ 3 PM
March 25	Social Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM
April 8	<b>Unity Banquet</b> Westchase Hilton-9999 Westheimer @ 7 PM
April 22	Social Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM

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If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 780-4282 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.geocities.com/tatspage>

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Unity Banquet is quickly approaching ... has everyone gotten their tickets yet? This looks to be the most memorable banquet yet, and the hype is fueling a lot of interest. Believe it or not, our little corner of this city is even garnering serious attention from those outside it! Much of the gay, lesbian and even straight community's interest in us can be traced to the Unity Banquet a couple years ago, when the banquet started pulling in those from beyond the T-world.

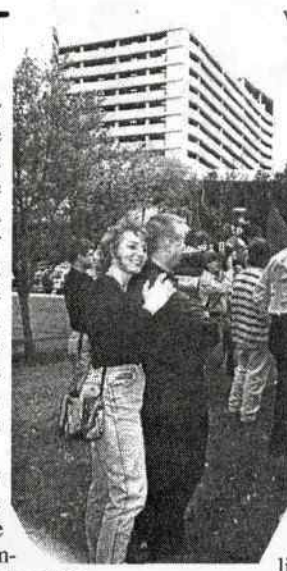
Lately, I've been approached by more than one person who's told me that 'as viewed from outside the community, the transgendered community is perceived as being where the drive, the excitement and the real energy is coming from.' Han-Net founder, Brandon Wolf, stated it best: "the transgenders are where the gay and lesbian community were twenty years ago" in terms of our push for rights and acceptance. While our own self-perception may vary, we somehow must be doing something right!

One of the things we have done right over the past couple years is that - as a community - we've started thinking and acting 'outside of the envelope.' Defined, that means we have gone beyond our normally expected routines to push further the limits of our consideration, participation and achievements. Tying back to the Unity Banquet, that's what the Apogee Award was created for two years ago - individuals who shone as a result of their over-achievements.

Mikhail Gorbachev was a global example of someone who went beyond the expected and took what was an unpopular decision to many of his countrymen - movement towards real peace. Détente was more than a word to Gorbachev. One vivid memory is his ride through New York City before the soviet breakup, when he left outside of his limousine to shake hands with the people of New York. That was a physical example of going beyond the envelope.

Our first Apogee winner, Councilmember Annise Parker, is another example. When the mayoral edict about non-discrimination in city hiring came up, she took extra effort to educate and push for transgender inclusion in the proclamation. It may not have been gained her favor with some of her gay and lesbian voter-base, and was likely viewed as risky by the uneducated straight community, but Annise stood firm.

Brenda Thomas, last year's winner, did likewise with her work for AIDS issues. In fact, Brenda has a chance to be a two-time winner by



virtue of going beyond that 'envelope' again this year: creation of TAIL: the TG AIDS Initiative League, and the visionary behind the Gender Center (HCDA's weekly meeting place.) TGAIN's Sarah DePalma has also, very quietly, worked behind the scenes to officially represent the TG community statewide in the Littleton case by submitting the Amicus Brief, and her work with the Texas Human Rights Fund's TG inclusion.

Others acting beyond the envelope include Jessica Redman, who has stepped up in a major way for the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus; going way

beyond what was expected by someone not even on the board! She was appointed the chair of their fundraising committee, and has provided some very beneficial input. The CATS group out of Brazoria is another example: they've taken the initiative to provide a more nurturing environment for those not receiving such from TATS. Chris Duffy and Kimberly Burnham have especially shown the time, and care, in looking in on one of our more emotionally tenuous members of the T community. Desirée Walton did likewise in the time spent counseling one of TATS' now ex-wives, Sandy Koenig; and helping her

In the gay community, Dan DiDonato has stepped up as an 'above-and-beyond' standout - not merely for his vision in coordinating the Exxon / Mobil Equality Rallies and subsequent dialog, but in a more subtle way by consistently and publicly supporting transgender inclusion in organization such as the Caucus, the Chamber and the Montrose Counseling Center's boards.

In a more social vein, Dan Bush and Joan Bray are a couple more who have annually hosted and underwritten the Valentine's Party at Dan's place. It's another vision that, in a fun way, brings the entire GLBT and straight communities together. In the guise of a party, we all get the chance to have fun, and also learn about each other by communicating. There are many examples in our community of people who go 'beyond the envelope.' Look around... there are over-achievers in our midst. Maybe you...?

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

- Jordana LaSesne**, Washington DC
- Gwendolyn A. Smith**, Bay Point, Calif.
- Katrina C. Rose**, Albert Lea, Minn.
- Sarah DePalma**, Exec. Dir, TGAIN
- Monica Roberts**

*for photos*

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# TEXAS HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION INCLUDES TGs

## TGAIN Press Release

**T**GAIN is pleased to announce that the Texas Human Rights Foundation (THRF) has voted to include transgenders as an official part of their mission statement.

"I first made contact with the THRF in the 1983/84 time period. At the time Gay Student Services was suing Texas A&M and the THRF did much of our legal work." Said Sarah DePalma, Executive Director of TGAIN. "This most recent contact came about as a result of their interest in the Littleton case. It turned out that we had many friends on their board of directors and the vote to include transgenders came without any prodding from us."

The Texas Human Rights Foundation is not affiliated with the Human Rights Campaign in any way. They provide legal counsel and refer-

als for the GLBT community and on rare occasions take on cases of special interest to the community. This vote makes the THRF the first statewide organization to include transgenders as part of their mission statement.

On March 30, Don Skipwith of the Texas Human

Rights Foundation and TGAIN Executive Director Sarah DePalma will be speaking at the



TGAIN Executive Director, Sarah DePalma

luncheon for the Bar Association for Human Rights. Their topic will be "Transgender/Gay/Lesbian marriages in light of the Littleton case."

In a related event, The Bar Association For Human Rights has announced that TGAIN Executive Director, Sarah DePalma will be the recipient of this year's "Advocacy Award." The formal presentation will take place on April 20. More details will be announced at a later date.

Congratulations go out to Sarah DePalma on this phenomenal effort - job well done!

# TRANSSEXUAL DANCE DJ JORDANA ASSAULTED IN OHIO

By Gwendolyn A. Smith

**J**ordana LaSesne, better known in electronica circles as "1.8.7.," was severely beaten following a performance in Kent, Ohio, on Feb. 22.

LaSesne was DJing that evening at an event called "Epiphany" at the Robin Hood club. On her way to the hotel after the show, she was assaulted, being punched in the face with so much force that she was knocked to the ground. Her assailant then continued to throw punches, and LaSesne blacked out. Her promoter, Chris Graves, and another individual chased this per-



Jordana performing at a show in Pittsburgh

son off after he attempted to stomp on her.

According to one report, there were other individuals parked in a truck in the area who claimed to be armed, and were planning to cause her further damage. It is likely that such individuals were working in tandem with the first assailant.

Further, an anonymous source familiar with these individuals claims that the group had planned "kill him and leave him there in the street."

Police did not arrest the suspect in the beating, Matthew W. Gostlen, but instead will serve him a summons to appear in court and only if he ignores the summons will they issue a warrant

for his arrest.

LaSesne survived the attack, but has suffered a broken nose and jaw, but has canceled all of her remaining tour dates. She is also contemplating an end to her career as a DJ and recording

artist, citing that her "spirit is broken," and that she no longer feels safe or protected.

She publicly transitioned in the electronica scene, and put out "sooper extra thanks" her second full-length album, "Quality Rolls," to all who expressed their support to her during her transition.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO HER FANS... FROM JORDANA LA SESNE

**F**irst off I want to thank everyone who emailed, called or posted here to express their concern for me. I am slowly getting around to returning the calls and I should have answered most of the emails and posts to me by next week. The prevailing sentiment seems to be one of great sadness that this happened and that I shouldn't let this stop me from living, DJing, making music, whatever.

Here is the problem. I have over the last two years kept a secret. I kept it because I always wanted to keep a good attitude and keep things positive. That is that I have been receiving a slowly escalating amount of hate email, voice-mail/phone calls, even a strange package sent to my address and a few outright death threats.

I've been told I was blacklisted from Philly and a few other places and that "these people owned me".

I have been fearing something of this nature for some time and had recurring nightmares of being shot outside a club/rave while sitting in a car lot. This incident came damn close and while I would love to go on and show them they can't win, they already have won. The scene I am apart of now bears little resemblance to the one of years ago. The attitude and the music has changed from a thing of beauty to an aggression driven nightmare. Because of the attacks I am now psychologically and emotionally scarred for life. I cannot sleep at night now and haven't been able to since the attack. To even do some-

where again seems unreal to me without an armed guard. I am still shaking thinking about what happened and what *could* have happened. The fact remains that my life outside of the scene, where no one knows my past, is relatively normal. The scene as it exists here in America, while full of people like yourselves who offer nothing but love is also filled with a small but virulent pocket of hatred and utter ignorance and intolerance no doubt fueled by too much Jerry Springer / Chris Rock / Howard Stern / Dr. Laura and other such rubbish. I thought that by ignoring the haters within the scene and just proceeding without giving in to them would make it all go away. Instead what

(Continued on Page 7)

# KENTUCKY LOBBY DAY 2000 — MONICA'S NOTEBOOK

**M**y first trip of the millennium found me on a Louisville-bound flight February 1 to participate in the first-ever Kentucky Lobby Day on February 2. It was being conducted by TransFair Kentucky and I was honored to be invited to participate, along with the famous 'Transgendered and Proud' banner packed with my luggage.

The goals of this lobby effort were to educate Kentucky legislators and lobby for the passage of HB 7, the statewide Fairness bill, and lobby for the defeat of HB 70 and HB 485. HB 70 is a Reicher-sponsored bill that would give churches an exemption to civil rights law and allow them to discriminate against any group that they objected to when they offered church-owned facilities for public rental. HB 485 was another Reicher-sponsored bill that they introduced January 28 that would wipe out all Civil Rights legislation in Kentucky and deny cities the right to enact civil rights laws. Translation- a frontal assault on not only Fairness but civil rights law period.

I arrived in Louisville about 5:30 PM to a sight that I haven't seen or experienced since January 21, 1973...SNOW ON THE GROUND! Anne greeted me at the gate with a big hug and quickly updated me on the current situation. Dawn had been laying the ground work along with Fairness by continuous lobbying of the Kentucky General Assembly ever since the session started in January. Like Texas, the Kentucky General Assembly only meets every two years, but with two differences: they meet in even numbered years and they only meet for 90 days as opposed to the 150 days the Texas Legislature meets. We sped over to Anne's house where Dawn, Angela, and Dr. Sarah Fox were waiting for me. Sarah had driven down from Columbus to help take part in the lobby effort also. We all greeted each other with big hugs and prepared to head over to Fairness Headquarters at 7PM for a Lobby Day training session. We arrived at Fairness headquarters and were greeted by FM Chester and Carla Wallace, and then proceeded to polish up our lobbying skills for the next two hours. After the lobbying training session was over, we made the pilgrimage over to Impellizzeri's for their delicious pizza and heavenly garlic breadsticks and then headed back to Anne's to get some sleep for the big day.

February 2 dawned cold and sunny as we prepared to hit I-64 for the drive to Frankfort, Kentucky's state capital. We left Louisville at 8:30 AM with Terri Hambaugh following us in her car. During the drive Dawn and Anne told us the interesting story about how Frankfort became Kentucky's state capital. Kentucky became a state in 1792, and there was a heated debate between Lexington and Louisville about which city would become the state capital. The debate became so heated that the cities quickly formed militias and were about to march on each other and fight it out. A compromise was worked out in which the capi-

tal would be equidistant from both cities, and the crisis was defused. A few moments later we arrived in Frankfort and at the Capitol building which is very close to the Kentucky River nestled in some picturesque hills. We had a quick meeting with the Fairness folks in a hearing room to coordinate strategy and set up the lobbying teams. Dawn, Terri, and I made up one team while Anne, Sarah, and Angela made up the other team, and off we went to lobby.

The rules of the Kentucky General Assembly are different in terms of lobbying also. You have unhindered access to the state senators (there are 38 of them), but in the Kentucky House (100 members) you must have an appointment and there are secretaries who act as gatekeepers at the entrance to the hallway floor where House members have their offices to ensure that this policy is followed. No one gets in there on the House side without a pass. In addition, when you are in the Capitol building you cannot lobby legislators past the Capitol Rotunda on their way to the House and Senate floor. If you do try it, you get 60 days in jail plus a fine!

My group had three people to see. State Senator Gerald Neal of Louisville, State Rep Arnold Simpson of Covington, and State Rep Jesse Crenshaw of Louisville. We started with Senator Neal, and this visit was the most fun I've had lobbying since the Tom DeLay visit in 1998. He was already up to speed on transissues and told us so, and just asked us what was the reason we were up there. We explained our objections to HB 70 and HB 485, and when we mentioned HB 485, his eyes lit up. The bill has I mentioned had just been filed 72 hours before our lobby day, so many legislators were unaware of its existence. We promptly handed Senator Neal a copy and when he read it, he mildly said "So they went there!" He then immediately picked up the phone and demanded to speak to Rep. Gross Lindsay, the Co-Chair of the Joint Judiciary Committee they were on. When the secretary replied that he wasn't in his office and asked if he wanted to leave a message, he replied "Tell him I want to talk to him about that anti-civil rights racist piece of crap bill". He then made a second call to find out when the Joint Judiciary Committee was meeting (February 3) and told us that if that bill made it out of committee and the House it was DOA in the Senate, and he would do everything possible to kill it in committee. So we hit a home run on our first visit! We then hustled to try to see Rep Jesse Crenshaw, but he was in a committee meeting, so we tried to see our next target, Rep Arnold Simpson. He was also not in his office, so we went back to the second floor where all of the committee meeting take place to see if we could catch either of them coming out of the hearing rooms. We didn't see either of them in

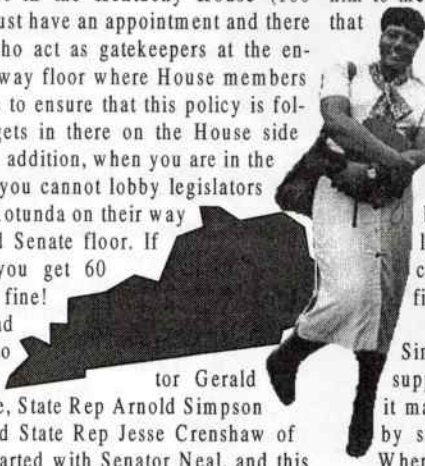
their respective committee hearing rooms, so we attempted once more to try to catch them in their offices. We checked with the gatekeeper secretary once again and after she responded that the two reps were still not in their offices, we decided to break for lunch since it was now 11 AM.

We joined the rest of our lobbyist and the Fairness gang in the cafeteria and discussed how the day had been progressing. A photographer approached our table from the Lexington Herald-Leader and asked if he could take some pictures of our group. He also called his bureau chief so that he could set up an interview and we also asked him to meet us at 1 PM in front of the Capitol so that we could take a group photo with the banner I brought from Texas. Moments later Angela Bridgman showed up and announced that she had secured a snap appointment with one of their targeted legislators and they immediately left to keep it. Unfortunately Anne had just bought her lunch and had to reluctantly leave it behind. We then left to try to catch up with our targeted reps and finally got in to see Rep Arnold Simpson.

We spent 30 minutes with Rep Simpson who told us that he would support us on HB 7 and in killing HB 485 if it made it out of committee, but stunned us by saying that he was voting for HB 70. When we pointed out that it was setting a dangerous precedent, he replied that he didn't think that was the case and the Rep Stein's bill (HB 7) would override that, and he felt that the amendments made to the bill would ensure it's passage. After thanking Rep Simpson for his time, we checked with the gatekeeper secretary to see if Rep Crenshaw was in his office, and when we were told once again that he wasn't in his office, we went back to the cafeteria. When we arrived we found out that Rep Susan Johns of Louisville wanted to talk to us and would be joining us shortly at the lunch table.

We had a lively discussion with Rep Johns and she commended us for having the courage to come to Frankfort to lobby and educate lawmakers on transissues. She asked some questions to clarify her knowledge on our issues and we gave her some of our handouts that further explained the definitions. Dawn and I then left to retrieve the blue banner for our 1 PM photo shoot which was rapidly approaching. We met the photographer in front of the Capitol to take the photo and then went back into the Capitol Rotunda to await the reporter from the Herald-Leader. After 30 minutes we gave up and decided to go to the House gallery to watch the Kentucky legislature in action. When we got there we saw the Louisville and Lexington police forces sitting in the House gallery in uniform. We found out why 30 minutes later. Louisville House Rep Eleanor Jordan (who's the only African-

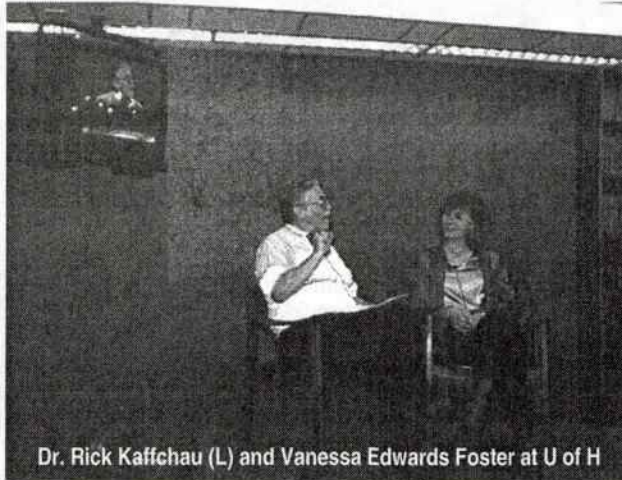
*(Continued on Page 6)*



## TS Does TV At UH

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

It was another panel discussion – but this time, with a twist! It wasn't really a panel ... more of a presentation since I was asked to solo this one. It was also a brief meeting: we had just under ten minutes to cover everything. Most unique was that



Dr. Rick Kaffchau (L) and Vanessa Edwards Foster at U of H

the class presentation was being taped for air-play on a cable access television channel! (Thus the title...)

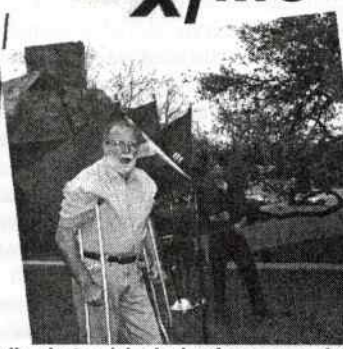
The class, "Lifestyles in Transition," taught by Dr. Rick Kaffchau at the University of

Houston's main campus, dealt frankly with issues such as courtship, relationships and sex; while giving correlations from anthropological, psychological and medical perspectives.

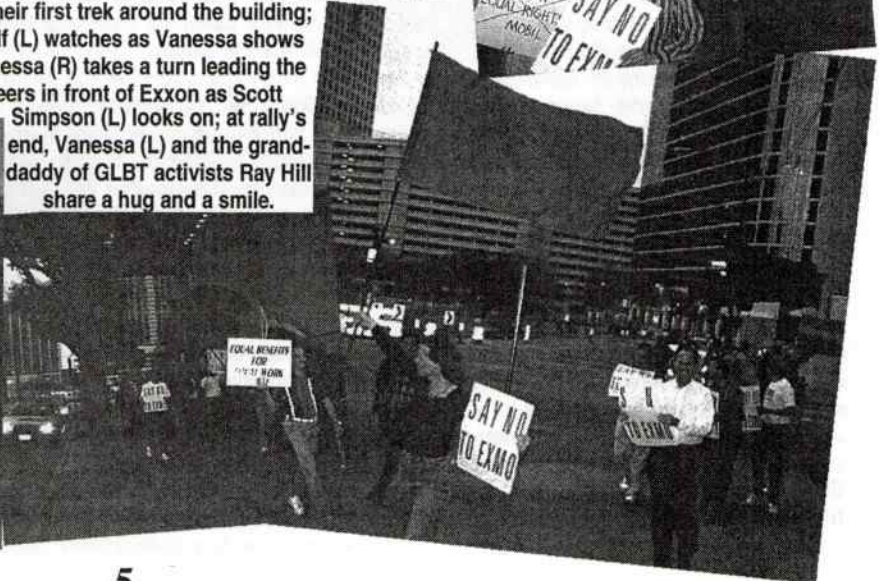
Even though the panel was a last minute schedule, it went like clockwork. Much of this was, no doubt, to Dr. Kaffchau's expertise in front of the camera; and practiced presentation. Nervous as I was before stepping up on stage, I became oddly relaxed once the interview began. Though Dr. Kaffchau credited me for the quality of the presentation, much of this was a

re-assertion of his disarming manner. With luck, this will also become a regular on the TS panel circuit. A special thanks to Dr. Collier Cole for referring Dr. Kaffchau to us, and to Dr. Kaffchau for calling!

## Equality Rally : ~~EX~~/Mo Protest, Part II



Equality Rally photos (clockwise from upper left) Sean Carter (L) speaks while Deborah Bell seemingly prays for divine guidance as Jimmy Carper bears the banner; Ray Hill (L) speaks while Jimmy Carper bears the flag; State Rep. Deborah Danburg speaks to the crowd; (at right) grim-faced protesters Clarence Bagby, Bill Agosto & Vanessa Edwards Foster march through downtown Houston; Nearing the protest site, a defiant Vanessa shows the flag; (below) the protesters take their first trek around the building; Brandon Wolf (L) watches as Vanessa shows the sign; Vanessa (R) takes a turn leading the protest cheers in front of Exxon as Scott Simpson (L) looks on; at rally's end, Vanessa (L) and the granddaddy of GLBT activists Ray Hill share a hug and a smile.



# MISTAKE OF THE APE RAPERS

By Katrina C. Rose

Versed bookstores are great. Sometimes you find stuff you need and can't find elsewhere. Sometimes you find stuff you didn't even know that you needed.

Allan Sherman's "The Rape of the APE" is such a book. I ran across a copy of it at a library book sale in Conroe before I moved. I was familiar with Sherman for his 1960's records (he's best-known for "Hello Mudduh, Hello Fadduh" and not as well-known for producing the first album by a then-unknown stand-up comic named Bill Cosby) but I'd never heard of this 1973 book published by Playboy Press - subtitled "The Official History of the Sex Revolution." APE, incidentally, stands for the 'American Puritan Ethic.'

Some sections are worth looking at for the headings alone: 'Censorship: The Immaculate Misconception', 'Damn the Torn Pillows, Full Speed Ahead!', and 'Ten Things to do While Waiting For Armageddon.'

Some portions of the book follow a pair fictional, generic, semi-immortal humans - Sap and Lala - from creation through to the present day. Readable? Yes. But the most effective portions of the book by far are Sherman's direct social critiques. Some are factoids embellished with commentary:

After labeling Christine Jorgensen's 1952 gender transition a "five-star scientific triumph" he added, "many Americans disapproved, but it must be said in Miss Jorgensen's behalf that she has conducted herself since like a perfect lady - more so than a lot of American women who were born with vaginas." (I seriously considered including that quote in the brief that I submitted to the San Antonio Court of Appeals urging a reconsideration of the Littleton v. Prange decision.)

1958, Sherman noted, saw the introduction of Ford's Edsel, "a rolling anthology of mistakes. Of all the mistakes, the greatest was right up front - where the Edsel presented to the American car buyer an enormous, yawning vagina, complete with chromium-lined labia majora." Believe it or not, the target of this section's jab was men. Ford "well knew that the American automobile is a phallic symbol (the American male ego has always demanded a car that is longest and most powerful), not a symbol of femininity." (Logic, then, would dictate that Christine Jorgensen drove an Edsel rather than a Mustang. But, Sherman didn't address that - one of the few failings of the book.)

Some factoids were able to stand on their own as monuments to the ludicrousness which they documented. A highlight of 1959: "The film Anatomy of a Murder had no trouble ob-

taining the censors' approval, in spite of the fact that producer Otto Preminger had included in the sound track a word never before heard in motion pictures: underpants." A lowlight of 1970: "a nationwide survey by CBS Television News disclosed that if it were up to the American public, six of the ten amendments constituting the Bill of Rights would be made illegal." What more could one say about that? I guess he could have mentioned which six - but that wouldn't make it any less disturbing.

In one section, 'The naming of the screw,' the word 'fuck' appears, literally, 504 times in succession. "Somewhere around number 327," he wrote, "a funny thing happened: The word ceased to frighten me. May the same thing happen for you, if it hasn't already."

It happened to me 25 years ago when I heard George Kennedy tell a bratty kid to "Go fuck a duck!" in the classic Clint Eastwood flick "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot."

Unfortunately, it has never happened for far too many people. The book's brief final section, 'Moral Chop Suey: An Hour Later You're Horny Again,' hints at the APE's impending re-animation in light of the then-recent Supreme Court decision declaring that each community could decide for itself what is obscene. Even without that preface, simply knowing that this is a 1973 book caused me to have a sense of dread when I came to the end of it.

After all, I know what came afterward: Happy Days, the Bee Gees, the non-passage of the ERA, Urban Cowboy, Ronald Reagan, Michael Jackson, Jerry Fallwell, Michael J. Fox, Jesse Helms, Falco, George Bush, Smurfs, Michael Dukakis, New Kids on the Block, Rush Limbaugh, Milli Vanilli, George Bush: TNG, Barney Frank, Log Cabin Republicans, Riki Wilchins, Tom DeLay. And, of course, Allan Sherman's death the same year that Rape of the APE was published.

"How splendid it would be if our glorious leaders could get their minds out of the gutter and concentrate on the orifices of the body that are really making the trouble: the mouths that tell the lies, the ears that will not hear the truth, the eyes that see only what they choose to see."

Hopefully by now you've figured out what I believe that the mistake of the APE-rapers was. Can anyone look at the current plethora of anti-Constitutionist scams - 'persecuted' Christians, the newly-asserted religious right to kill homosexuals, 'majority rule' abrogation of the establishment clause, the 'right' to convert non-Christians - and still need to ask?

No one needs rapin', but some APEs need killin'. The APE that Sherman named should have been killed when we had the chance.



## KENTUCKY LOBBY 2000....

(Continued from Page 4)

American woman in the Kentucky General Assembly) was sponsoring a bill (HB 331) that would allow a local option to destroy guns confiscated in crimes. There was a crime law passed in 1998 that had a provision tucked into it that called for all confiscated guns to be sold at a state auction, which the Louisville and Lexington police forces were opposed to. The two departments had basically exploited a loophole in the law and refused to turn over the guns to the Kentucky state police for the auction.

The fun started not long after we took our seats. Anne Casebeer mentioned a German proverb that proved prophetic. The proverb states: "Those who like laws and sausages should not watch either being made."

First up was HB 70. Rep Eleanor Jordan made a short speech on the House floor which eerily echoed the points that Dawn and I had made in our visit with Rep Simpson. When she finished, there were several minutes of back and forth debate between her and a Reicher, and when the bill came up for a vote it passed 87-13. We thought it would be close, but that margin stunned us. Score one for the Reichers.

Then the attention turned to Rep Jordan's HB 331. Rep JR Gray of Benton introduced an amendment that if passed, would gut Rep Jordan's bill and force the Louisville and Lexington police departments to turn over all the guns for state auction within 60 days, saying that he was "tired of Louisville and Lexington thumbing their nose at the state legislature". Rep Jordan tried a parliamentary procedure to kill the amendment, but when the parliamentarian ruled against her, she reluctantly withdrew the parliamentary motion. That touched off a nasty two-hour debate heavy with sarcastic shots that ended with Rep Gray's amendment being passed. In essence, the 'law and order' Reichers thumbed their noses at the police that they claim to represent and obeyed the National Rifle Association. The House then voted on HB 331, which overwhelmingly passed over the objections of the Lexington and Louisville House members. The police and those of us in the gallery were dumbfounded. This bill was predicted to be a slam dunk for passage but instead was turned inside out and killed. The police were justifiably angry about the turn of events and may seek their revenge in the elections later this year. Eleanor Jordan is running for the US House of Representatives later this year versus incumbent Anne Northup and judging from what I saw on the Kentucky house floor she would be an excellent addition to the US House. We decided to call it a day and head back to Louisville since I had to get up at 6 AM the next day to fly back to Houston.

Although we didn't get the results we wanted on HB 70, we have set in motion events that we hope will lead to the defeat of HB 485 and passage of HB 7. We have educated many Kentucky legislators and destroyed some misconceptions about transpeople in general. I just wish that more peeps in Kentucky that are GLBT would have joined us at that lobby day. Perhaps they will do so at Kentucky Lobby Day 2002.

**OPEN LETTER FROM JORDANA**

*(Continued from Page 3)*

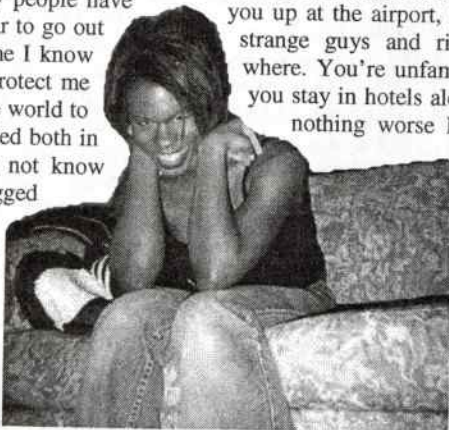
has happened is that they decided to make it so I couldn't ignore them. Many people have said I have come to damn far to go out like this but at the same time I know that the only one that can protect me is I. I have no one else in the world to do that and this was illustrated both in the incident which you do not know about where I was mugged randomly on the way to catching a taxi to the gig, by myself because Doug at Liquid Sky who was promoting the party in this case did not follow proper procedure as outlined in my contract which ironically, he sent out to dozens of promoters which states that I am to be escorted at all times between hotel and venue. It also didn't help that my (ex) boyfriend Roderick decided not to meet me or even show up at the club that night...so I was mugged, for a \$100. I thought this would be the worst thing that would happen on the tour and then the attack happened on Tuesday. All this drove home the fact that I have no one to protect me but me.

There have been many things which happened in the last two years both good and bad but there is a consistent thing in the scene that seems to be prevalent and that is that many people could not get the head fully around the fact that my reality and how I am seen in society at large is very different from my past.

This is why Doug probably thought it would be fine for me to just get taxi by myself late at night in New York City. Which is why I have been put into countless other dangerous situations that no other woman would be put into. DJing is a crazy lifestyle. Once late last year while in Chicago I was picked up by these three shady guys who were the promoters for the party. I was taken to a room which already looked as if someone had been in it and I when I called Doug at Liquid Sky and I asked, "what do you know about these guys, are they safe?" I was told "yeah they're safe." well they ran off in the middle of the night. I never played any party and they never paid for the hotel room so the hotel called the police when I went to check out. When the police came it

was found that these guys were LATIN KINGS GANGSTERS. They called the police on their own event and then fled town, apparently going

to New York. I felt VERY stupid when the police said, "Let me get this straight, you fly around the country alone, your booking agent doesn't investigate these people who then pick you up at the airport, you get into a car with strange guys and ride off to god knows where. You're unfamiliar with the area and you stay in hotels alone. Miss, you're lucky nothing worse has happened to you."



**Dance DJ / Recording Artist, Jordana LaSesne (aka: 1.8.7.) in a happier moment before the Feb. 22 attack in Kent, Ohio. She currently contemplates quitting the deejaying 'scene.'**

well now it has. It is now time to move on. To make a clean break, to REALLY start a new life and make a clean break. I tried to have the best of both world but could not. God I couldn't even get people to stop using "1.8.7." The reality is my life outside of the scene is on page 57. The people in the scene

mostly are on page 10 or maybe 20. The neanderthal piece of rubbish who assaulted me obviously never left page 2. I can never expect everyone to be on the same page and well rather than pretend that everyone is and be suprised on occasion when I find out that they aren't I'd rather just start over and live where everyone only knows from page 30 on. I know this doesn't much sense and I am reluctant to say what I am going to do right now since I am still processing everything that has occurred in the last week or so. One Tuesday or Wednesday I will issue a very concise statement, which sums up what I plan to do. Right now I just need more time to think about things and talk to a few people. I do not want to make any rash, irrational decisions just now. I have fought hard up until now. First to survive, then to thrive and succeed.



**Jordana hands out albums of her music at a show in San Francisco. Regardless of her transition, loyal fans loved her music.**

sent. I've fought for respect amongst my peers. I've fought to keep music free and to keep a spirit of mutual participation and helping one

another be productive in the face of crass consumerism. I've fought those that would want me dead because I survived. I've done most of this just by going about my business as I saw fit. Lest you think I am being dramatic here trust me, you don't know the half of the stuff I've had to put up with INSIDE THE SCENE. It is very idealistic to say, "keep your head up, don't let them win Jordana" and the idealist in me says to just keep going. Unfortunately the pragmatist in me says that I've fought hard enough and nothing, no music, no "scene" is worth losing your life over. I came damn close the other night and I do not wish to be a martyr. I've done a lot that I didn't have to and if I had it to do all over again I have to say I probably would have done things quite differently. I'd have left music for a time and maybe come back later from the beginning again as the new person I'd have become with no excess baggage. The fact is this attack happened because I chose to be completely open and honest to my fans and public. Unfortunately the world isn't ready for that kind of honesty. I'm not sure where to go from here

but I do know that the cities tour is now cancelled, and I've got to seriously think if I can ever go and dj again. My brain is scrambled right now. Maybe in the long term I may leave music but in the short term I have a half finished album that I'd like to complete even if it remains unsigned. (I'll just release it as free mp3s if I have to). The music isn't going to stop anytime really soon but things are now very different. I believe the two incidents, the mugging in New York City last Friday and the premeditated attack in Kent on Tuesday, while unrelated, happened so close together for a reason. To tell me, "Jordana, it's time you began living a normal life and leave this crazy world behind. You've done your part and given enough. It is time to take care of yourself and your needs." when I am ready I will let you all know what I plan to do.

Still recovering, still hurting inside and out but slowly forming a plan...please pray or meditate or concentrate whatever energy you've got to see that he assailant(s) are brought to justice. It doesn't look good right now.

Still recovering, still hurting inside and out but slowly forming a plan...please pray or meditate or concentrate whatever energy you've got to see that he assailant(s) are brought to justice. It doesn't look good right now.

*All photos and the open letter for this story culled from Jordana's website at: [www.jordana.co.uk](http://www.jordana.co.uk)*

## Ambiguous Genitalia Leads To Dallas Infant's Death

By Gwendolyn Ann Smith

In an evolving case in Dallas, Texas, a mother has been charged with killing her own child on December 8, 1999, simply because the child was born with ambiguous genitalia.

The baby was three days old, and died of blunt force trauma to the head, as well as strangulation. [editor's note: it has since been found that the child had also ingested ground glass. Investigators speculate it was fed to the child in order to induce internal bleeding; and cause a less suspicious death.]

Investigators were initially told that, while Gangaudaya Kavali, the father, was at the store, and his wife, Aruna Kavili, was in the bathroom, a stranger entered the apartment, grabbed the newborn from a couch and threw him outside.

Dallas police have concluded that this was not the case, noting that their investigation has shown that the newborn was dead only three hours after his parents brought him home from the hospital. Further, physical evidence did not support the couple's account.

Investigators from Child Protective Services, who have custody of the parents 2-year-old daughter, have indicated that she appears to have knowledge of her siblings death.

Detectives won't speculate whether Aruna Kavili allegedly killed her child because she was ashamed, or because she was pressured into doing so by her husband.

Mr. Kavali has not been charged.

*If you assume that there's no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope.* - Noam Chomsky

## TRANSGENDER AGENDA....

(Continued from Page 1)

have," said NTAC's Yoseño Lewis. "For the most part everybody played well together."

However, it wasn't totally devoid of conflict. "There was a tense moment when Nancy Buermeyer brought up the friction between NTAC and HRC," added Lewis. "Michael Gray was quick to move to reduce tensions and offer an olive branch for reconciliation."

"We got their attention," opined Sarah Fox, "and I think they realize we are a force with which they must negotiate."

"Obviously, HRC is intimidated by our main goal: TG inclusion in all proposed GLB legislation," stated Dawn Wilson, interim chair of NTAC. "There is no possible halfway point or compromise, and 'we're not ready yet' or 'we need more education' is no longer an excuse. An organization is either for civil rights for all or it isn't."

"I'm not so sure the needs of the transgender community and the needs of HRC are necessarily in conflict, Fox continued. "I don't think HRC is interested in excluding us from legislation, so much as keeping their contributors happy. There may be ways to do this and to advance transgender rights at the same time. I sincerely hope so, anyway!"

However, the NTAC team "did splendidly!" stated Fox. "We were extremely cohesive and well coordinated, and we played off of each other like a tightly choreographed ballet company."

Overall, the meeting was truly a success.

NGLTF Executive Director, Kerry Lobel (ever so humbly), said it was "a great start" ... a sentiment echoed by one of the other co-sponsors, Cynthia Newcomer on PFLAG National.

The National Transgender Agenda Meeting was, in fact, so well-received that a decision was made to convene another similar meeting in the coming months. NGLTF Political Director, Rebecca Isaacs, gave her blessing - and an underwriting commitment from NGLTF - to proceed with plans for another conference. The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force as a group, and individually Kerry and Rebecca, and especially Legal Director, Blake Cornish and staffer Eleni Zulia deserve major kudos for having the vision, and putting forth a tremendous effort to make it happen.

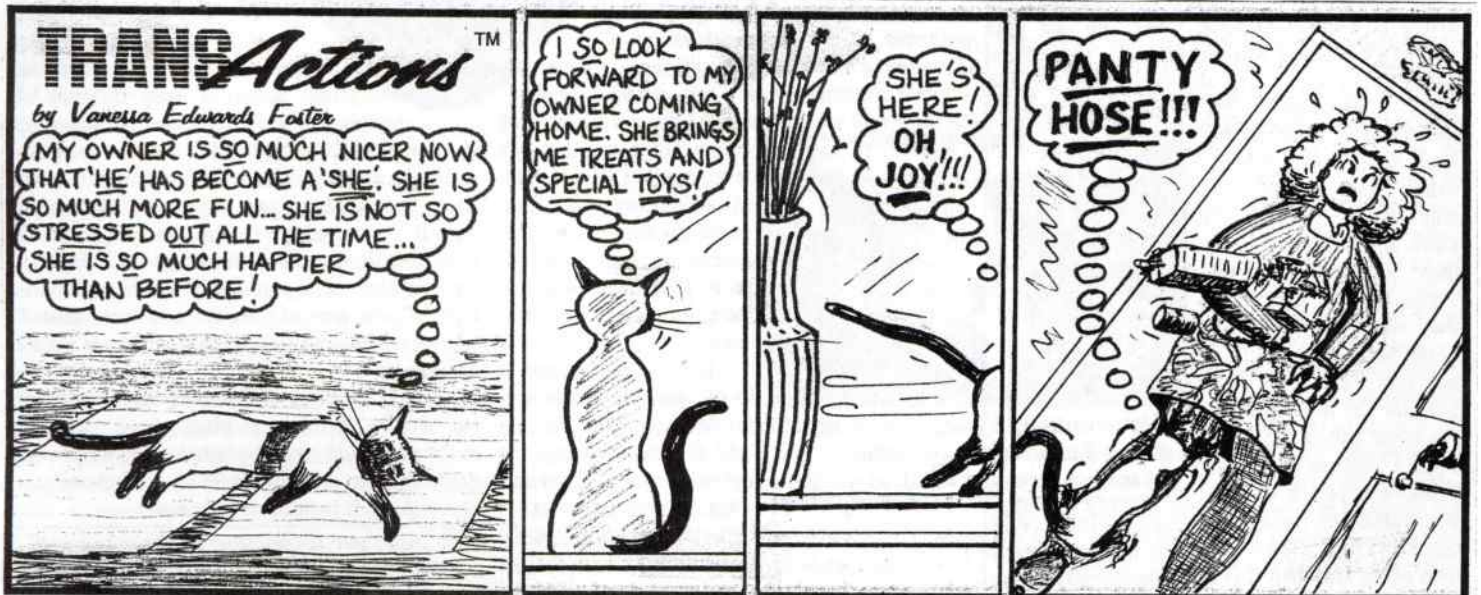
PFLAG National also deserves recognition for their role in making this a reality. PFLAG was instrumental in initiating the meeting and additionally ensuring that NTAC had a spot at the table - even though they had no national charter yet. Many thanks to Cynthia Newcomer, Tom Cornell, Ron Schlittler, T. C. Duong

and especially Executive Director, Kirsten Kingdon for giving us a voice. It was a truly laudable effort from organizations renown for their commitment and integrity.

The contacts made and shared from the various organizations are a wonderful beginning to what is hoped will be a true, broad-based coalescing of the national efforts. We've laid the first few important bricks in the groundwork needed to proceed ... now we move on to the next level.



Leaving NGLTF, the NTAC group (L-R) Vanessa Edwards Foster, Michael Gray, PhD, Chelsea Goodwin, Rusty Mae Moore, PhD & Sarah Fox, PhD



**TATS Tidbits**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• Lookin' for things to do this month? Walking The Dead continues playing this month until March 18. The play documents the life of a young girl named Veronica, who later becomes a lesbian named Ronnie, and finally a man named Homer. The play even has a bit of TATS interest in it ... our own transguy, Sidney Pye, was the continuity consultant for the title character played by Becky Byars. Show times are Fridays and Saturdays, beginning at 8 PM, at the Atomic Café - 1302 Nance (in the Warehouse District.)

For those who may not know where the Warehouse District is, take I-10 going east from I-45 and take the Nance & McKee St. exit. At the stop sign take a right on McKee, then an immediate right on Nance. The Atomic Café is one block down, on the corner of William & Nance. Tickets are \$15 and benefit Unhinged Productions, a non-profit gay/lesbian themed theatre company.

• If you are heading to see the play, realize you'll also be in the neighborhood to check out Fotofest 2000: Discoveries of the Meeting Place - a photo exhibit by the photojournalist of the transgender community, Mariette Pathy Allen. Mariette, of course, is famous for her first book, "Transformations" - a sensitive look at the transgender subculture.

Her show runs from March 3 through April 3 at Erie City Ironworks at 1302 Nance, just a couple doors down from the Atomic Café. If you time it right, there will be a reception that Mariette should be attending on March 11. You can see



the photo-artist and her work, then catch

the play. And if you're looking for something after, the Last Concert Café is catty-corner across the street from Atomic Café, with live music, beer & wine! Bonus!

• ROCHESTER, NY - A former transvestite prostitute who served 25 years in prison was acquitted of murder after re-trial for the bludgeoning and strangling of a businessman in 1973. John Duval, 47, freed last spring on the basis of new evidence, broke down in tears and his relatives sobbed and whooped "hallelujah" when jurors cleared him of the killing.

In the absence of physical evidence, Duval and fellow prostitute Betty Tyson were convicted on the basis of confessions they insist were beaten out of them by a rogue detective, and on the testimony of two teen-age runaways. They were sentenced in February 1974 to 25 years to life in prison. One of the teen witnesses, Wayne Wright, recanted his testimony in 1997, saying he had lied about seeing Duval and Tyson with the victim. Prosecutors then came upon a buried synopsis of a police interview with the other teen, Jon Jackson, in which he denied seeing Duval or Tyson with the victim - contrary to 1973 testimony.

• ALBANY, NY - A Roman Catholic priest in upstate New York is undergoing a sex change, the first American priest ever to do so, the New York Post reports. Father Dennis Brennan, sent a letter to parishioners revealing that he had been diagnosed with "gender dysphoria." "It was never a matter of choice," Brennan wrote. "I had always been conscious of my inner female gender, although I had managed to hide or bury it." Brennan, a priest for 33 years, said in the letter that he had begun living as a woman and would eventually undergo gender-reassignment surgery.

Veronica was a sweet little girl in a party dress. She grew up to be a hot lesbian called Ronnie. Then, Ronnie became a man named Homer.

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"Dennis Brennan was a very conservative guy who I always considered to be very much from the world of the 'tight concept' about what the priesthood was about," an unnamed priest told the Post, which also quoted a parishioner of Brennan's as saying the priest is "a disgrace." The Albany diocese said that it opposes Brennan's decision. Brennan has left the active ministry and has applied to leave the priesthood entirely.

• Transgendered employees of the city of Atlanta may soon be protected from job discrimination on the basis of their gender identity, if recently introduced legislation in the Atlanta City Council passes into law. The ordinance, introduced by Council member Michael Bond, would amend the bill of rights in the city's charter to include gender identity, age, color and disability in non-discrimination provisions.

"It is in the best interests of the City of Atlanta to treat all individuals fairly and equitably regardless of gender identity," stated Councilmember Bond in a recent press conference. Bond said he introduced the measure, which was initiated by Mayor Bill Campbell's administration, because "it is just the right thing to do."

• The Pride Parade is coming up June 24, and planning will begin at the next Unity Committee meeting on the next T community float for this year's parade. Monday, Mar. 6 at 7PM, at the Gender Center, 239½ Westheimer (behind Suzanne Anderson's.)

(Continued on Page 10)

**Mariette Pathy Allen**  
upcoming exhibition

solo show  
**Gender Frontier**  
Mai Manó Gallery  
The Hungarian House of Photography  
Nagymezo utca 20, Budapest  
June 1-June 30  
Reception June 1

group shows  
**Manly**, curated by Grady Turner  
Art in General  
79 Walker Street, NYC  
February 5-April 1  
Reception February 5, 6-8 pm

**Fotofest 2000:**  
**Discoveries of the Meeting Place**  
Erie City Ironworks  
1302 Nance, Houston, TX  
March 3-April 3  
Reception March 11

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**TATS Tidbits**  
(Continued from Page 9)

• GRESHAM, Oregon – Brian Peters is a classical music fan, an aspiring computer ace and a junior at Sam Barlow High School. Peters is also gay; and sometimes likes to dress like a woman. The 17-year-old says it makes him feel pretty. Now Peters' cross-dressing, along with some gay buttons and T-shirts, has gotten him into. For nearly two weeks, administrators screened his attire daily; and some of his choice in clothing and accessories are now banned.

This has created ripples of debate and controversy at the high school in this Portland suburb. Some teachers and students are suddenly talking about free speech, homophobia, gay rights, dress codes and in-your-face outfits of all kinds. Portland's gay community, including the local chapter of Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is closely watching what happens here.

• A bride-to-be suffered a shock the night before her wedding when she discovered the groom, dressed in her wedding gown, in the arms of his best man. The future husband and wife were celebrating at separate parties when the bride's friends asked to go see the wedding dress at the couple's home. When they arrived, they found the gown-clad groom in a passionate embrace with the best man. The wedding has since been canceled.

• LOS ANGELES - Geovanni Hernandez-Montiel is a "man who dresses like a woman." Because of that, reports say the 21-year-old native of Xalapa, Mexico, says he was raped at gunpoint by police officers when he was 14, beaten by a mob in his homeland, kicked out of school and shunned by his

family. Now, after being arrested crossing illegally in San Diego, Hernandez has garnered national attention from gay rights and civil rights groups as he has applied for political asylum.

Activists say the unusual asylum case could yield a precedent-setting court decision. In a worst-case scenario, if a court decides against Hernandez, it could create new obstacles for foreigners seeking asylum. Judge Kenneth Bagley rejected Hernandez's asylum bid in 1996 and the Board of Immigration Appeals affirmed that decision. Bagley acknowledged Hernandez was abused in Mexico, but ruled that Hernandez failed to show the abuse stemmed from Hernandez's status as a homosexual. Instead, the judge ruled that Hernandez's cross-dressing was something he could change; in essence, Hernandez could stop the abuse by dressing like a man.

• New Zealand lawmaker, Georgina Beyer, said she felt belittled during an interview with talk show host Roseanne and asked that it not be aired. Ms. Beyer reported that Roseanne did not stick to the agreed-upon questions in their Jan. 29 interview. Beyer would not detail the offending questions but described them as "tacky."

She refused to sign a consent form allowing her interview to be aired, and she wrote to the producers, requesting that the interview be taken out. "I understand that as the first transsexual (lawmaker) there will be a lot of media interest and I am happy to talk about my journey, but I felt belittled," she said. Last November, Beyer became the first transsexual ever elected to national office.

• WELLINGTON, New Zealand — inspired by the country's first transsexual mayor and member of parliament, Georgina Beyer, a Canterbury University student has successfully had the rights of cross-dressers and transgender students recognized on campus. The student, a post-operative M2F who is

now a lesbian, provided evidence of e-mail abuse to the university council which she received from another student. The e-mail was full of profanities and stated people like the student did not deserve to live. The sender threatened "to abuse and kick the shit out of you ... as long as I live, I will be your biggest nightmare".

The unnamed student claimed having Beyer as first a mayor, then parliament member helped give her inspiration. "People still see us as being drag queens," she said. "The reality is we go to university, we can become mayors and MPs. Does it matter that we also happen to be transsexual?"

• Has anyone seen the Pedro Almodovar movie, 'All About My Mother'? It's been enjoying a long run, especially for an European indie film. The is getting



raves once person's performance. The woman who plays the transsexual friend of the main character. One reason for the raves is that the actor playing the TS character is a genetic female. As you can see from the picture, she does manage a pretty convincing look: feminine with a hint of the facial angularity and the broad shoulders. One wonders whether her acting ability matched the visual. All I can say is "you GO, girl!"

• TOKYO, Japan — Chiya Fujino's "Natsu no Yakusoku" was selected as one of the recipients of the 122nd annual Akutagawa Literary Award — the most prestigious Japanese award, equivalent to the American Pulitzer. The 37-year-old Fujino is "an up-and-coming male writer who elected to live as a woman after he suffered from gender identity disorder." Kudos!

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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support ●

Volume 8, Issue 4

Houston, Texas

April, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## TATS HOLDS PANEL DISCUSSIONS

### First Unitarian Church Hosts First Panel

By Vanessa Edwards Foster  
**F**irsts ... that's the best way to describe TATS' first meeting at First Universalist Unitarian Church. While it was our second panel before a church group, it was our first before a mainstream church. It was also our first panel discussion on a Sunday - immediately following services, no less! It was also a first in the diversity of the make up of the panel: we had our first crossdresser on the panel - Julie Friedmann - and our first spouse on the panel - Desirée's ex, Paula Parker. Completing the very diverse panel were Desirée Walton, intersexed at birth, and moderator Vanessa Edwards Foster, a pre-op transsexual.

panel format. Paula Parker's story was especially compelling to the churchmembers in attendance. Her story of the difficulties in dealing with her family concerning Desirée's decision, and her grappling with her own emotions was truly one of the highlights of the panel for the audience. Desirée expounded further the difficulties in



First Unitarian panelists: Vanessa Edwards Foster (L-R), Desirée Walton, Paula Parker & Julie Friedmann

The diversity of the panelists was a refreshing addition to the

dealing with her family concerning Desirée's decision, and her grappling with her own emotions

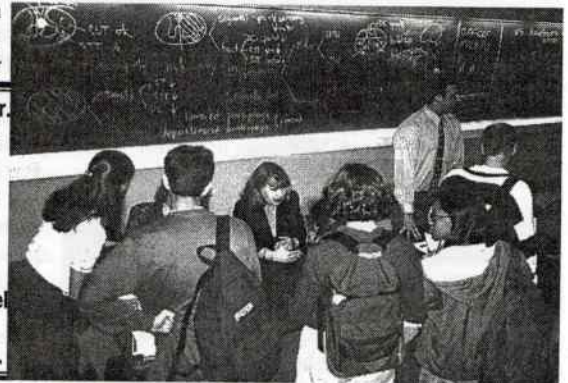
(Continued on Page 5)

### Baylor College of Medicine Learns "TG 101"

By Vanessa Edwards Foster  
**T**ATS again produced the third annual panel on transgenderism at Baylor

Basinger. As I was running slightly late,

The students of Dr. Basinger's class crowd around Jessica Redman (C) & Julio Friedmann (R) immediately following the panel presentation at Baylor on Mar. 21.



College of Medicine, March 21. The pre-med students in Human Sexuality elective were, as always, very attentive and quite interested in the subject. It's been an ongoing labor of love and education for our little group, and it's always very comforting to have a captive audience arranged by one of our most supportive and understanding educators in the state: Dr. Scott

Dr. Basinger had already managed to corral both our panelists, Jessica Redman and Julio Friedmann, and was animatedly chatting with both; giving them a bit of a pre-panel cool down. Lord knows it always helps to have panelists' nervousness dispelled before the presentation! It certainly worked, as there was no hint of nerves or

(Continued on Page 5)



TATS' Monica Roberts (R) and Anne Casebeer present Dawn Wilson her Trinity Award at the IFGE banquet.

### The Road To IFGE (or What Monica Did On Her Vacation)

By Monica Roberts  
**A**fter a busy period at work that covered the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, New Millennium Eve (or New Century Eve for you purists), and spring break it was time for the Air Marshal (my nickname in the T-activist world) to take a week of vacation and get a little R&R. But you TATS boys and girls know that my time off is always going to end up with some political activity involved in it anyway, so here's the story. When Dawn Wilson was nominated for and eventually won her Trinity Award I was told by her and Anne Casebeer that my attendance was mandatory when the award was being presented, so I bid one of my 2000 vacation weeks to cover the IFGE convention. So

(Continued on Page 3)

### MEETING SCHEDULE

- April 8 *Unity Banquet*  
Westchase Hilton-9999 Westheimer @ 7 PM
- April 22 Social Meeting at:  
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM
- May 13 Feelings Meeting at:  
Desirée Walton's @ 3 PM
- May 27 Social Meeting at:  
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**W**ell, it's official: this year's upcoming Unity Banquet is a resounding success. Last reports from Unity Committee facilitator Desirée Walton stated that the banquet is sold out! Not only that, but interest in the event has widened over the years to include not just the local T community, but those from around the state, and also those in our local GLB and straight communities!

One of the things that made this event even more special is the number of people participating in this year's event. The Unity Committee is comprised of members and leaders from all the various groups, CATS, HCDA, GCTC and even Tri-Ess.

It's a far cry from just three years ago, when only 40 attended, interest was waning and there were pronouncements of the banquet's certain death. The following year saw attendance shoot through the roof with more than 120 attending – doubling the previous record. This year, we're selling out venues with 175 seats! The difference? Participation.

This participation isn't just limited to banquets, though. Circa 1997, activists were – for the most part – personae non-grata in TATS and the other groups. People just didn't want to hear about it. A year later, TATS sent four new lobbyists to DC. A year after that, TGAIN pulls in 52 to lobby in Austin. Even now, three current members of TATS – Monica Roberts, Jessica Redman, and yours truly – are nominated for the NTAC Board of Directors, along with former Houston resident and TATS activist, Katrina Rose. To top it off, none other than Kerry Lobel pronounces Houston as being the epicenter of transgender activity for the nation.

Because of our wide-scale activism, things have changed for us nationally. Legislatively we're not much improved; but within the gay and lesbian community and organizations, we've made great strides over the past few years. Both locally and nationally, some of these same influential and established groups have become our biggest backers at very opportune times.

A recent example is the inclusion of NTAC at last month's TG Agenda meeting. There were a number of groups who questioned why we should include NTAC, who is not a nationally chartered organization. According to Courtney Sharp, it was at the behest of PFLAG National, especially Kirsten Kingdon, Cynthia Newcomer and Tom Cornell, that NTAC was allowed seats at the table.

Vanessa & Mary Boenke (R) at IFGE



Some of you may remember the names Kirsten Kingdon and Tom Cornell from our November issue of TATS and the local PFLAG inclusion. These same names that played prominent in NTAC's inclusion were the same folks who were indelibly impressed with the job the panel did back in October. In essence, the participation of our panelists helped facilitate NTAC making its

subsequent 'big splash' on the national activist scene.

Our panel discussions have also taken off in a big way this year. We're now seeing more participation, and more diverse participants, than ever. Additionally, the reviews are coming in more positive with each panel. As a result of the feedback from these, even more panels have become available; and our educational horizons have expanded greatly. However, without that diversity on the panels, it's obvious we would not have nearly the glowing responses we get from our more varied panels. And it's the panelists who make it work!

And where are we without the concern and active participation from our community? One need look no further than our own back yard, when Houston TG Social Club died on the vine when no one else was willing to step in and keep it alive. You can also look at what befell the Boulton & Park Society in San Antonio when the lack of participation caused rifts within the community, and eventually caused it to implode.

So here's to all the folks in our community who've participated in capacities large and small. What Desirée has been able to do, by getting a large portion of the community involved, is phenomenal. The results are that the success isn't as a result of any one person, but everyone involved in making it happen. Active communities tend to feed off of, and inspire one another. By being a 'doer,' you have likely just provided benefits for the community to reap in the years to come.

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

**Penni Ashe Matz, Boston, MA.**

**Sarah DePalma, Exec. Dir, TGAIN**

**Julie Friedmann**

**Cairistona Douglas**

**Monica Roberts**

**Lilly Roddy**

*for submitting humor*

**Lauren Robison, suburban Baltimore MD**

**Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV**

*for submitting photos*

**Julie Friedmann**

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If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: **moonflowrr@aol.com**

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at: **http://www.geocities.com/tatspage**

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# HOW I STARTED OUT AS A LEADER AND ENDED UP BURNT TO A CRISP

By Sarah DePalma

Those of you who have seen Vanessa lately may have noticed that "vacant" look in her eyes. People who attempt to converse with me on the phone often receive mumbled and incoherent answers. Anyone who has ever spoken to Phyllis on the phone knows she has an unwritten time limit of three minutes before she wants to hang up. All of these symptoms are the result of what I call "Leadership Disease." Some people refer to this as "burn out" but based on my own experience I know it is deep down, tired to the bone exhaustion. How your leadership ends up this way is the subject of this "guest rant."

Any time I talk about the trials and tribulations of being a so-called leader, someone immediately pops up to remind me that no one put a gun to my head. I "volunteered" for this job so I should just quit complaining. This is a wonderfully pat answer that allows the speaker to totally avoid their self responsibility or responsibility for anyone else.

The ironic part of their argument is that these same people are often the first individuals to level criticism about how things "should" be done. To paraphrase Henry David Thoreau, they are willing to stand on the shoulders of others in order to keep their hands clean.

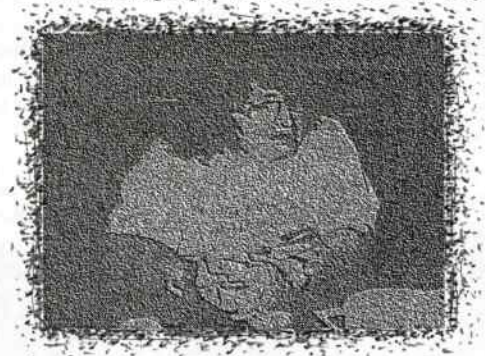
There is another segment of the community I call "the takers." These are the people who take the good advice and friendships offered by organizations like TATS and offer nothing in return. They run through their transition at warp speed, run like the wind to get their SRS, and immediately disappear into the woodwork. They couldn't care less if the support organization continues to exist for others.

Let's not forget the elitists. You know who they are. "I'm a transsexual not a cross dresser. I'm one of the chosen few." Elitists are easily recognizable because of how often they will say, "That person gets 'read' too often. I can't be seen with her." The few. The selfish. The transgendered.

Thankfully not everyone reacts this way. There are people who believe they have no right to criticize unless they are willing to be part of the solution.

There are people who believe the love they take should be equal to the love they make.

There are people who remember how they



appeared at the start of their transition and feel an obligation to repay the advice and friendship they received along the way.

My friends, these people are called leaders.

There is nothing mystical about leadership. It is simply to do what needs doing in the hope that others will follow their example.

Leaders get into trouble when they start expecting that others will follow their example. People are basically lazy and will do as little as they can without injuring their reputation. Expecting people to voluntarily follow a leader, even if they know that supporting the leader is in their best interest, simply will not happen.

The real frustration for leaders is that quite often they see and understand the size of the task at hand. They can visualize the number of hours it will take to accomplish the task, how many people will be required for the effort, all with the full knowledge that they will have about the quarter of the help needed for a successful outcome. Even worse, leaders know the same people who chose not to participate will verbally attack them for the inevitable lack of results. It's a vicious cycle and it has to stop.

Let me make this crystal clear. The Littleton

decision has changed the landscape in ways the critics have not yet begun to understand.

Do you eventually plan to marry? Forget it. If you have the "wrong set of chromosomes" you will not be allowed to marry. Those transsexuals who decided to woodwork believing they would be safe in the closet are in for a terrible shock. Their marriage is almost certainly invalid.

Sorry. If you choose the closet, you lose.

Your leadership has been cautioning for years that our only safety is in numbers and in the willingness of those numbers to mobilize on their own behalf. While many people have heard the warnings and chosen to work on their own behalf, the vast majority of transgenders have chosen to take their chances in the closet.

The result is that your leadership has attempted to compensate for the lack of numbers by using their own money and increasing their own tenacity and dedication. The Littleton case means that the workload will increase dramatically. We need your help.

I won't waste your time here explaining the many ways you can help. Vanessa has been explaining those issues for many months in this column and I'm sure she will continue to do so.

However, I want to leave you with a warning. Please spread this far and wide, but especially to those friends you know who have chosen to disappear into the woodwork.

There is no safety in the closet. Christie Littleton did everything she was supposed to do and the courts still slapped her. You must become proactive and you must do it immediately. Your marriage, your right to sue as a surviving spouse, and even your right to inherit are in deep trouble. The activist leadership of the transgendered movement is becoming exhausted at exactly the time they need their energy the most.

To quote Harvey Milk, "Come out, come out, wherever you are." And I add to that, or forever forfeit your right to bitch when your rights totally disappear.

## THE ROAD TO IFGE ....

(Continued from Page 1)

far so good. You also know it wouldn't be a proper Monica Roberts trip without some last minute drama tossed in it, so here's what happened to me this time. I wasn't planning on leaving for Louisville until Monday the 20th because Anne, Dawn and I were going to drive to DC from Louisville and the HRC dinner protest in Houston was still on at that time which I was helping to coordinate. When that protest was cancelled, Dawn called me Wednesday morning and asked if I could speak at the BlueGrass Belles meeting that was scheduled on the 18th. I had promised to speak before their group but

couldn't get my schedule coordinated with their meeting date until now. I moved up my travel plans to leave Houston on Thursday the 16th. I wanted to get my hair done before I left Houston, so I tried to set up an appointment with my hairdresser Sadat Busari.



Monica Roberts (R) at Serpent Mound with the girls from Kentucky & Ohio, including Cathy Platine (L) and Sarah Fox (2nd from right).

Sadat has been doing my hair ever since I began my transition five years ago and she has done such a great job that I will not let anyone else near my hair!

Well, Sadat wasn't able to get to me that Wednesday because I found out that she was in the process of taking continuing education courses in preparation for getting her license renewed. So I tried to hold out until 5 PM Thursday in the hopes of catching her in

(Continued on Page 6)

# Julie's First Panel: Views From The Fun Front Of Public Education

By Julie Friedmann

(Note: Julie is a Houston TG activist and long time member of the Tau Chi Chapter of Tri-Ess - ed..)

Recently, a friend of mine asked me to participate in a pair of panel discussions about the gender community. The events were for two very different groups: one was for a Houston Unitarian church after Sunday services, the other was for first-year students at Baylor College of Medicine. I was free to come en femme or in mufti. She thought that I would enjoy talking to people about my personal experiences as a heterosexual crossdresser and my take on the gender community.

Was SHE ever RIGHT!! I had a ball. In fact, I'm so amazed by the experience that I don't know where to start. Immense satisfaction! Loads of fun! An opportunity to dress! An opportunity to talk to everyday folk in a safe and supporting context! My own podium and pulpit!

I can't recommend the experience enough, and I hope the information below inspires you, gentle reader, to take part in similar opportunities when and where you are able. For the record, I am not 'out' to my neighbor, my co-workers, and to most of my friends. One of the joys of this experience is that I was talking to total strangers who would never see me again. This was part of the joy and liberation in the experience for me.

## THE FORMAT

Each panel had a similar set-up. I represented heterosexual crossdressers. My friend, Vanessa Edwards-Foster, represented MTF transsexuals. A third panelist represented intersexed individuals, Desirée Walton at the church and Jessica Redman at Baylor, those born with both male and female genitalia (I was surprised at just how many intersexed people there were in Houston). One panel also had the ex-wife of the intersexed girl, Paula Parker. We were unable, unfortunately, to have any of our FTM brothers on the panel, but not from lack of trying. We each gave a 5-10 minute talk on who we were, our experiences, and how we thought about ourselves and our representative groups. This was followed by extensive question and answer periods.

I can't overemphasize what a great format this is. First, we all learned about each other, and helped to cement our bonds within the Houston gender community. Second, it allowed the audience to instantly recognize how different we were from each other. This clears up a LOT of confusion early on, and also demonstrates how different issues and needs of the gender community and the gay/lesbian commu-

nity are. Many people were surprised to discover that I had been happily married for years, and that my wife knew about Julie before we were married. It felt nice to make that point clear.

The long Q&A period was critical in this regard. Both panels ran overtime, and dozens of people came up to the panel afterwards to ask even more questions. This kind of interest and enthusiasm is terrifically rewarding. Even better, it handled the most important questions up front, and each of the panelists could respond to the question in their own way.

## THE CHURCH

Since this gig was Sunday at noon, I had plenty of time to prepare. I wore a conservative

black top and pistachio stirrup pants. However, I DID bring a few large-format photos (11x17 color xerox of snapshots) of my male-self.

The group we spoke to was very warm and varied, including gays

and lesbians, parents of gays and lesbians, and the full range of age, race, and experience. There were black, Asian, and Latino members of the church, plus teen-agers, single moms, doctors and professionals, and retired couples.

The panel was organized Lindley Doran and Stewart Chatnik of the church's rainbow committee, as well as three members of PFLAG, John Kellett and Sue & Jim Null. They also took pictures and recorded us. It is important to say that they ASKED all members of the panel before taking any photos or tapes. This was important from a security standpoint; I felt that I was always treated with the utmost courtesy, concern, and respect.

The questions were wonderful. One question was about spousal support. I was able to proudly say that Tri-Ess had a long history of supporting spouses of CD's, and that we've learned over the years how to improve that help. My experience CERTAINLY contrasted with the ex-wife of the intersexed girl. She had absolutely noone to talk to who could relate to her experience.

Her sense of loss was keen, and although she was still good friends with her ex-husband, there was a great deal of difficulty and pain in her response.

Another question concerned the sexual aspects of crossdressing. I told the questioner that, although I wasn't certain, I was pretty sure that right then I wasn't having sex.

This is part of the joy of talking to a group. I went on to explain that while there are individuals who crossdress chiefly for fetishistic reasons, many did not. For me, crossdressing was about identity, self-perception, and expressing myself. After all, what's between your ears is more germane than what's between your legs. After the panel, a psychologist in the audience approached us and thanked us deeply. For her, we had really clarified this issue, and that she had finally, after 20 years of counseling, "gotten it." Mission accomplished, and off to the shops.

## THE MEDICAL STUDENTS

What a change an audience makes! Almost everyone in this audience was highly educated and driven, interested in learning, and between 20 and 23 years old. WOW!! That meant all the difference in the panel, both the kind of questions we got and the level of interest. I had come straight from work, so I spoke to the audience as my male self. I brought large-format images of both my male and female self, so that the audience could relate a bit with how I sometimes choose to present myself. While there were certainly differences in my presentation, this made a lot less difference than the people we spoke to.

The doctor who organized this course said that we were always his highest-rated class (no surprise there - Jerry Springer move over)! He started the

course a few years back when a student confided something important - she was very uncomfortable talking about certain things with patients. She realized that her own, limited background kept her from being the best doctor she could. The class, as a result, was aimed both at educating the students as well as making them more comfortable with the range of problems they might encounter in their work.

If you can, you've got to do this. It felt so good to talk to the doctors of tomorrow, all of whom were eager to hear what I had to say. It felt good to think that future crossdressers and gender benders of all sorts might benefit from my talking to these kids over my lunch hour. Talk about your high side -

(Continued on Page 8)



Julie Friedmann (R) addresses questions at her first panel, before the First Unitarian Church. Also on the panel were Desirée Walton (L) & Paula Parker (C).



Julio Friedmann (R) answers questions after the panel presentation at Baylor College of Medicine.

**FIRST UNITARIAN PANEL....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

was truly one of the emotional highlights of the panel for the audience. Desirée underscored further the difficulties in family transitions; emotionally pointing out her fears of losing her children, never to see them again. Desirée and Paula were not the only two in the room near tears during this point in the discussion.

Additionally, Julie's story brought to reality a little-known and scarcely seen segment of the community - heterosexual crossdressers. The audience murmured and gasped in amazement when Julie brought forth a visual aid for presentation: a handsome recent photo of his alter ego, Julio, complete with goatee. He also touched on his fortunate full acceptance by his spouse, Lara, and showed the compromise made to attain her acceptance - his rather hairy arms!

As always, the reaction from the panel audience was glowing. "You made [a] positive, moving impression on the Church members and friends in attendance," said First Unitarian's organizer, Dr. Lindley Doran, also of Rice University's Counseling Center.

"My husband and 3-4 others had to leave the presentation after half an hour for another church meeting and they all regretted it," replied Sue Null, also of PFLAG. "We have spoken to three others who attended personally since then

and they have given you all rave reviews." On the issues presented, she stated "that the most difficult phenomenon to understand was Julie [the crossdresser on the panel], maybe because she doesn't fit in any preconceived box."

One attendee was initially reluctant to attend the program, for fear it might be pornographic. "It wasn't easy for me to muster the courage and attend this meeting - to open my mind and heart to this topic," stated Jeannine Bergt. "I was rewarded. Each speaker spoke with such honesty and self respect [that] I felt myself relax." She continued, "I will be more alert to the pain of prejudice because these people spent an afternoon at my church. Thank you." This testimonial is as real as it gets; and the perfect answer to the question of whether these panels are worthwhile.

As with other attendees, Ms. Null raved about the group. "You opened a lot of minds - and provoked more questions!"

Other comments were even more positive: "I learned that gender is not just two absolutes but different levels in between. That is very freeing" ... "I appreciated the "wife's" point of view." ... "Nice to find successful, functioning transgendered people." ... "We are not all created equal. Some are more blessed." ... "Keep on going! It's been good!"

Louisiana, was unable to attend. Nonetheless, we proceeded as usual; and as the pictures showed, had the class crowding around afterwards to pry out some



**The first ex-husband & wife team do a panel discussion: Above, Desirée Walton (standing) talks on her transition as Vanessa Edwards Foster (L), Paula Parker (second from right) and Julie Friedmann listen. However, Paula (below standing) comes back to steal the show at the March 19th, First Unitarian Church panel with her own revelations about Desi's 'alter ego.'**



**Desirée (C) and Paula look on as Vanessa (L) fields a tough question at the March 19 First Unitarian panel.**



and simply "WONDERFUL presentation!" "I think our goal of increasing knowledge and sensitivity towards TG persons was definitely advanced - although it is also obvious to me we all have lots more to learn." Dr. Doran added. "You all are courageous, thoughtful and captivating people and speakers, really and truly," she continued. "You should do this more often!"

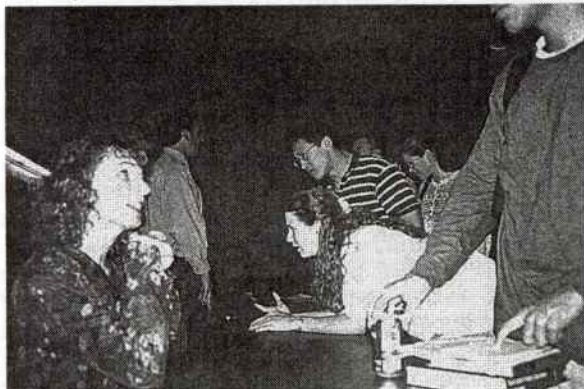
Indeed, that is our goal!

**BAYLOR LEARNS TG 101 ....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

discomfort in the presentation whatsoever.

This year, I was trying to bring in more diversity for the panel; again with an intersexed-



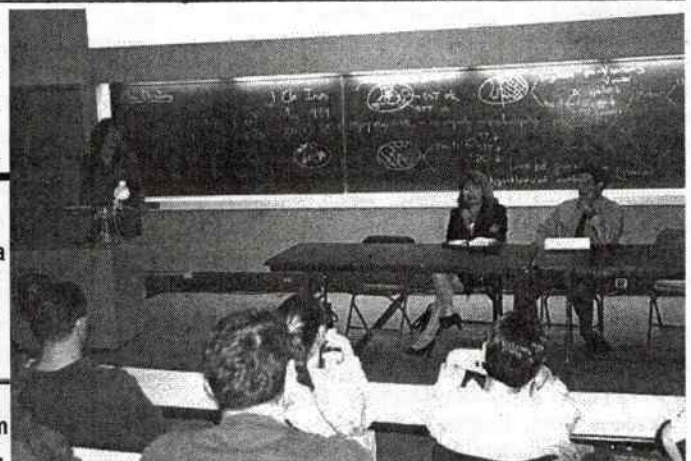
**At right: Jessica Redman (C) fields a question as Vanessa Edwards Foster (at podium) and Julio Friedmann concur with her answer.**

**At left: Vanessa (L) fields questions from the Baylor students, as Julio (standing at left) fields a few of his own.**

at-birth transsexual (Jessica) and a first - a heterosexual crossdresser (Julio). Unfortunately, our fourth panelist - a female-to-male from

more answers to their questions, and to get a closer look at those of us characters comprising this curious phenomenon.

Jessica garnered a few laughs from her description of growing up an all-state tailback in



Pennsylvania, as well as her analogy of comparing the elation of completing sex reassignment surgery to 'buying a new car.' To which, yours truly quipped, "yeah, you want to drive it around and show it to your friends!" We were allowed a few occasions of levity.

*(Continued on Page 8)*

**THE ROAD TO IFGE....**

*(Continued from Page 3)*

the shop and then speeding off to the airport to catch my 6:45 PM Louisville flight. To complicate things I needed to get Vanessa her pass to travel to DC for the convention and the HRC meeting. I finally had to give up and travel to the airport since Sadat hadn't returned home yet and it was too late for me to get my hair done and make that flight. However, I didn't leave the apartment until 5:40 PM and ran into a traffic jam on the Beltway between I-10 and 290 that slowed up my progress toward the airport to the point where I was in serious danger of missing the flight. I got to the airport at 6:35, stopped by the Will Call desk and left Vanessa's pass and a map in an envelope, and frantically headed toward the checkpoint. I set the security alarm off and had to get hand wanded and pat searched, and when that was done I frantically sprinted toward gate C-34. I made it to the gate just as my co-workers were about to take the final paperwork down and close the door, so they quickly took my pass and tossed me in a first-class seat. I finally got a chance to exhale as the plane pushed back from the gate moments later and took off for Louisville.

We got to Louisville 20 minutes early at 10 PM, so I had to amuse myself while I waited for Dawn and Anne to pick me up and take me over to Lambda Sigma Delta House. Since my last trip, Dawn purchased a 4 bedroom 3 bath 80 year old house that overlooks a cemetery with the world-famous transgendered gingko tree (I kid you not!). This tree is changing gender, and it's kind of amusing it's right across the street from a house full of transgendered people. Anne was in the process of moving to LSD House because she had to put her parent's house up for sale recently, so she was a little down about moving out of a house she had resided in since childhood. I got a chance to meet the other residents of LSD House when I arrived. Karen Hayes is a 23 year old who has a wicked sense of humor and a drop-dead gorgeous 6 footer who had just graduated from college and was now holding her first post-collegiate job as a lab tech. (for some reason she thinks she doesn't pass...NOT) Dianne Lampert was the other resident of LSD house who works in the computer industry, as does Dawn.

We spent Friday relaxing and watching the first round NCAA Tournament games as Dawn razzed Anne and Dianne because of Louisville's and Indiana's first round tourney defeats. (Anne graduated from Louisville, Dianne is from Indiana, and Dawn is a huge UK basketball fan). I spent most of that day working on the speech that I was going to deliver to BGB, and after writing 3 pages, Dawn and Anne suggested I take a break and we took off to one of our now traditional hangouts, TGI Fridays, where we had some of our usual long philosophical conversations.

Saturday arrived and I was still trying to finish my speech in time for the 7 PM BGB meeting. I now got a chance to meet another BGB member, Caitlyn Lemmons. Caitlyn is another interesting person that I immediately liked. We share a passion for history and Caitlyn even does World War II reenactments. I ended up riding in Caitlyn's 'Urban Assault Vehicle' as she calls her SUV to the BGB meeting site, a Unitarian church in downtown Louisville. I got to deliver my speech, which was on 'Transactivism and Persons of Color' and when the meeting was over we went to TGI Friday's where I sat by Dianne, Terri Hambaugh, Terri's SO and Caitlyn. We ended up in a free-ranging discussion that covered multiple topics.

We then went to the Connection, a downtown gay club that has a huge dance floor, a video bar, a piano bar, a bar where male dancers perform with a fireplace in it, and a theater where the drag shows are done that reminded me of the Baton in Chicago. This drag theater has sit-down tables and a bar in the back. I was with Caitlyn and Dianne and we opted to wait in the piano bar for the rest of the BGB gang. After an hour passed and we didn't see our BGB gang, we went to back to LSD House and crashed.

Sunday I was quietly thinking to myself about how long it had been since I'd been to Columbus, since I was less than 150 miles away and thinking about Dr Sarah Fox and Cathy Platine. Well, Dianne must have been reading my mind because she invited me to ride up with her to Ohio on Monday morning to Serpent Mound, where I would get an opportunity to meet NTACer Susan Davis. Susan was about to go to Wisconsin to have her SRS and she was going to have a Wiccan ceremony at the Mound to mark her final passage to womanhood.

The Mound was built by ancient Americans 900 to 2000 years ago and has the shape of a snake uncoiling. The interesting thing about the Mound is that if you draw a line from the head to the tail it lines up exactly with Polaris, the North Star. The snake's undulations line up exactly with the sun's positions during the winter and summer solstices at sunrise and sunset on those days. (One of those ancient wonders that make you go Hmmm...)

Dianne and I took off that morning with light rain patches dogging us until we crossed the Ohio River which forms the boundary between Kentucky and Ohio almost an hour later on the outskirts of Cincinnati. We met up with Kelly there and piled into Kelly's car for the rest

of the journey to Serpent Mound. Dianne had downloaded a map and had a copy of the e-mail from Sue which laid out the details for the meeting and the ceremony. My eyes lit up when I saw two familiar names on that e-mail: Sarah Fox and Cathy Platine!

We got to the mound about 11 AM which is a Ohio state park located outside of Locust Grove, Ohio. It is hilly farming country with winding two lane roads and a stream running by it. We decided to kill time by climbing the observation tower and taking a look at the Mound. Ten minutes later another car arrived carrying Cathy, Jaliza, Sarah and Sue. I climbed down from the tower as Sarah and Cathy looked at me with a stunned, surprised look on their faces, and then we ran and hugged each other! Sarah's first comment was 'You sure do get around!'. I introduced myself to Susan, and after we took some group photos, Sarah and I went for a walk



**Monica (R), Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) and NGLTF's Exec. Dir. Kerry Lobel (C) share a laugh just before IFGE's commencement presentation.**

to discuss NTAC business while Susan and the rest of the gang performed the ceremony starting at 12 Noon. When it was over Dianne, Kelly and I said our good-byes and headed back to Kentucky.

Wednesday morning Dawn, Anne, Janet and I piled into the infamous Windstar and headed east on Interstate 64, destination Washington DC and the IFGE convention. Back at

IAH the repercussions of my hasty exit from Houston were now endangering Vanessa's trip. I forgot to leave a buddy pass authorization letter in the envelope and that caused some problems for her. They finally let her board the flight for DC so that she could attend the HRC meeting with Michael Gray. We discovered that for some reason HRC is a little intimidated by little old me and Dawn. We decided to use that to our advantage. They were expecting me and Dawn to come through the door of HRC headquarters raising hell at 2 PM, but at that moment the Windstar was just west of Charleston, West Virginia. We drove through the picturesque mountains of West Virginia and finally crossed into Maryland about 5 PM. After a photo op at a rest area, we pushed on to DC and our rendezvous with Michael and Vanessa at LaPanatteria in Bethesda. (the Official Italian Restaurant of NTAC) We got there, discussed what happened at the meeting and after dinner said goodbye to Michael and made our way to Virginia and the Crystal City Hilton, the IFGE hotel so that we could check in. After forcing Vanessa to go get some sleep, we went to the bar where we ran

*(Continued on Page 9)*

# IFGE Awards Trinity to Wilson, Boenke, Barreto-Neto Tau Chi-Tri Ess' Jane Ellen Fairfax Wins The Virginia Prince Award

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

IFGE's most recent convention was a notable one – and not simply for the awardees. This year saw an array of impressive speakers as well as, arguably, the best crop of award winners IFGE has chosen to-date.

The International Foundation for Gender Education held its 14<sup>th</sup> annual affair in Arlington, VA; just across the Potomac from the nation's capital. Originally, the NTAC / TATS contingent had traveled to the convention to do a bit of light lobbying and attend a meeting with some of the staff at HRC. Other than Michael Gray, Alex Fox and I attending HRC's meeting (of which you'll read more later), the convention was so impressive and well-attended that we all hung around to take in the various workshops and enjoy the speeches.

The convening ceremonies, addressed initially by IFGE Board Chair, Pam Geddes in drab, led into the presentation of the featured speakers: NGLTF Executive Director, Kerry Lobel, making her first appearance at the event; and Kirsten Kingdon, Executive Director of the National Office of PFLAG.

Lobel spoke first about NGLTF's commitment to the transgender community, and the need for our community to take a similar stand and support gay, lesbian & bisexual rights as well. She repeated the commitment that NGLTF made "to all the big cities, and all the small towns, [that NGLTF] will be there to push for equality and change." In a stirring moment, Kerry mentioned the promise NGLTF made, and its results. "Without exception," Kerry began, with emotions cracking her voice, "in every small town I went to, someone came up to me – some transgendered person came up and said to me, 'I'm fulfilling the promise.'"

Lobel even touched on the benefits of that promise kept by the T folks; relating how one late night making a flight connection in Houston, she saw a familiar face: "this vision of Amazonian loveliness" at the ticket counter. Lobel gave 'props' to our own Monica Roberts for upgrading her to first class, and also reserving an entire row for the late night flight back.

Immediately after, Kirsten Kingdon addressed the group. Kingdon admitted she has "long been an admirer of Kerry; and in fact, I am sad to see her leave. So this is a much more emotional day for me." She also confessed, "it takes a lot to get this stoic Norwegian teary-eyed."

Kingdon touched on the work PFLAG has done; first in changing the mission statements nationwide to inclusion, then again on the push by PFLAG to pressure HRC into considering a likewise move. Kirsten also made mention of a



Houston connection herself. "My most memorable event while here at PFLAG," she related, "was when our Houston chapter – the last one in the nation to become inclusive – finally announced they had voted for transgender inclusion." Kingdon remarked that the "I don't know what kind of magic Vanessa worked down there, but glowing responses that came as a result of the panel discussion down there, and to have such a change from our most resistant chapter, was the proudest moment in all my time at PFLAG."

The Awards Luncheon was every bit as moving as the commencement ceremony's speakers. Dawn Wilson, who was presented the first Trinity Award by BGB's Anne Casebeer and TATS' Monica Roberts, gave her acceptance speech through tears. After thanking all those who had helped her during the Fairness Campaigns, Dawn spoke of a newcomer to their group: Karen Hayes. "Three days before the conference (Dawn's roomie) Karen came up to me and said, 'I trust you.' That meant more to me," she continued, "than anything – more than this award, even. That's why I do this!" She then dedicated the award to Karen Hayes.

Alison Laing then presented the second Trinity winner, Mary Boenke; who told of her double discoveries: first of her daughter's being lesbian, then of her daughter's announcement of innately being a man. Of her work in PFLAG: "My work has been a labor of love. I'm not doing it for [her son] anymore – I'm doing it for

IFGE Trinity Award winners Mary Boenke, PFLAG National TG Coord. (L), Dawn Wilson, interim board chair & executive director of NTAC (below) and Tony Barreto-Neto, executive director of TOPS – TG Officers Protect & Serve (R) speak during the IFGE Awards Luncheon.



me!" Summing up her speech, Boenke finished, "I want to leave with three things. First: the world does not come in either / or boxes. Second: Remember the very special plight of transgendered in prison. Third: We as a species are the same

persons. We are all one."

Lastly, the affable Tony Barreto-Neto stepped up to accept his Trinity with his usual blend of modesty and ease. Tony's most memorable moment was hearing the words "he and him" the first time. "It was amazing hearing that – finally being able to be myself!" On our rights, he said that "to take TG out of ENDA would be like erasing me." He finished by professing his love for the binary-gendered constructs. "Imagine a world of androgyny, a world of sameness," Barreto-Neto mused. "It would be very boring."

The second day's luncheon on Friday, had its share of impressive speakers – most notably Dana Rivers. As seen on TV (no cliché or pun intended), Dana is quite polished and compelling speaker. Even in the workshop she hosted, she had a subtle yet magnetic speaking style that draws in the listener.

Even though this author wasn't there to see it, the Virginia Prince Award for 2000 went to yet another Houstonian for the second year in a row. Jane Ellen Fairfax, the head of Tri-Ess nationwide – as well as facilitator for the local chapter for some years – was awarded the coveted Virginia Prince Award. This, of course, follows on the heels of Phyllis Frye winning the previous award of the same name. Chatting with Virginia personally during lunch one day at the event, she stated that she was "proud" of what Jane Ellen has been able to accomplish in Houston, and especially for Tri-Ess nationally.

It underscores something that Kerry Lobel mentioned as a compliment to our local community. In her words, "Houston has more vocal activist, and more nationally-known transgendered leaders per capita than any place else in the nation." When I reminded her of Kentucky, she replied "well yeah, but Houston is the center of gravity for the transgender movement. Houston is ground zero!" Normally, that would be taken with a grain of salt. But considering this comes from Kerry Lobel (not one given to hyperbole), it's quite a statement!



**JULIE'S FIRST PANEL....**

*(Continued from Page 4)*

it was nothing but net.

I found that talking to a group en femme or as a male made only a small difference. This was a surprise for me, since I believe that I act rather differently given my current role. Nonetheless, I found that I was just as aggressive about fielding questions, just as forceful in my answers, and told about the same number of jokes and stories. The content really didn't vary at all. One difference, though, was clear to me - I found that me in the audience had a harder time relating to my female self, in terms of both tone and content of questions. Well, I suppose I'm not surprised.

One statement which most intrigued the group was something I said about the mechanics of dressing. In order to keep a smooth front, we often tuck our testes up into our abdominal cavity before tucking our members. This mystified the crowd. Apparently, most men don't try this, and never think to try. Many men didn't realize that there was even a place to put our boys, much less how or why.

One of the most rewarding questions from me came after the main event. A woman walked up to me and asked where I got my clothes? She had a friend who was a large, tall girl and had trouble finding clothes that fit. I'm 6'2" and 195 pounds, so getting clothes for me is not easy. It was very rewarding to share my years of hunting around Houston for nice shops and bargain



**The pleased organizers and participants in a group photo immediately after the successful First Unitarian Church panel: (L-R) John Kellett, Julie Friedmann, Dr. Lindley Doran, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Paula Parker, Desirée Walton & Sue Null.**

stores to a woman who was a bit shy and inexperienced. Helping real people - what fun!

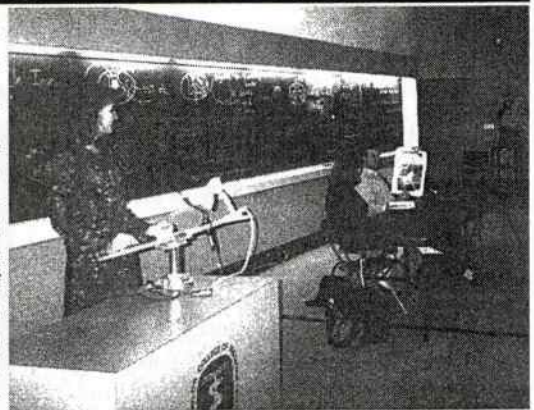
**OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**SECURITY:** I have already mentioned a few points regarding security. I firmly believe that anyone who organized a panel discussion really wants the panelists to feel comfortable and open. Security had a big part in this. I never felt that any member of the audience was threatening or rude. I also never felt that my identity was at risk to anyone I knew. Obviously, if one is worried about security, don't attend a panel discussion in your OWN church, or in a small town where everyone knows everyone. By the same token, I

know girls who take part in panel discussion in towns nearby or not-so-nearby. Speaking at a University is particularly good since, as long as you're not a professor there, there's little chance of encountering any of these people again.

**HOW TO ORGANIZE A PANEL:** I was surprised at how hungry the audiences for my panels were to know about our community. This is great news. It demonstrates a high degree of acceptance in this modern world, and it made it much easier for me to talk.

I am confident that one could call any psychology department at any college in the country to arrange a panel. Vanessa has organized panels for the law enforcement students, for clergy and counselors, for doctors, and for everyday people. I know others who have talked to police officers and legal groups. In short, the sky's the limit.



**At Baylor: Julio (R) gives 'show & tell' a new meaning as he shows off a photo of his other half, Julie, while Vanessa (at the podium) & Jessica look on.**

**WHY BOTHER?** This one's easy. The more people we educate, the better off we are. The safer we are from hate crimes, the more secure we will be in our jobs, and the more the laws in this country will reflect our needs. Vanessa started arranging panels in order to help increase voter confidence in T-issues. She wanted to affect the people who lobby the government.

I want to affect everyone. I want to talk to school teachers and parents. I want to talk to professionals of every stripe, including dentists and paramedics. I want to talk to elected officials and journalists. Why? That's easy - because it's really fun. These are people who do things in the world, from fix your teeth to make your laws. These are the parents of future bullies and future voters. And I am pleased and proud to de-stigmatized our community before the world, and show that the "nuts and sluts" of day-time talk shows are only the most obvious beginning of a huge range of people we share our common loves with - the love to express our feminine sides fully and comfortably, and to be our feminine best on our own terms. Cross your fingers.

**BAYLOR LEARNS TG 101....**

*(Continued from Page 5)*

Beyond the humor, though, the diverse panel seemed to attract even more interest than usual. Additionally heartwarming was the fact that two of the students approached me after the panel to state they were doing their term papers on transsexual subjects!

One of the students, Christina Bloem, even asked to attend transgender gatherings to interview more of the community for background information. She was immediately invited to the TATS meeting that next weekend, and was afforded an earful from a number of the members, most notably Jennifer Pool (who announced having two auditions for movies that day), Robin Miller (who gave her a great deal of background on growing up and now beginning her transition as an intersexed person), and



**Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) and Julio Friedmann (R) get a laugh as Jessica Redman (C) 'cuts up' about sexual reassignment operations during the Baylor presentation**

Melanie Black (who provided numerous resources to contact.)

If there are still any naysayers among our readership (not to say there is), then this is more proof that letting the public know about us is crucial to our future. You've heard me push it before, but it's true: Education is the key. Educating our educators and the students who will become the professionals and educators of tomorrow is vital - but it's only the beginning. There's lots of education needed by the general public, and they're only waiting for those of us who are willing to stand up and proclaim who we are and what we're about. Take the initiative and do so. It does more good than you'll ever know.

## NTAC Meets With HRC

WASHINGTON DC — In a break from the status quo over the past few years, negotiators from the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) sat down at national headquarters with representatives of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) for a meeting of the minds. The meeting was the result of contact between NTAC's Michael Gray and Nancy Buermeyer — two of the attendees at the National Transgender Agenda meeting last month.

Attending the meeting on behalf of NTAC were Alex Fox and Vanessa Edwards Foster, as well as HRC's legal counsels Tony Varona and Kevin Layton. While progress on inclusion in ENDA was quite minimal at best, one notable item was discovered at the meeting: HRC did admit to 'fact finding meetings with legislators' just before the ICTLEP Lobby Event in February, 1997, and the now infamous revelation from Sen. Harkin's office.

Buermeyer denied, however, that any pre-lobbying had taken place in subsequent years; and categorically denied it taking place in some of the places where gender lobbyists had noted over the past two sessions. This is starkly contradictory with some of the reports coming from NTAC's Dawn Wilson, and a personal visits she made with Rep. Ernie Fletcher of Kentucky.

While the meeting, for the most part, was civil; there wasn't much to 'hang one's hat on.' Buermeyer admitted that there was very likely going to be reluctance to the idea of inclusion within some of the board of HRC. Additionally, much of the blame for the lack of movement towards T inclusion on Capitol Hill was thrown at the feet of Rep. Barney Frank.

A bit later, more specifics were pressed. When Foster brought up the persistent rumor of 'heavy contributors' swaying HRC anti-trans policy, Tony Varona spoke up; saying that he, in all his time with contributors, had never heard one mention — even casually — anything anti-TG. When Foster asked Varona if he had indeed met every large contributor, the response was "of course not. There are over 40,000" of the large donors; thus "impossible" to meet all.

Gray and Foster then both pressed for education sponsorship from HRC. Gray asked for an in-house education of HRC and its board. Foster pressed for a broader educational push for the folks who needed educating the most: Capitol Hill. Though inclusion wasn't within the realm of what they could promise, all the HRC reps agreed that education was necessary and much more doable.

Before leaving, Alex Fox asked for a time frame on when we could expect to hear from HRC on these issues. Varona mentioned that the upcoming Equality Rocks concert were their current focus. When Gray continued pressing, HRC gave a soft commitment for contact within the next two months. For now, we wait,...

## Where The Outrage Over Hester Murder?

By Penni Ashe Matz

**O**ver a year ago, just before Thanksgiving, Rita Hester spent the late afternoon and early evening hours at one of her favorite watering holes, where she was accepted and loved as the beautiful woman she was. After she returned home, one or more individuals entered her apartment. Police think Rita knew these individuals, as there were no signs of forced entry. While in Rita's apartment, they stabbed her more than 20 times in the chest area and left her to die, exiting through the back door of the apartment.

In 1998, Boston saw 35 homicides. Of those 35 murders, two of them — six percent — were transgender individuals. In addition to Rita Hester, Monique/Rufus Thomas was murdered; while it seems that Monique was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, bias may have played a part in her murder.

I'm going to put this into perspective. Generous estimates suggest that perhaps five percent of the general population is transgender. But that includes those guys who dress as guys except for the stuff they wear next to their skin. Neither Monique nor Rita fit into that category: both of them were visibly gender variant all or almost all the time. They belonged to the two percent of the general population and I'm being generous, here that self-identifies as either transsexual or transgender living full-time in one's preferred gender.

Okay. 1998 was a bad year in Boston.

Ewan Smith, a transgender activist in the San Francisco area, launched the Remembering Our Dead web site early this year. She launched this because she'd noticed a very disturbing statistic: for nearly two decades we've seen, nationally, a report of the murder of a transgender-identified individual in an apparent hate crime on the average of once a month. Since she launched the site this past spring, that frequency has continued, unabated. By far the majority of these murder victims are black transgender women.

I'll concede that being stabbed 25 times in the chest and being left to die may not be as brutal as pistol-whipping a young man and leaving him tied to a fence, to die. Maybe it isn't as brutal as dragging a black man behind your pick-up truck for two miles for most of which, it seems, James Byrd was alive. But while we continue to be reminded of Matthew Shepard, James Byrd, and Billie Jack Gaither, the virtual silence regarding the one-per-month murders of transgender folk is unconscionable.

Let's put this into perspective: in the 12 months after Matthew Shepard's murder, we saw the murder, nationally, of 20 gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT) people. Of these, more than half twelve are transgender. Less than half the GLBT community is transgender and fewer still are visibly gender variant all or most of the time. When I mention this ratio to gay and lesbian friends, their eyes turn into saucers. Or they try to console me by reminding me that as the transgender community comes out of the closet and gains ac-

ceptance, the murder rate will get worse.

And so I wonder: Why are we not outraged? Is it only because I'm a transgender activist that I find this horrendous transgender murder rate painful, every day? Expressing outrage over Rita's murder, a web site was launched bearing her name. Six months later, that site was no more. The gay press is somewhat complicitous in this absence of outrage. We keep hearing about Matthew Shepard, Billie Jack Gaither, and other gay and lesbian murder victims, but almost nothing about one transgender murdered every month.

Where's your outrage? Doesn't one murder a month in a population comprising 2 percent of the general population count? Isn't that frequency alone as disturbing as the murder of Matthew Shepard? Or will it take two murders a month — or three — or four? Tell me how many will it take before you find your outrage?

## THE ROAD TO IFGE...

(Continued from Page 6)

into my old Southern Comfort roomie Dianna Cicotello and her daughter Laurie, Marisa Richmond, and Yvonne Cook-Riley. Anne and I left after a few drinks and finished working on our presentation roast for Dawn and the next day's Trinity Award luncheon.

Thursday at noon saw me and Anne at the IFGE Trinity Award luncheon. In addition to Dawn receiving a Trinity, Mary Boenke of PFLAG and Tony Barretto-Neto also were honorees. The scene stealers were Anne and myself when we did our three minute roast prior to Dawn receiving her Trinity. In Dawn's speech she dedicated it to her family, BGB, Fairness and Karen Hayes back in Louisville. I also got to meet some other NTACers for the first time such as Chris Stinson and Cheryl Costa.

Friday, the last day of my vacation and we took in some of the IFGE seminars before Vanessa and I had to fly back to Texas. We had to come back a little earlier than we planned because of the threatened USAir strike and I wanted no part of trying to travel standby out of a city where USAir controls 35% of the flights. Anne took us to the airport and we reluctantly boarded our flight back to Texas.

I had a great vacation..I got to spend some time with people I love and care for such as Dawn, Anne, Vanessa, Cathy, and Sarah. As a matter of fact Vanessa and I joked that the only time we get to spend time with one another is when we fly 1000 miles away from Houston, and we live eight miles from each other! I got to renew acquaintances with other friends and meet new people. I even got to see the cherry blossoms in DC! I hope the rest of my vacation weeks this year have as much fun and excitement packed into them!



*"What a distressing contrast there is between the radiant intelligence of the child and the feeble mentality of the average adult."*

— Sigmund Freud

# "NORMAL PEOPLE"

By Cairistona Douglas

"Transsexual." Could this one word be the source of all hatred toward us?

Of course not; it is only half the source. The other half is the mere sight of us. Let me explain ... when people see or hear about us, they immediately visualize acts of carnal sex. Hello, people! You are not supposed to do that! Do you see your minister and their spouse and immediately visualize disgusting acts in various positions? Whew, yuck, gross! Same for your sister or even your parents. When you see your grandparents, do you say "Oh, you disgusting criminals of carnal lust! Guilty of the filthy act of exchanging juices which made my father! You make me sick! I want to hurt you!"? Or do you say, "Hi grandpa and grandma, I love you and I missed you?"

Unfortunately, this is the way some people react to us. Sure it is incorrect, and they are being ignorant. They never stop to ask us about our sexuality. Perhaps they should. Perhaps we should spread the word - tell them that some of us are straight, some of us are gay, some of us are bi.... Just the same as quote 'you normal people.' They might be very surprised to find that a vast majority of us go through a long period of asexuality that lasts years if not a lifetime, as our souls and our bodies become the person we feel we were meant to be. Such is the case with me.

That truth alone destroys their false perception of us which triggers all their hatred and damning judgment. Speaking only for myself, my transformation has little or nothing to do with what is in my pants. It is about working hard to make my heart, my soul, my mind well; after a lifetime of unsuccessfully trying to deny my feelings. My years of suppression leading to depression. Some turn to drugs and alcohol, as I did, after 20 or more years of fighting this ever-losing battle. You realize you can never conquer your feelings. You are hopelessly condemned to this self-torture. And as for most of us; one day your life, your job, your mate, and family comes apart.

Do these 'normal people' of hate have any idea how many of us have tried to kill ourselves, as I have? In my heart, I think if these 'normal people' were to see a person dying in bed from cancer, or a poor child's life leaving them in a pool of blood after a terrible accident, I know they would cry for them.

After a lifetime of an illness, in my case some 30 years, at the brink of my death I am

trying desperately to save my heart, my mind, and my soul. Yet instead of love, prayers, and pity; I face stares, laughter, slander, denial of my place in the workforce, denial of my place in society, threats, assaults, etc. In fact, that many of us have been murdered.

I feel if 'normal people' could only understand it is not all about sex, but about us desperately trying to save our own lives, they would indeed care and perhaps even shed a tear.

The word "transsexual" only contributes to our suffering. Do you suppose there is a word that means "only myself, finally healthy, happy and well, thank you Lord?"

Out of the 150 or so persons that I am affiliated and have met who suffer from gender dysphoria, not a single one has given me the impression of being flamboyant, promiscuous, sensationalized over-sexed persons with 'no-holds-barred' moral standards - as we have been perceived in certain media TV shows which seem to promote such sensationalism, questionably choreographed by that same show solely for the sake of their own ratings! All at the cost of the credibility of all of us struggling for a normal life.

If you're to try to categorize our personality traits as a common standard, I do see something some of us have in common. Some of us suffer from depression, some of us suffer from social anxiety, some of us suffer from low self esteem. Do you 'normal people' wonder why? Even so, as opposed to our former selves, we are sober, optimistic, much better than we were before.

Transsexuals are the last true minority. But like abolitionists and the suffragettes before us, if we step out into the light of day, arm in arm, and be counted; someday we will win our equal rights in the law and in society. Rest assured, "We shall overcome!!!"

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and you're on the mends...  
here's a bouquet of flowers  
and a box of Depends.

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won't that be a laugh,  
when they find out you're one  
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# Happy Anniversary!

By Monica Roberts

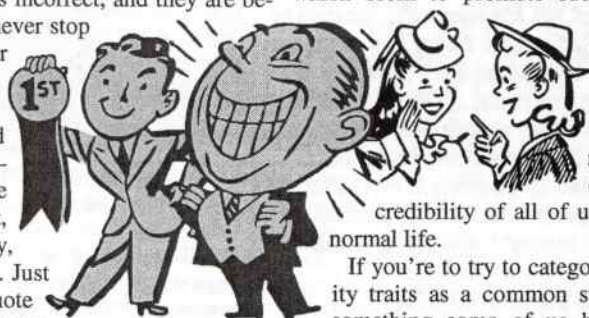
April 8 marks a personal milestone for me. It is the day five years ago that I began my transition and showed up for work as Monica Katrice Roberts. I remember feeling like I was in a fishbowl for the whole day and for the next two weeks afterward as my coworkers called my gate, stopped by to wish me well, and offer their support and help. There was a lot of stumbling over pronouns and stares as my coworkers made the adjustment along with me, and other little bumps along the way as I settled into my new gender.

April 8, 1995...I had only the support of TATS, my sister Latoya, the help of my coworkers, Dr Cole, and my boss Karen Miles. I also had a new friend in Deborah Arnold who had never met my 'twin brother' but took the time to become my closest girlfriend and walk me through the bumpy process of trying to cram 30 plus years of feminine knowledge in a short timespan. I was dealing with the anger of my separation from my family and the vicious outing by my ex-girlfriend that forced me out of the closet. The outing upset my transition timetable and came close to putting my job I loved, am damned good at, and had spent at that time 8 years employed there, in jeopardy. I hadn't told my grandmother's about my transition because I was afraid of having them reject me too as my parents had done.

I had yet to tell some of my close friends about my transition, and some of my friends found out about it from my ex as she called all my friends in my phonebook and put her negative spin on my transition. Some of my friends (or people who I thought were my friends) never call back.

It's now a new century and five years later. My family now accepts me and loves me, some of my close pre-transition friends are still there and getting to know the person they once knew occupying a new body. I am watching my niece Sontoya grow. I have a new nationwide circle of friends to replace the associates I lost in 1995. Deborah and I are still close friends in 2000. I am still happily employed by Continental and respected by my co-workers and peers for my ability as I was in 1995. My ex has even apologized for the hell she put me through five years ago. I am a happy, fun loving person who is comfortable in her skin for the first time. I'm looking forward to the Comets season that starts in May and my 20 year high school reunion in October. I am involved and giving back to the community via my political activism.

Now if I could only get my SRS in Montreal and find someone who loves me, everything would be perfect! Happy Anniversary Monica!



**ASTRO COLUMN FOR APRIL 2000**

By Lilly Roddy

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

This is rather a quiet month. We probably need the break from all the activity since the new year. Only a couple of days to watch out for, April 14th, 15th (did I need to say that), 18th, 19th and 26th. The rest of the month is fairly nice and evenly paced.

And just for some information about how the date for Easter is chosen each year. Easter is selected for the first Sunday after the full moon, after the first day of Aries or the first day of spring. This year, the full moon in March occurred on the day before the Sun moved into Aries. So Easter doesn't occur until after the Sun enters the sign of Taurus. I like this time of celebration because all different kinds of religious belief systems can join together in this time of rebirth. Of course, I don't expect the Wiccans to be seen walking hand in hand with the Christians, just yet.

Sun begins the month in Aries, the Ram or Ewe, (gender appropriate for your pleasure) and enters the sign of Taurus, the Cow or Bull on the 19th. Mercury, finally moves out of Pisces, sign of the Fish, a naturally dual sign, and into Aries on the 12th. Venus starts the month in Pisces but quickly moves into Aries on the 6th. Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn are trodding through Taurus. Uranus and Neptune are continuing their visit to Aquarius, sign of the Water Bearer (no gender references, since we can all carry water). And Pluto remains in Sagittarius, the Archer, until 2008.

ARIES — As this is your birthday month, April always represents a time of reviewing last years goals and

establishing new beginnings for this year. This year has you really focused on your financial affairs. You will want to throw caution to the wind and buy buy buy. But, don't don't don't. You will feel the pinch after the 15th. Relationships take the spotlight in the later half of the month with the Full Moon in Libra. This is a good time to renew your vows or a time to look for some to make some vows with. The question for the end of the month is, what are your worth to your friends, lovers and partners?

TAURUS — April represents the beginning of a two month period in which you will be invite competition on all fronts and rears. Probably you will feel the greatest impact in your career sector with you wanting to be in charge. You will not hold back on how you feel about things at work or your opinion of your boss. You will experience "De ja Moo" this month. That means you have heard this BS before. Watch that you don't force a confrontation and find yourself career challenged.

GEMINI — Work is finally getting back into order and that queasy feeling of chaos is lifting. Group activity is very important this month and you may get you most amount of notariaty there. If you are not in a community group or business association, this is a great time to join one. You are more social that you have been lately and the company would do you good. Look for some rest and retreat by the end of the month. You will have earned it.

CANCER — There will be lots of focus this month on your career and public life. You will want to be noticed and you will be. At work, you will take on a leadership role. Be careful that you don't come into conflict with your boss trying to lead the parade. This is also a good socially active month. Like the Gemini's you will do well in group related activities. This would also be a good way to increase your business opportunities.

LEO - Try to spend the first half of this month relaxing. Take a trip. Go to a bed and breakfast. Take your lover with you. Look at some picture from a foreign port. Discuss philosophy. Because by mid month, you career is going to have your attention. This can be a crucial time where you will want and demand more from your career. Conflicts here can and will arise. Try to remember that you can not be challenged if your don't accept the challenge. And if you accept the challenge, take the large weapons.

VIRGO - This month your take your relationship needs a lot deeper. You are wanting to know and to share more intimate mysteries with your partner. This would be a great month for a get away with that special person as well. Trying to keep secrets hidden will force them to the surface and they will come out at the most inappropriate times. Be sure and enjoy the ease and flow of this month, next month is very busy.

LIBRA - This month you will need partnership connections even more than usual for you. If you are in a relationship and your partner is not very much fun, you will want to dump her/him and go find someone who is. You are very adventuresome this month and you are willing to take more risk than you usually are. Remember if you play with matches, you usually start a fire.

SCORPIO - Take care of those problems at work this month. You are tired of those piles around your desk. Work problems will create a greater stress if you don't address them as soon as possible. As we approach the end of the month, relationships will take the spotlight. And if there are issues there, the glare from the spotlight will let you and everyone else see them. Start talking now with your partner.

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(Continued on Page 12)

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**ASTRO COLUMN....**

*(Continued from Page 11)*

**SAGITTARIUS** - Your desire to have fun and be creative are what you are interested in this month. Don't plan anything too complicated or time consuming. Your propagating energies are very strong this month. Try to have something new to direct your attention to. At the end of the month, it is time to get your work station cleaned up. Then, you will be ready to focus your attention once more.

**CAPRICORN** - Fun at home with Dick and Jane, the Dysfunctional Family. Time to take a trip back home to visit the place where all of your unconscious motivations come from. So if you feel out of control, unable to get control of your emotions and your temper is raw; Welcome Home! At the end of the month, you are ready for fun and play. Go to the theater, the beach or indulge yourself in hedonistic pleasures. Or do all three. Keep your life schedule light.

**AQUARIUS** - Lots of different projects and activities are up for you this month. You will be converging on the more mundane aspects of your life. They will not seem mundane to you because you will have to be paying a lot of attention to them. So, all the parts of your life that you take for granted, you will learn to appreciate them once again. The end of the month has you really really focused on your home and family life. You will have a choice to either take charge or shut up.

**PISCES** - Usually, you are not so concerned about money in your life. You are customarily more concerned about the quality and the meaning of life. But not so this month. And yes, this is the month you have to pay attention because your Uncle Sam is wanting his money on his Day, April 17th. The end of the month, you are more ready for your normal life to return. Your day to day interest reestablish themselves and all is right with the world.



**TATS Tidbits**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- There will be no TATS meeting April 8 at Desirée's. We're all gonna have our hands full just preparing for the banquet! We'll see y'all April 22!

- Cosmopolitan apparently has a nice article in this month's edition regarding the intersexed ... so says Vikki Skelton. Though I personally haven't had time to sit down and read it, Vikki says the article was done quite tastefully and informatively. Worth checking into.

- Quote from Hillary Swank upon winning best actress award for her part in *Boys Don't Cry*: "And last, but certainly not least, I want to thank Brandon Teena for being such an inspiration to us all. His legacy lives on through our movie to remind us to always be ourselves, to follow our hearts, to not conform. I pray for the day when we not only accept our differences, but we actually celebrate our diversity."

- MELBOURNE, Australia — Scientists have made a major breakthrough: identifying a gene that is critical in ensuring male babies do not end up developing female sex organs. Dr Andrew Sinclair, head of the Royal Children's Hospital and University of Melbourne research team, has discovered that the absence or malfunctioning of the gene, DMRT1, causes genetically male children to be born with female sex organs.

"Knowing the cause helps people to cope," stated Dr. Sinclair. "But it will still be a long time before we understand how all the genes and proteins come together to build something as complex as the testes." Worldwide, an estimated one in 4000 live births is of indeterminate sex.

**Absence Excuses....**

Submitted by Holly Foster Wilson

Dear Teacher: Please excuse Lisa for being absent. She was sick, and I had her shot.

Dear School: I hope you will excuse John for being absent on Jan.28,29,30,31,32 and also 33.

Dear Miss Larson: Jack didn't go to school yesterday because he had two teeth taken out of his face.

Mrs. Smith: Please excuse Tommy for being absent yesterday. He had diarrhea, and his boots leak.

Dear Teacher: Please excuse Jimmy for being. It was his father's fault.

Dear Mr.Brown: Please excuse Jason for being absent yesterday. He had a cold and could not breed well.

To Mary's Teacher: Please excuse Mary for being absent yesterday. She was in bed with gramps.

Dear Mr.Anderson: Maryann was absent yesterday because she had a fever and upset stomach. Her sister was also sick, and her brother had a fever. I wasn't too well, either. There must be something going around. Her father even got hot last night.

Dear Mr.Thomas: Jennifer missed school yesterday for a good reason. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch, and when we found it Monday, we thought it was Sunday.

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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 8, Issue 5

Houston, Texas

May, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## Unity Banquet 2000 A Smashing Success!

### Attendance Record 3rd Straight Year!

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

It was a night of glitz and glamor, pomp and circumstance, friendship and celebration. Unity Banquet 2000 was a resounding success in every fashion. The transgender community's seventh annual event drew in yet another record crowd, with the gay, lesbian, bisexual and straight communities all being well-represented at the event. This year's event drew everyone from local HRC members and Log Cabin Republicans, to original TG activist members of It's Time, Texas! and local politicians; all convened for an evening of celebration, sharing and unity!



Queen of the Unity Banquet Desirée Walton at the mic.

(Continued on Page 7)

This year's event was a fundraiser for the new Houston

### Sarah DePalma Wins Apogee, Lifetime Achievement

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

It was an incredibly tough choice this year with so much activity that's happened in the past year. But to the newly-formed Apogee Award committee, Sarah DePalma stood head-and-shoulders above the rest; scoring big with her work on submitting the Littleton Amicus Brief and also for winning T-inclusion in the Texas Human Rights Fund mission. When you realize that Brenda Thomas (last year's awardee) created TAIL, and did all of the work with the city on AIDS issues, and Desirée Walton created the Unity Committee, and designed the Pride Parade 1999 entry, and with all of the inclusion issues that were voted through over the past year, it speaks volumes to the level of accomplishment Sarah achieved.



An incredulous Sarah DePalma accepts her Apogee Award from city council-member Annise Parker (L).

Obviously, it was a popular choice, as Sarah received a standing ovation for winning this year's Apogee.

When the first Apogee winner, City Council-member Annise Parker, announced this year's Apogee Award winner, Sarah was in shock. The reason for that? She'd just stepped off the stage after winning the Lifetime Achievement Award! That was a no-brainer: Sarah was the creator of It's

Time, Texas, as well as a founding member of It's Time, America! She also reinstituted It's Time last year - under the new moniker TGAIN (the Texas

(Continued on Page 4)

## 'UNITY' WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

By Vikki Lynn Skelton

I just want to put my two cents worth in concerning the Unity Banquet this last weekend. If you went, you will know what I am talking about. If you did not, then you will know what you missed this last weekend. Well girls and guys, it was...

**FANTASTIC!**

I really enjoyed myself thoroughly. I can't wait until next year. I not only spent each Monday the last couple of months along with spent hours and hours last Friday and Saturday helping to get things

(Continued on Page 5)



Christie Littleton (at podium) addresses the Unity Banquet as Don Skipwith (L) of THRF applauds, and attorney Phyllis Frye (R) looks on approvingly.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

- May 13 Feelings Meeting at:  
Desirée Walton's @ 3 PM
- May 27 Social Meeting at:  
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM
- June 10 Dr. Cole's Semi Annual Meeting  
Rosenberg Clinic/Galveston @ 10 AM
- June 24 2000 Pride Parade:  
Near Woodhead & Westheimer @ 6 PM

T. A. T. S.  
P. O. Box 142  
Bellairé, Texas 77401

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Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.geocities.com/tatspage>

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Sometimes, things just go right. Even without trying, even if it seems like the entire process is plunging into chaos, even when the odds are stacked against success; sometimes fall into place. You pull out a victory. And on top of it all, people will praise you for your success!

I find myself thinking of this after this year's Unity Banquet, which was unequivocally a success. We had so many opportunities to

fall flat on our collective faces, and yet we made it look easy! Corporate sponsors that we were hoping to get, fell through ... VIPs who were supposed to attend, didn't ... the price we thought we were quoted for the meal, more expensive because we didn't read the fine print.

The date changed from what went out on the initial press release. The hotel itself didn't get confirmed and the contract signed until about three weeks before the banquet! Our prices were more almost triple the previous year's ticket price. We fretted we might not get community participation. Our advertised comedienne didn't come through. The awards process and decisions were late; and even after they were confirmed and the information sent to the engravers, there were a couple awards that broke during shipping. The engravers then replaced the awards with new ones ... with the wrong information or spelling on them!

Even the banquet itself didn't go exactly as scripted. First I, then Jessica, lost our scripts at various times - including while up at the podium. I'd sent Phyllis a script via Email, which didn't make it to the banquet - requiring a hasty handwritten scrawl beforehand. The servers didn't wait until after the first set of awards before serving dessert - resulting in the next error in the program.

After Jessica and I had finished the first community awards set, Desirée came on for a few jokes, then re-introduced us almost as soon as we'd sat down. So up we go to do the second set of community awards, Jessica launches into her part of the script (she stuck with the script *this time!*),

Belles of the Banquet: Heckle (R) and Jeckle



and I peeked under the podium to find ... no awards. No intermission between: no time to bring over the second set of awards! So I make an announcement, and Jess

and I, quite awkwardly, stall for a couple minutes (or was it hours?) while Desi goes through the box to pull out the remaining awards. That's entertainment!

I'm reminded of a song by the Austin rock group, the Arcangels ... "Too Many Ways To Fall." We definitely had the opportunity to totally lose face. Instead? The 2000 edition of the Unity Banquet

was an unqualified success!

We sold 165 tickets. We made over \$700 for the Houston Transgender Community Center. Desirée took charge of being the 'comedienne du jour,' and got quite a response from the crowd. As for the awards presentations: "[Me] and Redman were a hoot!!!" So said Phyllis Frye - not once, but three times. "Y'all need to get up there and do that more often!!!" Indeed, dozens came up to us or wrote Emails over our comedy routine. Too bad there wasn't any comedy written into the script. We were trying to do a serious presentation. Good thing for extemporaneous humor!

Even the scripts themselves were fodder for comedy from the other presenters. Annise Parker quipped, "yeah, I got my script too! And it's color coded!!" Phyllis herself mentioned she also got a script, but wasn't going to follow it! She 'doesn't do those kind of things!'

No one follows scripts! But scripted or not, imperfections or not - without question, the banquet was a winner! Maybe I fret too much....

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

- Jessica Xavier, Kensington, MD
- Peter Freiberg, Washington, DC
- Katrina C. Rose, Albert Lea, MN

**Phyllis Frye**

- Jessica Ann Redman
- Vikki Lynn Skelton
- Lilly Roddy

*for submitting humor*

- Katrina C. Rose, Albert Lea, MN
- Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV

*for submitting comic*

**Desirée Walton**

*for submitting photos*

- Chrissy Fusco
- Robert Davis

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# PANELS, PANELS, PANELS – BUSY MONTH FOR TATS

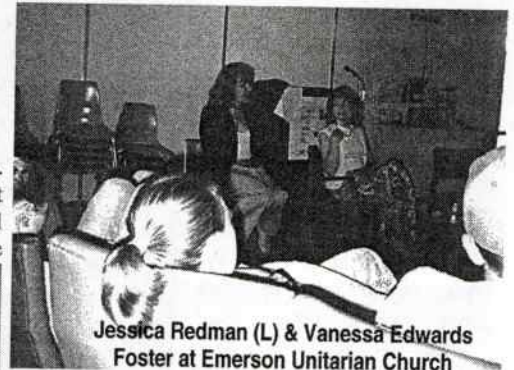


Cairistona Douglas speaks to the class, as (L-R) Monica Roberts and Sarah Jane Connell listen attentively, while Vanessa Edwards Foster hovers in the background for moral support. Troy Ham (C) gives a recounting of his life while, Sarah Jane (L), Jessica Redman (R) and Chris Duffy (far right) seemingly relive a bit of their own lives while listening to his story, April 6.

## TATS TAKES GLBT AGGIES BY STORM

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Another week, another university to present to. Ho hum, right? Hardly! This was our most enjoyable panel foray yet – at least from a personal standpoint! It was a bit of a drive up there, but we



Jessica Redman (L) & Vanessa Edwards Foster at Emerson Unitarian Church

## THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT! TATS PANEL AT EMERSON UNITARIAN EDUCATES YOUTH

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Saturday morning. It brings up images of cartoons, as a young child. Or maybe just hangin' out and bein' lazy, idly chatting with your friends on the phone ... maybe watchin' some MTV or listening to your newest CD if you in those in-between years. Saturday morning ... so what are these kids doing in church? Not only that, but in a class in church ... learning?

What this was is an innovative approach to education on issues most parents wouldn't even touch, in order to dispel myths, debunk inaccuracies and demystify the last great taboo of humankind: sex. It's the brainchild of Emerson Unitarian Church: a way to get to the kids before they start experimenting with little or no knowledge in matters that can comprehensively change their lives (sudden pregnancies during adolescence), effect their emotional state of well-being (wondering

*(Continued on Page 12)*

Vanessa (L) and Emerson Church parent, Bradley Gammell, start off the April 15 Diversity In Sexuality panel geared towards teen education.



## TATS & CATS TEAM UP FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> TEXAS A & M - GALVESTON PANEL

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Texas A & M's first panel, at the Galveston campus, was a marathon. We had our largest panel ever with seven panel members participating, and it was additionally our first dual group effort between TATS and CATS. We also took a big chance with nearly half our panel – members from CATS – attending their very first panel.

The panel was definitely well received – a good indicator of a success! We were invited down at the behest of Dr. Collier Cole (the state's pre-eminent therapist on trans issues). During a conversation I'd had with Dr. Cole on an unrelated issue, he brought up the fact that his class would welcome having a panel presentation, wondered if I was still putting together the panels, and ... next thing you know, we've got another panel shoehorned in a busy panel season!

Finding the panelists was no problem. Jessica (one of our two resident intersexed) had a flexible schedule. Monica had been bugging me for a chance at a Thursday panel – bingo, our woman of color! Finally, I wanted to get Chris Duffy and the CATS gang's feet wet doing a panel. So I

*(Continued on Page 12)*

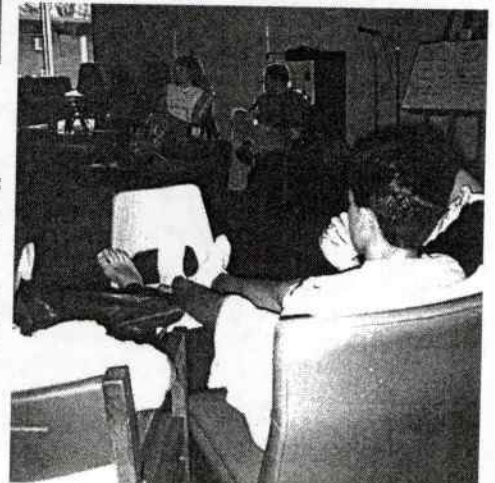


The TATS group in action at Texas A&M in College Station: (L-R) Newcomer Mara Alexandra Flores, Vanessa Edwards Foster & Jessica Ann Redman show the Aggies the 'T' in GLBTA!

had an absolute blast! These Aggies rock!!! These kids took us in and made us feel like family (pun intended!) It was definitely well worth the drive!

It all came about from a comment I'd made to a friend about wanting to do a panel in College Station someday. That friend passed along our wish to a contact on the Aggie campus, and referred him to us. Late last year, I'd gotten my first Email from Jordan Davis of A & M's GLBTA

*(Continued on Page 9)*



**DEPALMA WINS APOGEE, LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT; DESIRÉE WALTON WINS PEOPLES' CHOICE**

(Continued from Page 1)

Gender Advocacy & Information Network), and organized the first large-scale statewide lobbying event in history – one that drew 52 participants – and was also in attendance for the very first GenderPAC national lobbying event in Washington DC. Speaking of firsts, she's the first-ever syndicated, transgendered radio host whose done a transgender-oriented radio show. The list goes on and on ... in other words, it was a very-well deserved award.



At left, Sarah DePalma (C) picks up her first award of a very busy evening, the Lifetime Achievement from presenters Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) and Jessica Ann Redman.

At right, Phyllis Frye presents the inaugural Peoples' Choice Award to Desirée Walton, who later went on to win the Unity Committee facilitator's award: the Princess Dye Tiara!



were heavily involved in pushing TG inclusion in the various local organizations that voted us in their missions. These two awardees were no slouches, though. Sue Null was the point-person at PFLAG Houston when all the rhetoric was flying, as took a great deal of heat from the transgender community, and those who wanted to drag heels on inclusion within PFLAG locally, and yet more heat from the national office on 'getting with the program.' Dan was a part of both the Caucus and Chamber inclusions – especially



1999 Virginia Prince winner, Phyllis Frye (R) presents before the honetown crowd the 2000 Virginia Prince Award to Jane Ellen (L) & Mary Frances Fairfax.

Below: (L-R) Dan DiDonato, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Sue Null and Jessica Ann Redman pose for the inaugural Champion Award. This first presentation of this award ended with two winners, Dan DiDonato, for his push with the Caucus and Chamber of Commerce inclusions, and Sue Null, secretary of PFLAG Houston, for her work on their

Below right, Unity Banquet Award presenters Vanessa (aka: Heckle) and Jessica (aka: Jeckle) are all smiles at the announcement of the Champions Award to the PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays) National Office.

The second annual Dee McKellar Merit Award, went out to Minnesota's newest TG with a law degree (and license!), Katrina Rose. As mentioned during the awards presentation, this award has taken some of its personality from the lady it's named for. And, true to Dee's form, Katrina had a way of doing things that didn't always win her favor. Ironically, Dee was a key mentor to Katrina; and similarly had no problems ruffling other folks' feathers when she adamantly adhered to her opinions. But you always knew what to expect: both individuals were always staunchly pro-transgender, and very unapologetically activists. Similar to the Apogee, this award choice also received a standing ovation – albeit in absentia.



There were also three new awards created and presented this year. The first ones are companion honors, the Champion and the Champions, to go to the individual – and additionally, one to go to the group, organization or company – who exhibited unwavering support, promotion of issues, and advocacy for the local transgender community. What distinguishes these awards from the others, though, is that they are bestowed specifically upon those who are not members or



spouses of the local transgender community. It's geared specifically to recognize those outside of our community for their selfless acts of heroism.

Again, there was extremely intense competition for these awards; so much so, that the inception Champion Award was a tie, and went out to two individuals: Sue Null of PFLAG Houston, and Dan DiDonato, organizer of the Equality Rallies. They beat out the likes of PFLAG Houston's President, Jeanne Edmonds, former Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus President, Carl S. Smith, and the Chamber of Commerce's former VP, Coy Tow – all of whom

taking a great deal of heat for the online petition to the Chamber. Additionally, Dan was instrumental in getting transgenders seated on the boards of the Montrose Counseling Center as well.

For the Champions Award (for groups), the hands-down winner was PFLAG National, based in Washington DC. Edging out PFLAG Houston, Chase Bank, the Caucus and Sea Shell U.S.A., the National office of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays) was very instrumental in helping get the local PFLAG group moved to inclusiveness. Later, when NGLTF's Transgender Agenda meeting was announced in Washington earlier this year, it was initially decided not to include NTAC since they had



Brenda Thomas (L) presents Brandi Welch Williams with the Tri-Ess 'Woman of the Decade' Award.

(Continued on Page 6)

**UNITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

prepared for the best banquet I have ever been to in my life (I have been to a few) but I had a lot of fun helping to plan, decorate and enjoying the fruit of many peoples labor. I believe that I made some deeper friendships, made some new friendships and got to learn more about some of the leaders in our community. I had a fantastic time. I want to personally thank each and every one of you that came to the Unity Banquet, bought tickets and gave up your seat to someone else, donated money to the event, participated in the silent auction, donated items for door prizes and the silent auction and gave of your time and money to help this event come to past. I believe it was a success and I believe we have become more united within the Transgender Community as a whole here in

Houston, Texas. We had close to 170 people there from all walks of life within and without the TG community. Phyllis Frye put a challenge up to fill the place up with 300 people. Help us next year by making a *definite unequivocal decision* to come to the Unity Banquet 2001 here in Houston, Texas. We will keep you informed as the time gets closer. Now what happened at the Unity Banquet 2000. The below of course is from my perception and you may or may not agree with me if you attended.

**FASHION:**

Oh Darling! You should have been here if



Fashion was the buzzword of the Banquet: Above at the Chase Bank table (L-R), co-workers Richard Bielec, TATS' Michelle Gregory & Brandon Wolf flash winning smiles, Below: the chi-chi Caucus board (L-R) Tony Carroll, Jessica Redman, current president Sean Carter, board chair Scott Simpson, past president Hon. Annise Parker, vice president Mike Bodin, treasurer Vanessa Edwards Foster & Dan DiDonato.



you were not. There were ladies in gorgeous evening dressings and gentlemen dressed to the nines in tuxedos. I saw a few gentlemen that I would have loved to have devoured. Everyone came dressed in their best and everyone looked fabulous. If you were looking for a night to don your best then this was the night. For those of you that came,

next year will be a time for you to out do yourself once again. Are you up to the challenge? If you did not attend then save up your money for next year's event and for buying that special dress or tux that will turn all of the heads in the room as you walk in (Don't forget to practice that special entrance walk). If we had had judges for the most beautiful dress, the best dressed and so-forth, it would have been very hard to pick a winner. For the best in fashion, don't miss the banquet next year.

**THE AWARDS:**

If you did not attend then you missed one of the best awards ceremonies, not to mention one of the funniest you will ever see. Next year will be tough to top, but I am sure we will. There were several awards given and several award announcers. However, my favorite were our "guest" awards announcers Heckle and Jeckle (Vanessa Edwards

Foster and Jessica Redman). Award ceremonies are normally long and boring. Not this year, Vanessa and Jessica livened up the award ceremony quite a bit and made it fun to sit through

the many well & much deserving awards. Having been out of the community for a while on a "getting myself together" type of leave of absence I lost touch with who was who and who was doing what in the community. I am glad that I attended the Unity Banquet. It brought me up to date on some of the TG and Non-TG leaders that have been giving of themselves to help support the TG Community and what was going on in and about the community as well. Though there were many nominees and only 1 winner for each award, everyone deserves a pat on the back, a thank you and our support for their hard work for our community. It was a tough choice and I am glad that I did not have to choose the winners. Of course, don't forget to give your heartfelt thanks to our

wonderful friend Jessica Redman, the Susan Lucci of the TG Community, who was nominated many time but never won an award. Remember, whether you were nominated or not or whether you won an award or not, when you give of yourself to a worthy cause and to other people you are a



Staffing the admissions desk: Vikki Lynn Skelton (L) and Sara Rook, out front and ever-fashionable.

winner and can take pride in that fact. Don't forget to ask Desiree Walton about her Princess "Dye" Award and her tiara. A new tradition was started by honoring the facilitator of the Unity Banquet with a tiara which is to be passed on by the previous year facilitator. I am sure she is wearing her tiara and that her Princess "Dye" award is hanging up over her mantle this very moment for all to see. Thank you everyone for your hard work and giving of yourselves in support of the TG Community.

**EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY!**

Oh my! I thought my dress was going to burst at the zipper after eating the fabulous meal. Thank God for those waist cinchers. I probably would have looked like a pregnant mare otherwise after such a wonderful meal. The steak was cooked just the way I liked it...*flavorfully mouth-watering delicious*. The vegetables were very tasty and seasoned well I thought. Then there was the demon of the whole meal or rather was it heaven...the dessert. I do not know what the name of it was, but it was...let's say...maaaarveelous! I can not wait until next year to see what they cook up for us. I definitely want to get the seasoning recipe for the steak and the recipe for the desert.



Awards announcers 'Heckle & Jeckle' make the scene: Jessica 'Jeckle' Redman (L) suffered from "Susan Lucci disease" while Vanessa 'Heckle' Edwards Foster looked too much like Susan Lucci.

The service was excellent as well and I want to thank the West Chase staff for doing such a great job.

The music was very good and I enjoyed what little dancing time we had after the banquet ceremonies. As for drinks, basically you could name it and they had it. We had a bar and of course there were other bars in other locations of the hotel as well. Everyone seemed to be

*(Continued on Page 7)*

**DEPALMA WINS APOGEE....**

*(Continued from Page 4)*  
 yet to be nationally chartered. However, it was at PFLAG National's behest that NTAC was invited to the table – and the rest, as they say, is history.... (For PFLAG reaction, see story on Page 17)

The final new award is the brainchild of Lilly Roddy: the Peoples' Choice Award. This is awarded annually to the individual who garners the most popular votes from the community. Appropriately, the initial winner was Desirée Walton, the community's 'hostess with the mostest!' Desirée has been cracking jokes, putting on community meals at the holidays, and acting as confidant for a good portion of the local community for well over the past year. Obviously, Desirée was another 'popular' choice.

Tri-Ess' group awards saw an emotional Brandi Welch Williams snag their Woman of the Decade Award. The Tau Chi Award was bestowed upon Tri-Ess' newsletter editor, Danielle, and the Tri-Ess Community Service Award went to Brenda Thomas. At the end of the Tri-Ess awards, Phyllis Frye (winner of last year's IFGE Virginia Prince Award) again presented, before the Houston audience, this year's Virginia Prince Award to the husband-and-wife duo Jane Ellen and Mary Frances Fairfax – the real powers behind Tri-Ess' local Tau Chi chapter. As Phyllis mentioned, there have only been 13 Virginia Prince Awards given out – and two of them reside in Houston! Something to be said for the local community and its leadership!

Without a doubt, the award honorees this year were the cream of the crop, and quite deserving of the accolades. On top of it, virtually every announcement of awardees received standing ova-

tions! Both the Unity Awards Committee – comprised of Jessica Redman, Lilly Roddy, Sara Rook,



At Left: A picture worth a million bucks! Sarah DePalma is stunned when the Apogee Award winner is announced. Lori Rice (L) helps her up while Beth Richard (behind) applauds. At Right: Sarah heaves her awards for view-



Brandi Welch Williams, and chaired by yours truly – as well as the Apogee Committee – comprised of Phyllis Frye, Dr. Collier Cole, Dr. Denise O'Doherty, Suzanne Anderson, Councilmember Annise Parker, State Rep. Debra Danburg and Apogee chair, Brandon Wolf – had a very difficult task mulling over all the qualified nominees and win-

nowing it to the ultimate choices. As evidenced, though, we did pick a winner (or six!) Finally, to all those in the community who contributed in ways large and small, yet weren't recognized (you know who you are), a heartfelt

'thank you' goes out to every one of you. Indeed, you are the true unsung heroes of our community, and well-deserving of a measure of recognition in your own right. And to those who went that extra distance and were recognized for your efforts, a hearty congratulations to you! The Houston area transgender community sincerely appreciates your efforts on behalf of us all!



True Champions! Two individuals who exhibit selfless heroism toward a community that is of no direct benefit to them – yet they did so undauntedly. Sue Null (with Jessica at left) – parent of a gay child – and Equality Rally coordinator Dan DiDonato (with Vanessa above)



## UNITY...A SMASHING SUCCESS

(Continued from Page 1)

Transgender Community Center. All in all, 165 people attended and helped bring in over \$700 for the cause. It was also a breakaway from the past on a number of levels: we held this year's banquet at the Westchase Hilton (as opposed to restaurants), it was a seated banquet (as opposed to buffets), we had a program starring Desirée Walton as our comic entertainment (as opposed to strictly extemp humor previously), and we also had a silent auction and corporate sponsorships to help bring in more funds for the cause. Additional firsts were a slide presentation of the past year, put on by Ms. Jessica Redman, and a deejay with dancing after dinner. It was obviously our most successful local event yet!

The Awards, of course, were the highlight of the evening. Sarah DePalma came away the big winner this year, hauling in not only the Lifetime Achievement Award, but also most coveted honor: the Apogee Award. Desirée Walton also pulled in one of the big honors, snagging the inaugural Peoples' Choice Award (created this year by Ms. Lilly Roddy.)

Other top honors saw the initial Champion Award, given to the individual(s) outside the TG community who have stood out as staunch supporters of transgenders and their issues, going to both Sue Null of PFLAG Houston, and Dan Di-Donato; and the counterpart Champions Award for similar groups, organizations and companies, going out to PFLAG National. The Dee McKellar Merit Award went up to the frozen tundra, where Minnesota's gain from Houston - Katrina Rose -



The Unity Committee Class of 2000 takes a bow: Front (L-R) Rose Wall, Sarah Jane Connell, Stacy Fisher, Brandi Welch Williams, Chris Duffy, Brenda Thomas & Lilly Roddy. Back (L-R) Vanessa Edwards Foster, Jessica Ann Redman, facilitator Desirée Walton, Vikki Lynn Skelton, Michelle Gregory, Melanie Black and Sara Rook pose after a truly successful Unity Banquet!

president, Sean Carter stated it simply: "It was awesome!" Planning for the Caucus' Awards Gala later this year, Carter mentioned he wanted to take a couple of hints from our Unity Banquet. He was especially impressed with the slide presentation, and wanted to work in a similar one for the Caucus event.

This year's Unity Banquet was one for the ages! What an ambitious and impressive way for the Southeast Texas Transgender community to begin



At Left: The 3 Amigas cut up at the banquet, (L-R) Vanessa, Desirée & Jessica trade quips.

At Right: TATS Classic®, circa the mid-90's (L-R) Beth Richard, Vanessa, Monica Roberts, Sarah DePalma, April Lauper & Sarah's mate, Lori Rice, pose for proof that the longtime TATS members are still remaining active!



pulled in that honor.

Overall, the feedback from the banquet was that it was a "smashing success!"

"This is the most impressive event the community has ever put on!" said Phyllis Frye after making her speech at the end of the program. "[I want to] congratulate Desirée and her friends on doing such an excellent job!" Even her guest speaker, Christie Littleton, was amazed at the size and activity of the Houston community.

Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus

the 2000's! It has certainly raised the bar on the expectation for future events! Certainly, no more will one person be able to do an entire banquet - thus the Unity Committee. For the attendees, however, we will have an event to truly look forward to! If you want to be a part of creating next year's history, get involved! Join the Unity Committee and be a part of next year's record-breaking event!

## UNITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

(Continued from Page 5)

having a great time in getting reacquainted with friends that they had not seen in a while and in making new friends. Truly, we did eat, drink and were merry.

### TAKE MY PICTURE! TAKE MY PICTURE!

We also had the opportunity to have our picture taken by a professional photographer for a very small fee (\$7 per shot...no that is not Tequila). You even got to take your picture home that night with



A shell-shocked Sarah takes the Apogee winners' walk.

you. I had two pictures take of myself, a solo and then one with a very dear friend. Then several of the girls and myself had the privilege of having a few shots (No, I said it wasn't Tequila!) for the photographers port folio. That was fun.

There were many ladies and gentlemen having their pictures taken. The photographer also roamed around and took pictures (with permissions given of course) of various individuals throughout the Banquet time. Hopefully, we will get to see

some of these in a Unity album sometime soon.

### THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE EVENING!

In my personal opinion, all the above would and exciting. But they were not the highlight of the  
(Continued on Page 9)



A shot of the crowd, April 8, at the Westchase Hilton for Unity Banquet 2000!

# A CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN TASK FORCE

## A National TG Community Treasure Steps Down: Kerry Lobel Leaves After Three Years At NGLTF

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**K**erry Lobel resigned her position as Executive Director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force on Friday, April 7. Lobel was under no pressure to leave, and was indeed asked not to resign by board co-chairs Rachel Rosen and Jerry Clark and other board members. But in an interview with the Washington Blade earlier this year, she replied "Three years was exactly the right time for me to accomplish what I set out to accomplish. The Task Force is in its best shape ever," Lobel continued. "It's time to go."

Lobel, 46, first joined the staff of NGLTF in January 1995 as deputy director, and became its executive director in December 1996. Under Lobel's leadership, NGLTF has nearly doubled its budget and staff; strengthened NGLTF's focus on state and local organizing. In addition, she expanded the Policy Institute, NGLTF's think tank; and championed the inclusion of many diverse constituencies in the GLBT movement – most especially (and precious to us) was the unequivocal inclusion and support of transgenders in that movement.



Outgoing Dir, Kerry Lobel

"[NGLTF] has stabilized dramatically," said Ken Sherrill, an openly gay political science professor at New York's Hunter College. "You don't hear stories of pitched battles and deep division that you used to hear. The organization may have



Kerry Lobel (C) enjoys a laugh with TATS girls Vanessa & Monica at the IFGE convention in March.

become a little less ideological, which is also good. [Lobel's] been very skillful at getting an organizational image of being progressive without being crazy."

Indeed, it was that sense of integrity that permeated the entire organization, and seemingly everything it touched. Quietly confident in demeanor, Kerry Lobel was never one to mince words when it came to compromising values. The most vivid examples of that were her public resignation from the Millennium March Board, and her staunch support of transgender inclusion in ENDA.

(Continued on Page 16)

## Elizabeth Toledo Tapped As New Exec. Dir. For NGLTF

By Peter Freiberg

**T**he National Gay and Lesbian Task Force this week named Elizabeth Toledo, a vice president of the National Organization for Women, as its new executive director. Toledo, 38, who came out as a Lesbian less than a year ago, will replace Kerry Lobel, who resigned April 7 after three years at NGLTF's helm.

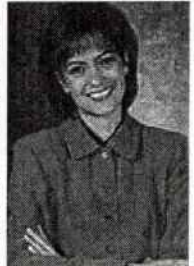
In an interview with the Blade, Toledo said she has worked on Lesbian issues as NOW's vice president for action since 1997 and was instrumental in organizing the group's Lesbian Rights Summit that was held last spring. She joined the board of the Millennium March on Washington after NOW formally endorsed the event in February.

Previously, Toledo said, Gay-related issues were prominent priorities when she served as full-time president of San Francisco NOW and subsequently as president of California NOW.

Toledo said NGLTF is similar to NOW in that "it's got a real commitment to building communities and creating change. ... One of the hardest tasks is to expand coalitions [supporting Gay equality], and NGLTF can be at the forefront of that."

Jerry Clark, co-chair of NGLTF's board, said Toledo's having come out so recently was not

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NGLTF's Incoming Exec. Director, Elizabeth Toledo

# Bad News for Texans: Courts Change Gender Criteria

By Phyllis Frye

**C**hromosomes, not physical characteristics, will now be used in Texas for all determinations of gender. An invasive and frequently inaccurate use of chromosome patterns for gender was mandated by Chief Justice Hardberger of the Texas 4th Court of Appeals in September 1999, in the wrongful death suit brought by Christie Lee Littleton concerning her late husband.

Since the ruling, which also invalidated her Kentucky marriage license and 7-year marriage, Mrs. Littleton petitioned for review of the case by the Texas Supreme Court. In March 2000, Texas' highest court denied hearing her case.

Her new attorney, Phyllis Randolph Frye of Houston and a native San Antonian, will file for extension and subsequent rehearing by the Supreme Court on Monday, April 3, 2000. The case affects all Texans, and some potentially seriously in matters of marriage, inheritance, insurance, and even incarceration.

According to Frye, "In future wrongful death actions, the invasive chromosome testing of the deceased and the surviving spouse will be routine. Many married partners are not aware of their chromosomal makeup."

"Studies show that in Texas alone, between 20,000 (0.1%) and 802,000 (4%) residents, may have non-conforming patterns. Applying the Littleton holding, these marriages are as void as Mrs. Littleton's without the partners being aware. The surviving spouse will be



Phyllis Frye (at podium) announces her taking the case of Christie Littleton (L) at the Unity Banquet, as Texas Human Rights Fund's Don Skipwith (C) looks sympathetically at Christie.

left with no legal recourse, a voided marriage, and a legally, court-imposed, change of sex."

Frye continues by stating that the same percentage of the population will also be affected in probate proceedings and insurance coverage. "Currently, Littleton is being cited in other states in probate actions where there is no will. The children of the deceased parent want to void that parent's current marriage. This would increase their share of the estate by eliminating the statutory share of the surviving

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TATS TAKES AGGIES BY STORM....

(Continued from Page 3)

group, asking about whether I could find someone around college-age to address their group. As fate would have it, I was just making my first few contacts with a 22-year old, soon-to-be TATS member who was soon to be out of the Navy. Once I contacted Mara Alexandra Flores – whom I'd never even met in person at that point – and got a thumbs-up from her on doing such a panel, I sent back a positive reply to Jordan. Jordan was happy, and said he needed to get with the group to set things up.

That was the last I heard from Jordan for a while....

It was also about the time I stopped getting regular contacts with Mara. As my schedule was quickly filled with things to do, the College Station visit sat on the back burner, and I didn't concern myself over it much. A few months passed. Then suddenly, I got word again that Jordan was looking to set up a panel, and had a date specified: could we do it? It gave me an opportunity to drop an Email to Mara to check her status. She was now out of the Navy, just beginning her transition, and very much interested in the panel! After confirming Jessica Redman, and attempting unsuccessfully to get Sarah DePalma, we wrote back to give the news.

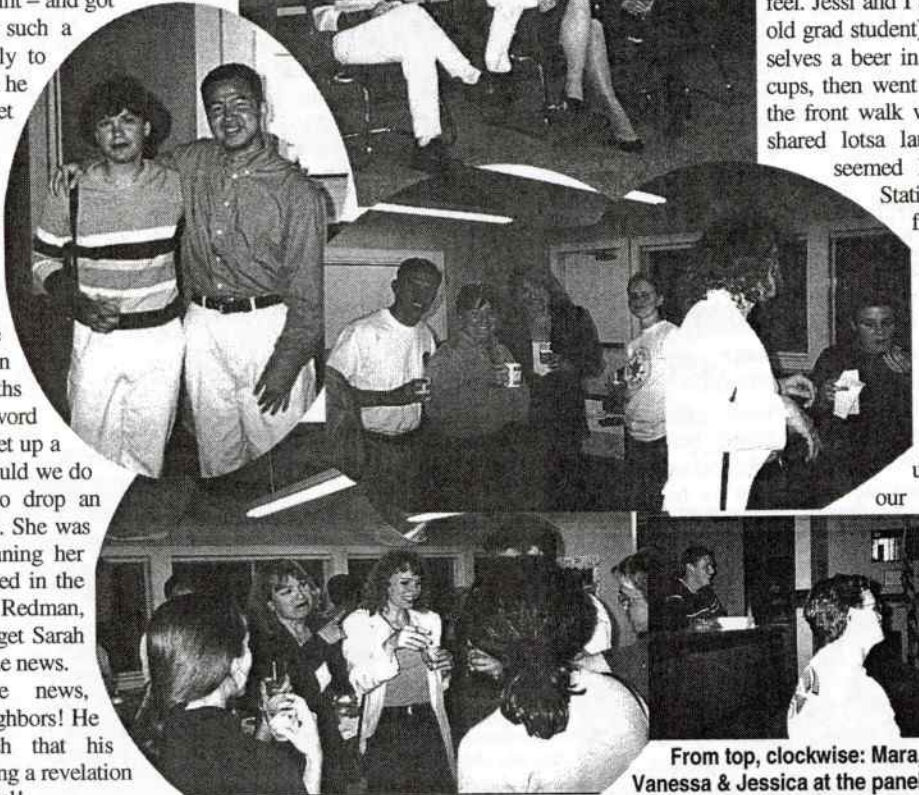
Jordan, upon hearing the news, whooped so loud it scared his neighbors! He talked up the panel so much that his GLBTaggies were almost expecting a revelation from him sometime during the panel!

And the Aggie group really took care of us! We were treated to dinner at Johnny Carino's Italian Restaurant before proceeding to the panel. Jordan even offered to have us put up at a motel, or at one of the students' place, should we desire to stay over for the night!

As Jessica and I arrived, we got our first chance to see Mara, who was waiting for us along with Jordan and Natalie Wilson. Mara was a really sweet, somewhat shy girl, and only with some prodding allowed that this was her first time out in public!!! Yikes! News to me! And here I was, making this girl drive solo to College Station, waiting at a restaurant without us, and (topping it off) sitting on a panel!!! What was I, nuts?!

The dinner was delicious, and the company was delightful! We got a chance to meet the GLBTA group's pixie-ish president, Megan Wright. As the saying goes, big things sometimes come in small packages! Later Robert Davis and Robert Corbett joined us. Just sitting and chatting with these kids, with the bright minds and wonderful outlooks, in the midst of what is one of the more conservative, machismo-loving campuses in a state known for such image, really impressed us greatly! They were aware it was the best possible environment they could land in; but they seemingly took it all in stride, dealing with it rather blithely.

The panel itself was wonderful! We had a very attentive group of gay, lesbian and bisexual students; as well as a



From top, clockwise: Mara, Vanessa & Jessica at the panel; Jessica (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) hangs out with Natalie Wilson (4<sup>th</sup> from left), while Vanessa talks Aimee out of her necklace.; the man behind the panel – Jordan Davis (L) – along with Robert Corbett (R); Jessica & Vanessa cut up at the post-panel reception; Mara finds an admirer at the reception Thurs. night.

of steel! Both Jessi and I were impressed!

After the panel, and the obligatory overstaying our allotted time answering questions, we headed over to a very accepting church (whose name escapes me) for a reception after! We sat down, snacking on cookies and cokes, and found groups of chairs being drawn into circles and the question-and-answer sharing went on for another couple hours. Aimee even gave me a memento of the trip to College Station: a gorgeous rainbow necklace right off of her neck!

At about 11 PM, we bid adieu to Mara, and took up a number of the students on an invitation to hang out Aggie-student style! What, you ask, do GLBT students in College Station do for diversion? Well, we were invited to go stand out on Duddley's Bar's front porch! Since most of the students weren't 21 yet (drinking age), they were consigned to the front sidewalk in front of the bar. Not exactly the kind of invitation that appeals to the more 'mature' set. But since Jessica and I aren't all that mature, we decided: Let's do it! Live life like the Aggie GLBT students do! Hangin' out on Duddley's front porch on a

Thursday night!

You guessed it, we had a blast! It wasn't what I was expecting at all. The strip of bars on Northgate (just across from the north edge of the campus) was fairly busy – even on a Thursday night! It actually reminded me of Spring Break; it definitely had that feel. Jessi and I and Aimee (a 25-year old grad student) went in and got ourselves a beer in keg-style, big plastic cups, then went back out to stand on the front walk with the students! We shared lotsa laughs, and met what

seemed like half of College Station, before Jessi and I finally drug our carcasses back to Houston in the wee hours of the morning.

Oh, and of course, the panel was very warmly received! "You did a wonderful job helping [us] understand a part of our community that we

don't have much interaction with here in College Station," stated Robert (6-foot rule) Corbett. "I had a great time getting to know each of you.."

"I can honestly tell you that I thought I knew virtually nothing on the subject of transgenderism, but now I realize I knew more than I

thought," stated Lauren Mendeck. "While I'm not transgendered myself, the stories told Thursday were remarkably similar ... to my own coming out, and it helped me realize just how diverse people can be. I was able to identify with you quite a bit! Most importantly, I finally gained some understanding. Before, the most exposure I'd had to transgenderism was Jerry Springer and the like...not exactly the best of sources!" Mendeck added, "I don't understand sometimes why people can be so silly as to reject someone based on two things: misunderstandings and a lack of knowledge. If people were to open their minds a bit ... the world would be a much better place!" Very well said! Couldn't have done better myself!

"I fully understand and agree with your reasons for doing the panels," Mendeck continued. "It compliments

(Continued on Page 10)

# TRANSGENDER SEX WORKER BRUTALLY MURDERED IN WASHINGTON, DC

Submitted by Jessica Xavier

WASHINGTON, DC – In the early morning hours of Easter Sunday, April 23, Tyra Henderson, a 22-year old African-American transgendered person, was found murdered in the 3600 block of 13th Street in Northwest Washington. She had been bludgeoned to death. There were reports that her body was mutilated (her breasts were slashed and her penis cut off) but the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) has denied them. Earlier that night she had been working the 5th Street NW corridor. A friend reported her missing after she did not return from a date.

A 911 call was made at 4 a.m. Sunday morning, reporting a woman yelling, "help, help, call the police" from the 3600 block of 13th Street NW.

According to MPD, officers from the Metropolitan Police Department's 4th District responded, saw nothing and left. Two hours later, the 911 caller, having not seen the any police, called 911 a second time to report a body outside of her house. An ambulance finally responded, but Tyra Henderson was already dead.

The Metro Section of the Washington Post, following its usual pattern of excreable coverage of transgendered people, erased the victim's transgendered identity in a story on Monday, April 24. Despite evidence of overkill, the MPD has labeled this a pick-up murder and not a hate crime, and have stated they have no suspects in the case at this time.

"Tyra's dad used to beat her up for playing

with dolls, before he threw her out onto the streets of Washington, where sex work was her only option," stated national trans-activist, Gwen A. Smith. "Now she is number two-hundred-and-one on the 'Remembering Our Dead' website, killed Easter Sunday.

"How many is it going to take? How many have to die... before this becomes unacceptable?"

The Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance (GLAA) has asked the police to investigate why the police failed to respond appropriately to the first 911 call. The ACLU has been contacted by the family and is looking into the case. Despite reports of MPD harassment, GLAA will continue to monitor the case and work with the police.

## Schnectady TG Fatally Slashed

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

(with excerpts by Bobbi Jo Williams)

Residents of a Schnectady neighborhood apartment building were awakened before dawn, March 23, by a loud argument between two men, and then a dying man's cries for help. When police arrived at about 4:30 a.m. they found Frank Yazum, 40, with his throat slashed and bleeding to death in his second floor rear apartment, said Detective Lt. Jack Falvo. "It appears that there was some type of sharp-edged weapon that was used on the victim," Falvo said.

Tenants in the building said Yazum, a local Tri-Ess member who went by the name Stephanie, was a friendly polite small person who often went out at night dressed as a woman in a long black wig and high heels. "I'd say hi to him and we'd talk sometimes when he came out of the house and got into cabs dressed as a woman," said Thomas Caulfield who lives in the building next door. "He



had his thing but he was a nice little guy who wouldn't hurt a soul. This makes you sick."

"She weighed less than a hundred pounds; ninety-five, I think she told me once – a size four or six. Such a little girl," was how

her friend, Bobbi Jo Williams described her. "Her Polish features gave her the look of a doll – not a Barbie or Chatty Kathy, but the kind of dolls you find at European fairs." According to Williams, she also suffered from diabetes and epilepsy.

Police have no confirmed suspects or a motive yet in the brutal slaying of Yazum, though her wallet was found discarded on the stairs leading down to the front door, which has a security buzzer.

A man who said he lives upstairs from Yazum's second-floor apartment said he heard the victim come home just after 4 a.m. with at least one other person. He gave a chilling account of the moments that followed.

"Smash smash smash. The whole house shook and it sounded like somebody was throwing Frank up against the wall," the man, who did not want to be identified, said. "Then he screamed 'Ahhh, help me someone is trying to kill me!' Then there was a high-pitched scream then nothing. You could have heard a pin drop and I'll never forget that moment for the rest of my life because I knew Frank was dead." The tenant, who estimated the altercation lasted little more than two minutes, said he heard one person run down the stairs and a car quickly speed off. Tenants said they did not get a good look at the man who ran away and police did not release a description.

Stephanie was seen by a friend the weekend before at a local gay bar they frequented. Bobbi Jo Williams recounted Stephanie going to the back of the bar to play pool. When Williams searched for her before leaving, she noticed Stephanie embraced in a kiss with an unidentified man she'd been playing pool with. It is unknown whether the man was connected with the subsequent stabbing of Yazum later that week.

## In Memory of Robin West (born David Strelsky) 1959 - 2000

David Strelsky, aka: Robin West, Born Nov. 26, 1959 in Pasadena TX, was found dead in his apartment on April 25 by family members. At the cause of press time, death was not certain. An autopsy performed of his family. Robin, as he was known in the GLBT community, had taken a leave of absence for a still undetermined illness. Pictured at last year's Unity Banquet, Robin participated in a number of community events last year.



## Planet Femmé™ By Desirée Walton

### TATS TAKES AGGIES BY STORM

(Continued from Page 9)

my personal theory for increasing tolerance and awareness – especially those concerning GLBT rights: increase exposure through the accurate and positive giving of information. If you get people to think about the issue and consider other viewpoints then I'd consider a panel a success!"

"I know that what you and the other two panelists said had a definite impact on me," Mendek finished, "as it helped clear up my misunderstandings and added a bit of knowledge to this subject!" In her words, then, that would make this panel a success!

Beyond the positive feedback, we also had a few instructors approach for possible future panels as well. As Robert Corbett, the social chair for the GLBTA group stated, "I ... hope that you can come back and talk to us again next semester." We look forward to returning to A&M too, Robert!



**UNITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

*(Continued from Page 5)*

event in my opinion. I felt that the highlight of the event was having the privilege to share in Christina Littleton's story from her very own lips and heart. Believe me, I and many others in the room shed some tears. The outcome of this case, whether you are part of the TG Community or not, will affect everyone in one way or another. Please remember Christina, the lawyers handling her case and the judges hearing the case in your prayers. They all need our prayers for this to turn out in the betterment of all concerned. You can read about her story, what the judges have said in the lower courts and much more at <http://christie.womynweb.net/>. Thank you Christina for your courage and your determination to not see your rights and the rights of others in the future trampled over by the government. Know that I and others are all out here telling your story and standing behind you in any way that we can.

**LAST WORDS!**

Eventually all good things must come to an end, they say. The Unity Banquet may have come to an end but the message does not have to. The

message of Unity among the TG Community, where we all stop competing against each other

and arguing with each other over various issues (much of them truly petty) and begin to *work together for the common good of the tg community as a whole*. Until we do this across this great country of ours, we will never see the changes that need to be made in order for us to truly enjoy the



The Chicken Dance, or the YMCA? City councilmbr. Annise Parker (C) shows Jessica Redman (L), Vanessa Edwards Foster & April Lauper (R) how she did the YMCA Dance at the Urban League.



Above: Desirée's crowning achievement - her 'tiara' as the royal, sovereign 'princess of the 2000 Unity Banquet', as presented by her lady-in-waiting, Jessica.

At Right: Turn out the lights, the party's over! Jessica and her beau, Scott Simpson pause to reflect over a fabulous evening.



So, next year don't miss the event of the year... Unity Banquet 2001! (An Odyssey You Don't Want to Miss!)



**COURTS CHANGE GENDER....**

*(Continued from Page 8)*

spouse."

"The same number of Texans could be affected and find themselves without a share, with no marriage and a legally, court-imposed, change of sex."

In matters of insurance, Frye goes on to say, "The impact on the insurance industry, specifically addressing life insurance only, will be expensive. Many life insurance applications, already require medical examinations. To this will be added the additional expense of chromosome testing which will effect a change in the application of actuarial tables with associated premium re-calculations."

"The same number of Texans could be effected and find themselves without a policy or with a

premium change, and with a legally, court-imposed, change of sex."

Even law enforcement and the penal system will be confronted with a new challenge to an already burdened institution. "Within the criminal justice system, inmates in every county are classified and segregated by sex using the appearance of their genitals. Under Littleton, invasive and expensive chromosome testing will



be required to verify the genital inspection."

"The same percentage of incarcerated Texans could be effected and find themselves in expensive segregation, having a court-imposed, change of sex with its resulting harassment, and tax **(Continued on Page 14)**

Immediately following the Unity Banquet, Phyllis Frye (L) with Christie Littleton go on KPFT's After Hours to announce to Sarah DePalma and the radio audience of Phyllis and civil rights attorney Alyson Meiselman taking on the Littleton v. Prange suit, and the implications of the case.



*FATS Out In  
The Community...  
at the PFLAG*

*Scholarship Banquet*

At Right: Vanessa Edwards Foster (L-R), State Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt of Dallas, and Jessica Redman pose at the banquet. At Left: Jessica (L) and Vanessa cut up with Harryette.



*A New Perspective ... By Jessica Ann Redman*

Recently on a flight between Houston to Dallas one Sunday morning, I had a very unnerving experience my plan was struck by lightning in a storm and immediately afterward hit severe turbulence. This was far and above the worst flight I had ever been on even before the lightning strike, simply because the plane began to bounce all over the sky as soon as we had left the ground, however I will never forget the wonderful change of perspective that flight gave me.

I had gotten up that morning late as usual, thrown on my make up, gotten dressed in a pair of jeans and a sweater and rushed to the airport... I was on my way to visit my children for the day.

Battling traffic that made no sense... traffic on I-45 on a Sunday morning??? Cursing all the way to the airport in my best Anglo-Saxon, I finally arrived at Hobby. Then I jumped in line where I went to the gate to check in. A not so nice bubba cut in line in front of me. A very pleasant young lady at the gate checked my ID and informed me that the flight would be a little late taking off. I grumbled something unrepeatable, as I went to the ladies room to try and make some semblance of order out of my appearance. No need to frighten my children more than usual!

Finally, we all lined up to get on the flight... everyone was elbowing each other in a hurry to board. I was unable to sit in my usual seat and ended up facing backwards, squeezed in right next to the bubba who had cut in front of me, my luck... With that the plane took off.

The pilot came on after about five minutes in the air and apologized for the bumpy flight. The flight attendants began serving us the obligatory drinks and peanuts and just as they got to my section it hit.

First an incredible flash of light... then the loudest boom I have ever heard... then the pilot announced, "flight attendants sit now!" Then in one of those unforgettable moments the aircraft was falling... sideways... fast!

Drinks, cups, peanuts and people flew and

bounced around the inside of the aircraft. I screamed and grabbed the man's arm next to me... then we all heard a roar as the pilot struggled to regain control of the aircraft and pull it out of the dive. People all around me were screaming and everyone I saw had the look of absolute terror on their face.

Repeatedly the plane bucked and kicked as we continued to fall... The screams and cries were punctuated by bangs and pops as things began to fall out of the serving areas in the front and rear of the plane. In slow motion things seemed to happen...

I was very surprised to have flashes of the ones I loved go through my mind... I thought, "oh come on, I have worked too hard for too long for this to happen now."

Finally, as the pilot gave the plane more and more speed we pulled back to being horizontal. When things seemed to calm down the pilot came over the speaker and said, "that ladies and gentlemen was the worst turbulence I have ever experienced, we will have a med team meet the aircraft at the gate," I apologize for scaring anyone but we are safely on our way again.

With that the clean up and check up began, the flight attendants got out mops and totally wiped down the serving areas, stacks and stacks of napkins were passed out to customers and phone numbers to call for free dry cleaning were distributed. Bubba suddenly turned gentleman and asked if I was okay while wiping off the coke he had spilled on my seat, I pulled my fingers free from his arm.

Suddenly though a miracle occurred... people who five minutes before hardly knew each other began to talk like they had been best friends for years. Everyone was in a great mood no one bitched or though a fit about their clothes being soaked. Everyone was happy to be alive. Several of us got up and started helping the overwhelmed flight attendants clean up and help with the

children who were crying and the old people who were still frightened. The pilot landed to a resounding round of applause from everyone on the plane twenty minutes later. Before I left, I made friends with two other girls who were helping, Flight Attendants but off duty on vacation, and we still talk three weeks later.

What had happened in those few brief minutes that changed peoples attitudes and lives??? Why were they all acting so differently??? Two very simple things... Reality and Mortality.

Reality... suddenly all the day to day pressures that are truly unimportant were stripped away in the blink of an eye. Everyone realized that being there on time, or where we sat on the plane, or if we had enough room, or where was our luggage, and even if we had a little Coke spilled on us didn't really matter. Why? Because we almost weren't alive to worry what if...

Mortality... a very scary word for most people. We all will die, there is no get out of death free card in this game. Each of us on that plane had faced the thought of a world with out us in it. Pretty heady stuff. One thing it does do is make you realize how small and insignificant we really are, and how much we love those in our lives who will remember us after we are gone.

So what does this have to do with each of you? One thing and one thing only... Live your life... Live it to the fullest. Be all you are, live, love, and be happy, because nothing else really matters.

Yours in the light... *Jessica.*



The author (R) Jessica, back home with two of her friends who love her very much, Sean Carter (L) & Vanessa.

**A & M GALVESTON....**

*(Continued from Page 3)*

confirmed Chris, and arm-twisted Cairistona Douglas (in order to pull her out of the shell a bit), and talked Chris into convincing Troy Ham into going – we had our T-guy! Sarah Jane Connell, the only CATS member with panel experience from Sam Houston State, came along for good measure. And with yours truly up at the podium, and wandering Donahue-style behind the panelists, we had a full stage!

Thank goodness we were given a generous amount of time! The panelists all did well – especially our newbies! Troy was a bit shy and reticent, but Chris warmed up fairly easily. The biggest surprise, though, was Cairistona! In fact, after seeing the initial nerves from Chris and Troy, I was concerned Cairistona might lock up.

So much for that worry! Cairistona hit the ground running once she got the microphone in



**Above: Monica Roberts ponders while Sarah Jane Connell tells her story, (L-R) Troy Ham, Jessica Redman, Chris Duffy and Vanessa Edwards Foster.**

**At Left: Jessica takes a turn at the mic, as Troy (L), Chris and Vanessa (R) watch her work the crowd!**

hand, making a very compelling case for gender different folks in general. It was almost like hearing a presentation during lobbying. For someone who we thought might be in her shell, she sure found her way out of it rather quickly.

This was our first venture into the Galveston

area since the panel Sarah DePalma and Daniell McCleney did one back in 1997 at UTMB. However, after speaking with Dr. Cole – who was pleased with the panel presentation – there’s an excellent chance it won’t be our last one for the next three years!

**THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT....**

*(Continued from Page 3)*

and worrying about their feelings of different sexuality or gender identity), or even kill them (unprotected sex that could lead to various STD’s, including AIDS).

Over the course of a few months, the Friday nights and Saturday mornings of these kids – and a few parent volunteers acting as overseers and peers – are spent at the church. There, they have frank discussions about that word that shakes most parents, and would send other, more conservative religious congregations frothing at the mouth: sex. Much as most people would love the convenience of sweeping it under a rug, and having it disappear; the reality is that it is a part of all our lives. The problem occurs when, because of parental or authoritarian discomfort, the decision is made at some point to stigmatize rather than discuss the subject. Because of this, sex is fixed with a taboo of being morally lacking or, at worst, devious.

This is where the Diversity In Sexuality class at Emerson Unitarian comes diverges from the usual. Rather than hide from the subject, they tackle it head on with factual learning. Rather than allow the mystique of the unknown to blossom and grow, they bring in real-life human beings to give personal experiences of what really occurs. And that’s where we come in....

A good friend, John Kellett, had given a heads up after the First Unitarian panel, of a program that Emerson Unitarian was doing. Certainly this was intriguing, especially considering the audience. John himself had done a panel on being gay, and had left quite an impression on the group: he didn’t

look gay, he didn’t act like how they thought gays should act – in essence, he crushed all the preconceived stereotypes. While we were concerned – our audience is usually a bit older, and we weren’t used to relating on an adolescent level – the decision was made to proceed.

With that, I contacted Barbara Crotty, one of the parent mentors for the program, and set up the



**Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) and Bradley Gammell at the Emerson Unitarian panel, teaching the kids we’re more than caricatures – we’re real people!**

panel once Jessica’s schedule was confirmed. Having an intersexed panelist was an excellent way to maximize the information and show the comparison and contrast of the two issues.

The class, as stated earlier, is a Friday night to Saturday afternoon program – meaning they did a bit of a sleepover at the church. As I walked in, I was surprised by sleeping bags and obviously slept-in clothes. Hanging out in the kitchen area just before the presentation, it was almost like being in someone’s home during a sleepover or slumber party. It was certainly a very casual atmosphere, with kids and blankets sprawled over chairs and on floors.

The kids were a bit shy; however, they had

taken the liberty of writing down a number of questions beforehand to be answered during the discussion. Not surprisingly, the shyness covered up a deep curiosity; as evidenced by the handwritten questions. Many of the questions were very probing, but in the innocent manner of youth. Some of the questions included “are you attracted to women or men?” and “if you’re a woman, do you still have a penis?” Blunt as the questions seem, they were honest requests for information; and we obliged as delicately as we knew how. Even the parents, Brad Gammell and Barbara Crotty got into the act; asking a number of questions, or tacking on more in-depth questions to some of the more basic ones answered.

All in all, the panel was another success! Both Barbara and Brad raved over our presentation; and considered it very worthwhile. How effective it was with the kids? Only time will tell. At least we’ve made one huge victory: they no longer only associated transgenders with RuPaul, Dennis Rodman and Jerry Springer ‘guests.’ Like the panel with John Kellett before us, we’ve opened their eyes to the fact that we are, indeed, real people!

*In case you're planning on camping this year please note the following public service announcement issued by the National Forest Service:*

*Tourists visiting our Arizona Parks are warned to wear tiny bells on their clothing when hiking in bear country. The bells warn away MOST bears. Hikers and campers are also cautioned to watch the ground along the trail.*

*Pay particular attention to bear droppings in order to be alert to the presence of bears. One can recognize bear droppings because they contain tiny bells.*

# ASTRO FORECAST FOR MAY 2000

By Lilly Roddy

Gosh, this is going to be an interesting beginning of the month. Most all of the planets are going to be in the sign of Taurus and the rest are going to be in Aquarius. I have not seen this kind of line up of the planets since 1973. The first thing that comes to my memory about that period was the gasoline crisis. The people that will be the most impacted by this are those that have their Sun and/or other planets in Taurus, Scorpio, Leo, and Aquarius. There will be a couple of days that will have a lot of stress associated with this planetary line up. But in reality, you should have been feeling the building intensity since the last 2 weeks in April. The most intense days will be the 3rd, 4th, 8th, 9th, and 10th. Try to keep an even keel. The Sun begins its journey in Taurus and walks into Gemini on the 20th. Mercury, Venus and Mars also start the month in Taurus but enter Gemini on 14th, 25th and the 3rd respectively. The rest of the planets remain in the same sign where they have been since the beginning of the year.

**Aries** — Money and self worth are what you are looking at this month. Self worth problems can show up with friends that continually take advantage of you and your good nature. Others will have to make more of an effort if they want to be in your life. Otherwise, you will be out on an adventure looking for new people to put in those friendship spots. At the end of the month, your sense of humor returns and you won't take life so seriously.

**Taurus** — This is your birthday month and it is going to be a heck of a one. This is a major, extreme, fanatical time of reevaluation in your life. Where are you going? Are you happy with this direction? If not, look for some significant changes in areas of career, relationships, friends, and family. Your tolerance and patience will be a thing of the past, especially in the beginning two weeks of May. You may want to put some distance between you and any problems that you have. This would certainly help your future decision but won't change how you feel about your current situation.

**Gemini** — There is a bubbling cauldron inside of you. You are looking a way to release this build up of energy. I suggest a spiritual retreat or a get away from your routines. Paris or London would be fill the bill nicely. If not there, then Galveston will work. By the end of the month you are feeling like your old self, full of spice and vinegar. This is a great month to take risk and stand up for yourself. Exercise and diet programs will work nicely as well. Just don't expect to do the same old things as you did.

**Cancer** — This is a very testing time with your friends and group associations. Some will become painfully obvious that they have outlived their

usefulness in your life. Others will have to be re-evaluated and reoriented into your life in a different way. One way that this will be evident is that friendships will have to be more balanced. If you feel that you are carrying the ball in the maintenance of the relationship, it will have to be more balanced or come to an end. At the end of the month you will need some time for retreat and rest.

**Leo** — May is about your career and who is in charge of that part of your life. Anyone who tries to push their weight around with you will be tangling with the Lion that your sign represents. Watch out for conflicts with the amount of time that you spend with your lovers and that time you spend at work. Your lovers could seem very emotional distant this month. If you feel properly ignored, you will want to wait until the end of the month before you go out hunting mission. Otherwise, you will attract the same time of people that you have at home.

**Virgo** — This is a great month for you to look at doing different thing in your career and exploring your more creative side. You are feeling very restless at you work. If you don't act on this feeling, you will be engaging in more conflictual experiences with the people that you work with and deal with as customers. Also, If you would like to get away from your precious routine, it would be really good for you. Otherwise you will be more picky and critical than usual. And you don't want to overdo your better qualities.

**Libra** — Time to remove those nice mask that you wear around your lover and your close friends and let them see the real you. The obsessive controlling part of you that wants everyone to be nice, polite and gracious. And you get to be the self centered, narcissistic relationship partners that you attract. This is real balance. The thing you always seek. Put your elbows on the table. Chew with your mouth open. Leave the bed unmade in the morning. Wear bright colors instead of trying to blend in. And enjoy the shocked looks on those closest to you. Next month, you can go back to your normal perfect self.

**Scorpio** — The big line up of the planets this month puts all of them in your relationship house of your sign. You will have the fortune to expose any uncertainty about your commitment. And for you to challenge your partner with any uncertainty that you feel from them. It sounds like a time to clear the air with your life partner. And avoid going home to visit the family and taking your partner with you during the first 2 weeks of May. If you are looking for a Cattle-Lus, with all the planets in Taurus, you will find one there. Moooo! Get along little doggie!

**Sagittarius** — Feeling really pushed at work? Getting the notion that everyone expects you to carry the whole load? Well, you are correct. And you are ready for a

break but you just can't get away to enjoy one. You have over committed yourself once again. When will you learn that there are 27 hours in a 24 hour day and not 30 like you want to believe. Watch out for your health. If you get signals that your health is deteriorating, blame others and take the rest of the day off. Next month, the challenge of relationships and how you can get along without them.

**Capricorn** — Everyone around you is feeling stressed, bent out of shape and pushed to their limits. And since this is how you feel most of the time, all is right with the world. Your creative energies are flowing. Take this month off for play, trips, and self indulgence (you may have to look up that one). Spend time with people that are interesting in having fun. You are not really into the normal work mode. This is a great time to market yourself or ideas since you won't be so caught up in the outcome, you will get more than you expect. Relax, by the end of the month, you will be back to your old self.

**Aquarius** — Basically this month, you are rebuilding your home, family and foundation to fit you, finally. You have struggled with feeling different and out of place your whole life. Now you have the control that you have always wanted. Clean out those psychological closets where your mother hides and those dusty attics where your dad hangs out. You have more control over your choices in your life. This may be why this seems so confusing since you have only dreamed of this kind of power. Your throne awaits you.

**Pisces** — You always seem so calm while people are running around you with their heads and hearts in their hands. You are in a great place to give people sage advice at this time. You see the bigger picture and know how to get the results they need. Just be careful and don't do it for them even if you want to. Save that energy for the last part of the month when your family issues bubble to the surface and you have to take that unexpected trip back home.

Visit Lilly Roddy at <http://www.cybersim.com/hermes>

## Children's Books that Didn't Make the Cut

1. You Are Different and That's Bad
2. The Boy Who Died From Eating All His Vegetables
3. Hammers, Screwdrivers, Knives and Scissors: An "I-Can-Do-It" Book
4. The Kids' Guide to Hitchhiking
5. Curious George and the High-Voltage Fence
6. The Little Sissy Who Snitched
7. Whining, Kicking and Crying to Get Your Way
8. Eggs, Toilet Paper, and Your School
9. Places Where Mommy and Daddy Hide Neat Things

# Why I'll Never Watch Boys Don't Cry

By Katrina C. Rose

**Y**es – Hillary Swank won the Oscar for portraying a female-to-male transsexual. Yes – she even got the name and the pronouns right in her acceptance speech (unlike the voice-over slug who introduced Swank who referred to a “girl” named “Teena Brandon.”)

However, I can't bring myself to go see Boys Don't Cry. No – its not some one Kat boycott, or any kind of boycott for that matter. In fact, I encourage everyone to go see it. I'll probably even buy a ticket for it out of principle. I simply can't bring myself to watch it, though.

Why? I've seen the real thing.

You see, before Boys Don't Cry, there was The Brandon Teena Story, a chilling documentary by Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir. The actual words of the actual murderers, interviewed in prison, have left a permanent imprint on my transgendered psyche. Seeing Kate Bornstein at a loss for words while standing outside the courthouse following listening to the testimony of one of the killers was as powerful as anything that Hollywood could create on a soundstage (it's the only time that I ever have seen Kate at a loss for words.) I've also driven those back roads of southeast Nebraska. While doing so – I felt the fear and the hate.

Transsexuals do cry – and on the Monday morning following the ceremony, nothing will have changed other than Swank's bankability and the look of her trophy case. Thousands of transsexuals will still be crying. Crying because of homelessness. Crying because of being forced to work in the sex industry. Crying because of rejection by family. Crying because of rejection by the movement that they helped start. Crying because they know that they have a better chance of being murdered than of ever getting married.

Crying because they know that its open season on transsexuals.

On the day of the Oscar ceremony alone, look at what was in the news e-mailing from GAIN, the Gender Advocacy Information Network:

- An update from a British newspaper on the recent death of post-op, male-to-female transsexual Christine Chappel which refers to her with male pronouns and almost exclusively by her former name. Will Swank's win cause news agencies to begin referring to this woman by her chosen name?

- An initial report on the murder of Stephanie Yazum, a 40 year-old trans-woman (some reports indicate that she was in the early stages of gender transition; others indicate that she was a cross-dresser), in Schenectady, New York. Will anyone make a movie – or even a non-sensationalistic news story – about this transgendered person?

- Reminders of the murders of Alina Marie Barragan, Chanel Chandler, Lauryn Paige, Vienna Faye Williams, Rita Hester and Tracey Thompson – and how their deaths are virtually ignored by the mainstream media. “Why hasn't the press paid attention?” ponders Noelle Howey. “It's understandable that each and every transgender murder or as-

sault doesn't get full-bore media attention, but the persistent silence surrounding a trend of violence – a trend illustrated in a hit movie, no less – seems unnatural for the time-hook-happy mainstream media.” Indeed, Hollywood. What about these transgendered people?

- A lengthy update on the so-called progress on the “civil union” bill in Vermont. I say ‘so-



transsexuals to change their birth certificate gender designations – meaning that a couple consisting of a male and a male-to-female transsexual is left to guess as to whether they can partake of marriage or non-marriage marriage. Transsexuals were left out – and do the pushers of the same-sex marriage issue give a damn?

- A press release from the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) detailing the doubletalk that HRC has been attempting to pass off to the transgendered community as alleged action on transgender rights issues. After blaming HRC's gender-exclusive policies on Barney Frank, Nancy Buermeyer said in defense that much of the HRC Board and the Congressional sponsors of ENDA are ignorant of the importance of gender

expression to anti-gay discrimination and prejudice. However, when asked by Texas transgender activist Vanessa Edwards-Foster as to what HRC had been doing to educate those people, Buermeyer admitted that the issue is not something she discusses with them. Not disgusting enough? In response to NTAC negotiator Michael Gray pressing for HRC to consider action on the educational process within HRC and to Foster pushing for similar definition of a time frame on outside education, HRC's Tony Varona replied that his organization was too busy



called' because for transsexuals that's all it is. Vermont still has no method for

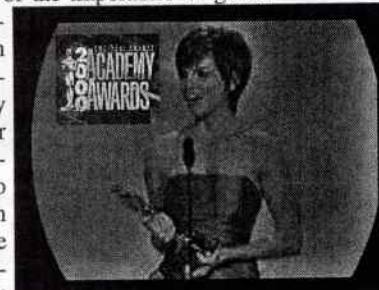
lived to see Barney Frank's non-gender-inclusive ENDA enacted, he would not be covered by it – which would leave him just as excludable from the workforce and just as subject to winding up all but unemployable in rural Nebraska as he was in 1993 when two disgusting pieces of garbage decided that they had authority not only to find out what Brandon's genitals looked like but to kill him for having had the nerve to report what had happened.

I simply can't bring myself to watch Boys Don't Cry. Again – its not out of any disrespect, though. It solely due to weakness – my own. This former boy does cry. I cry whenever I think of how Brandon was shit on during his life and how we are all shit on – not simply by religionist theocrats like Laura Schlesinger but by vicious transphobic elements within the greater queer community. Denial of his identity. Denial of our existence.

And lets not forget that Hardee's spokesstar Norm MacDonald once declared, on Saturday Night Live's Weekend Update, that all who were in any way connected with Brandon existence should be taken out and killed.

It was open season on transgendered people in 1993. Its open season on us now. Transgendered people weren't included in proposed federal sexual orientation civil rights legislation in 1993. We're not part of it now. Nothing has changed for us because of Boy's Don't Cry or because of Hillary Swank's Oscar. And, if Barney Frank and HRC have their way, nothing ever will.

I applaud Hillary Swank and the makers of Boys Don't Cry. But, I hope they'll understand why this transgendered person can't bring herself to see their movie. I see the ultimate hate crime against transgendered people every time I look at the text of Barney Frank's non-gender-inclusive ENDA.



**ELIZABETH TOLEDO....**

*(Continued from Page 8)*

viewed as a negative by the board, given that she is "very knowledgeable" about Gay issues. "She demonstrated her familiarity with key issues," Clark said.

Among the things that led the board to choose Toledo, Clark said, was that "she is deeply committed to family issues. She herself is a Latina Lesbian mother." Clark said, "and, given that family issues right now are sort of at the front of the movement's agenda, it seems entirely appropriate to have someone like Elizabeth [as executive director]."

Toledo said, "I don't come to NGLTF thinking it needs to make a U-turn." She plans to meet with NGLTF staff and board members to familiarize herself "as an insider" with the group before proposing any changes.

"I will be reviewing everything," she said, "hoping to ... [come] up with creative changes to expand our reach. ... We have the opportunity to expand who is involved in NGLTF and who is involved in the movement."

Mandy Carter, a Lesbian activist who knows

Toledo from her own volunteer work on NOW's Lesbian Rights Committee, said Toledo is "a wonderful choice because she is a woman of color" - of Mexican descent - and because of her "progressive background." Carter, a prominent opponent of the Millennium March, lobbied Toledo and NOW not to endorse the event. Although Carter disagrees with Toledo, who eventually recommended that NOW endorse the march, Carter says: "She's a very accessible person. You pick up the phone and she's there. She's very easygoing and level headed. ... I enjoyed working with her, despite our differences. ... She has a calm way of dealing with things."

In 1992, Toledo married, and has two children, Mia, now 4, and Tomas, 3. She and her husband divorced last year, in part, she says, because of her growing awareness of her sexual orientation. Last summer, she fell in love with Cynthia Jordan, an HRC staffer who was a good friend; they now live together in Montgomery County, Md., with her children.

Speaking of her coming out, Toledo says, "It's a long and personal process to really come to the point where you pursue the kind of life that really makes you happy. I wish it had come to me sooner. I'm very envious of my partner," Toledo said, "who, from a very young age, said, 'This is the way I'm going to be.' ... Hopefully ... at NGLTF ... I can encourage people who have the resources and strength to make these decisions at an earlier time in life."



NGLTF board co-chair Clark said NGLTF had at least 20 applicants who expressed formal interest in the executive director job; of those, a dozen men and women demonstrated that they were qualified, he said. The search committee, made up of staff and board members, recommended three candidates to the board - and the board chose Toledo. The other candidates were not disclosed.

"I'm thrilled," Toledo said. "I'm very excited."

**HATCH VOTES FOR TRANS INCLUSION**

*Houston Teen Coalition Now A 'GLBTQ' Group*

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Something almost slipped our radar this month: the Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals, commonly known as HATCH, brought up the issue of inclusion an unanimously voted for inclusion in their mission statement. According to Caucus president Sean Carter, who attended the meeting, the group is now officially represents Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning youth.



Sean Carter

HATCH mission is to provide a positive environment and support to teenaged GLBTQ youth. The organization a non-profit organization devoted to seeing that young GLBTQ youth are offered a positive role model and peer structure, and that they are provided the education and awareness that they can be positive, productive contributors to society.

You can check out their website at [www.hatchyouth.org/](http://www.hatchyouth.org/)



**KERRY LOBEL LEAVES....**

*(Continued from Page 8)*

During the early stages of the Millennium March planning, when it became obvious to her that the power structure was ignoring the diverse elements of the GLBT community, and keeping the decision making in too tight a circle of players; she swam against the current in the community and dropped out. Earlier, when the HRC-backed, Barney Frank-sponsored ENDA bill was being proposed; she took a very bold step and declared NGLTF would not sacrifice its values and turn its back on a portion of the community it served - the transgender community - in order to opt out for an easier shot at victory. These were decisions that brought her a fair amount of heat from other elements within the community; with comments referring to her as "wrong-headed" and to NGLTF as displaying a "lack of political maturity." Nonetheless, Lobel stuck with her values, didn't dignify their responses, and retained the moral high ground.

About those transgenders that Lobel stuck up for, at the recent IFGE convention, she revealed in how active the national transgender community has become during her tenure. During the plenary speech at the beginning of the convention, Kerry repeated the "commitment that NGLTF made, to all the big cities and all the small towns, that [NGLTF] would be there to push for equality." With her voice cracking, Kerry continued, "without exception, in every small town I went to, someone came up to me - some transgendered person came up - and said to me, 'I'm fulfilling the promise.'" Lobel's

primary motive wasn't so much to push for gay/lesbian rights, as it was to be the voice for those who were without a voice. It was something she performed beautifully!"

In excerpts from her letter of resignation to NGLTF, Lobel recounted her triumphs. "NGLTF has proven that a national organization can both lead the movement in new directions and be relevant and accountable to its constituents. And we've proven that there is no shortage of visionary and committed donors that will support our work. The last five years have taught me much about our wonderful gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement. Together, we have changed the way that our movement thinks about state and local organizing. Together, we have built long-lasting political infrastructure in nearly every state.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity that I have been given to serve our movement and for the trust and confidence that has been placed in me for these many years. I am especially grateful to the thousands of activists around the country who have opened their hearts and their homes to me and to the Task Force. I am forever changed by their lives....

"I have loved each and every day at the Task Force. Now it is time to pause, to reflect and to move on to new adventures. The movement for social justice has been my life's work and passion, and so I know that wherever I go, I won't go too far from my NGLTF family." Speaking on behalf of the transgender community, presumptuous as it may sound, we all hope you stick closet ... and look forward to working together with you very soon!





### Unity Banquet Memories ...

### Memories of a party for the ages The 2000 Unity Banquet!!!

(From bottom left, clockwise): Christie Littleton (L-R) & Vanessa Edwards Foster pause for a glamorous pose. At Top Left, Jerel McNeil (L-R) and Caucus President, Sean Carter, havin' a ball at the banquet! Above (L-R) "Picture this ... a podium, with awards inside of it...: Monica Roberts and Trish Frye watch as Phyllis Frye confirms the protocol for the Peoples' Choice Award with Vanessa, while a bemused Donald Skipwith enjoys the explanation chat. Above right: "Okay, now where's the camera?" The Caucus-oids have trouble making up their mind which direction to look in! (L-R) Board member Tony Carroll, Board member Jessica Redman, President Sean Carter, former Caucus president & City Councilmember Annise Parker, Board member Scott Simpson, Vice President Mike Bodin, Treasurer Vanessa Edwards Foster & Board member Dan DiDonato search for direction, but things are 'sketchy.' At Right: (L-R) Unity Committee facilitator Desirée Walton is impressed with Virginia Prince Award co-winners, Jane Ellen Fairfax (speaking at the podium) and spouse Mary Frances Fairfax.



## An Open Letter From PFLAG - National

It is with joy and some measure of pride that we, the National Board of Directors of PFLAG, gratefully accept the honor of your selection of us for the Houston Transgender Community's first annual Champions Award.

I note that this award is bestowed upon a non-transgender-specific organization which has taken a stand as advocate and ally of the transgender community. We are delighted to receive this acknowledgment of our inclusion, beginning last year, of transgendered persons as a vital part of our entire organization's mission and message.

It may have taken our organization excessively long to take this inclusive step. We have been helped immeasurably through the guidance and encouragement of numbers of transgendered persons in various

parts of the nation. With their help, our staff prepared a kit of materials for persons and chapters to study the issue.

The cause has also been immeasurably advanced by PFLAG member Mary Boenke, the chair of our Transgender Special Outreach Network, author of the booklet, "Our Trans Children," and editor of the longer book, *Trans Forming Families: Real Stories about Transgendered Loved Ones*.

It is a special privilege to share the award spotlight with Sue Null of PFLAG Houston, a truly remarkable person of amazing accomplishment.

We look forward to continued relationship with you and your organization, as well as those throughout the country who work for transgender inclusiveness in all aspects of seeking justice and equality.

With gratitude and appreciation,  
Paul Beeman, President  
PFLAG Board of Directors



TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Plans are in the works for the transgender entry to the 2000 Pride Parade. We're hoping to convince



Christie Littleton down to march in our contingent this year! If you'd like to be involved, attend the Monday night Unity Committee meetings at the Houston Transgender Center, 239½ Westheimer (in back of Suzanne Anderson Realty). For those not familiar, there is

additional parking across the street from Bistro 220 Restaurant, just two doors down towards town.

Speaking of the Pride Parade, it is official now: Chris Duffy, founder of CATS, has been voted in as the next facilitator for the Unity Committee. Congratulations go out to Chris, and hopes for nothing a very successful year!

The Westheimer Street Festival will go on, in exile this year. The event will happen this weekend, May 6 & 7, on the outbound lanes of Allen Pkwy. (on the Buffalo Bayou side.) Those lanes will be shut down, and the usual cast of characters will be there, too. Vendor booths, food, the Urban Animals jousting match, the Art Car exhibit, and of course the music stages. The Buzz stage will have national recording artist (and local boys) the Hunger headlining. According to Rainbo DeKlown, even Mary's Bar is going to find a way to export themselves to the festival-in-exile.



It'll be different not having it on lower Westheimer anymore. One thing that won't be different is the parking - or lack thereof. Festival organizer John Florez announced a shuttle to take folks from the Montrose to the festival, with stops at the Burger King on Westheimer at Lincoln (near Montrose), and the Mausoleum on Westheimer (wherever the heck that is!) The real fun is finding parking remotely close to the shuttle that will whisk you to the site at Allen Parkway's Tinsley Park. No one said this would be easy!

NTAC is planning on having its national inception board meeting to coincide with the GenderPAC lobby days. The initial plans for the May 5-6 meeting in Philadelphia were scuttled when the International Congress on Sex and Gender postponed their event until sometime in the fall. The NTAC Board will meet Sunday, May 21 at the Best Western Inn, 8601 Baltimore Blvd, in College Park MD. The phone number to the hotel is 301-474-2800.

There will be a block of rooms set aside for NTAC, and the rate is \$85 per night for double occupancy. For those wanting updates on lobbying, and/or NTAC, contact yours truly at: [MoonFlowrr@aol.com](mailto:MoonFlowrr@aol.com) or Monica @ [Monica.Roberts@pdq.net](mailto:Monica.Roberts@pdq.net). Be a part of trans history! And we'll see y'all on Capitol Hill!

DES MOINES, Iowa — Gov. Tom Vilsack officially vetoed a bill reversing an executive order on gay rights Friday, making good on a promise he issued only minutes after lawmakers approved the bill. The House this month approved the reversing of the executive order providing equal opportunity and affirmative action in state employment, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender citizens.

Supporters of the bill reversing the governor's decree said they were guarding the rights of the Legislature to set state policy. Critics viewed the move as an election-year effort to use gay rights on the campaign trail. Vilsack had his aides deliver the veto message as soon as the votes were counted. Vilsack said he was "profoundly disappointed" that lawmakers had wasted their time on the issue.

NEW YORK, NY — Eric Carolina, 23, was found not guilty in a Manhattan court last week of 2nd degree murder and manslaughter in the killing of Fitzroy Green, 36, although he admitted stabbing Green 26 times in the neck and back. Local GLBT activists who were outraged by Carolina's attorney who portrayed Green as a "deviant sexual predator," made intimations that he was crossdressed, and denigrated 3 prosecution witnesses as being unreliable because they were transgendered.

"The sad part for us is that here we are in the year 2000 in New York City," stated Richard Haymes, Executive Director of New York's Anti-Violence Project, "we're thinking people won't get away with that anymore, and right here, homophobia and transphobia was used to blame the victim, and somehow the jury bought it." In reporting the August 1998 killing, The New York Post described the victim as an "S&M master and a cross-dressing prostitute" who "turned his tiny Greenwich Village studio into a sleaze emporium."

The Emmon Bodfish murder investigation is going in a different direction. Contra Costa Sheriff's investigators are now speculating that Bodfish somehow orchestrated his own bludgeoning death - much to the dismay of friends who knew him. The reason for the new tack? Excerpts from the diary Bodfish kept, with lines such as: "Tell body it's a stupid piece of sh\*t that should be beaten to death." Investigators theorize that it's 'beyond coincidence' that his body was found bludgeoned in his Orinda CA home last June.

Friends of Bodfish counter that this was his form of therapy, not a death wish. "He wasn't talking about physically beating himself," said friend Willow Oak Istarwood. "He talked to me a lot about his demons... left over from the abuse he had as a kid."

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Despite vocal opposition from the American Family Association, the Leon County, Florida Commission on Tuesday voted 5 to 1 to add "sexual orientation and gender identity" to the list of protected categories under the county's fair housing ordinance. Twenty five people spoke in favor of the amendment, while nine spoke against the

amendment.

Let's turn it to the Transgender Channel! Actually, that's becoming a reality - online. Channel-T.org



Channel-T founder, Webster

is the brainchild of film-maker/host

Cynthia Webster. "It's our intention that Channel-T will develop into a conceptual lighthouse, or "Rock of Gibraltar" of positive

transgender media." Channel-T.org is a non-profit grassroots series of transsexual documentaries intended for free distribution over the internet via QuickTime 4 streaming video technology.

"This is the beginning of a new video network of multi media programming from within the 'T' community itself. Hopefully" continues Cynthia, "We can accomplish this with dignity, and a sense of humor!" The purpose?: to promote public understanding and acceptance of people who change genders. The Channel-T.org "network" is only two weeks old and growing, and although it is presently shy on material, it is receiving an overwhelmingly positive response. Anyone interested in contributing video material is urged to contact Cynthia@channel-t.org

TB Alert!!! A tuberculosis outbreak in the transgender communities of Baltimore and New York City may be spreading to other cities, the government said. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta confirmed 26 active cases and 37 dormant cases of TB, most of them connected to members of the transgender community in the New York and Baltimore areas.

The CDC reported 62 percent of the tuberculosis patients tested positive for HIV. People with HIV are susceptible to tuberculosis and could die if not treated. The CDC is checking for additional cases linked to the same strain in Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, DC.

What is the biggest health concern amongst the GLBT community? AIDS? If you answered that, you'd be wrong, according to a study just released by GayHealth.com™ ([www.gayhealth.com](http://www.gayhealth.com)). According to the study, depression is the top health concern, even surpassing HIV, for both lesbians (35% of those surveyed) and gay men (32% of those surveyed). This figure is more striking when compared with a similar survey of heterosexuals. Results showed that gay men and lesbians are approximately two times more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to be concerned about depression.



Though the report didn't specify transgenders in the study, it goes without saying that it's as big, if not a bigger threat to the transgender community as well. Ostracization, isolation, and societal stigmatization are all prime culprits. Make sure to care for your emotional health as well as the physical.

(Continued on Page 19)

**TATS Tidbits**

*(Continued from Page 18)*

- Did you know... Minneapolis was the first city to enact TG-specific non-discrimination? It was in 1975!
- Tired of facial hair? There may be relief in sight! Studies show an experimental prescription medication cream significantly slows facial hair growth on 70% of users. The drug is called Vaniqa (pronounced VAN-ih-kah), and it's produced jointly by Gillette Co., the world's biggest manufacturer of razors, and pharmaceutical maker Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.

Vaniqa is under review by the Food and Drug Administration, and is expected to win approval this summer and hit the market by the fall. "Vaniqa is the first topical cream that inhibits the growth rate of facial hair, thereby reducing the time women have to spend managing it," stated Dr. Marty Sawaya, who conducted the studies. In the 24-week study on 596 women with excessive facial hair, 70% of them showed marked improvement. Side effects found in the study included stinging, burning, tingling and acne. Gotta admit, that sounds better than 'explosive diarrhea!'

- Hilary Swank's Oscar acceptance speech infuriated JoAnn Brandon, whose daughter was portrayed by Swank in "Boys Don't Cry". Brandon said she objected when the actress thanked "Brandon Teena" and referred to her as a man. "That set me off," JoAnn Brandon said. "She should not stand up there and thank my child. I get tired of people taking credit for what they don't know."

Brandon criticized the filmmakers for failing to explain that, as a girl, her daughter was sexually

molested by a man. She said Teena began dressing in men's clothing and dating women "so no other man could touch her." Thanks, mom! I guess you should know....

- SEATTLE, Wash. — A former Navy sailor who says he has killed more than a dozen people around the world may be lying about three Seattle slayings he says he committed, authorities said Tuesday. Former USS Nimitz sailor John Eric Armstrong, 26, of Dearborn Heights, Mich., told Detroit police he strangled five Detroit-area prostitutes and earlier killed 11 other people while on active duty aboard the aircraft carrier. Armstrong claims to have killed a transsexual and two women in Seattle, but there are no bodies to back him up, a state criminal investigator said. "We're actually thinking now that he hasn't done anything here, because nothing he said remotely matches any (killing) we've got here," said Dick Steiner, head of the homicide investigation team.
- "I think all of those are just make-believe," agreed Armstrong's lawyer, Robert Mitchell of Detroit about claims of killings in Washington and elsewhere. "I have certain reasons that I wouldn't want to reveal right now," Mitchell added. "He's a troubled person and confused."
- VATICAN CITY — Takin' a walk on the wild side? Pope John Paul II, proponent of Christian family values, and Lou Reed, poet of transgender risk-taking, headlined the May Day concert on May 1. Other performers on the bill include Alanis Morissette and the Eurythmics.
- MONTREAL, Quebec — a transsexual man has won a legal fight to have his sex designation on his birth certificate changed from female to male. The decision in Quebec's Superior Court, reported March 24, clarifies what medical procedures are required in

order for the province to recognize a female-to-male sex change. The transman, known only by the pseudonym Daniel Aranoff, has been on hormones and surgical procedures, including the removal of breasts and ovaries.

- Go to Austria, get free boobs! A Vienna, Austria television station is offering women a breast enlargement operation in a bid to boost ratings for its tabloid program. Interested viewers must send a photograph of themselves to the program, "Check It," together with a few sentences on why they want to enhance their bust. Kinda gives the 'boob tube' a whole new meaning!

ATV television, said the winner would be chosen by viewers. Here's an odd part: the program targets the 12-29 age group. Twelve year olds wanting boob jobs? Stated ATV chief editor, Thomas Gauss: "There'll be only one winner, but of course two silicone implants." I suppose that needed to be clarified....

- RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Nine young Saudi men have each been sentenced to more than 2,000 lashes and at least five years in prison for deviant sexual behavior. Police found that they were dressing in women's clothes and engaging in deviant sexual behavior with each other.

A court in the western city of Qunfuda sentenced five of the men to six years in prison and 2,600 lashes – to be flogged 52 times in 50 sessions. The other four defendants were sentenced to five years and 2,400 lashes – to be flogged 48 times in 50 sessions. There will be a pause of 15 days between each of the flogging sessions. Human rights organizations criticized those penalties; saying defendants do not receive fair trials and often have no access to lawyers.

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## The Prayer Battle Between the Sexes

When my daughter Kelli was 3, she and my son Cody would say their nightly prayers together. As most children do, we have to bless every family member, every friend, and every animal current and past. For several weeks after we had finished the nightly prayer, Kelli would say "And all girls."

As this soon became part of her nightly routine to include this at the end, my curiosity got the best of me and I asked her, "Kelli, why do you always add the part about all girls?"

Her response: "Because we always finish our prayers by saying All Men!"

## Daily Proverbs

\* As seen from a child's perspective....

- If You Lie Down With The Dogs, You'll — Stink In The Morning.
- You Can't Teach An Old Dog New — Math.
- A Miss Is As Good As A — Mr.
- An Idle Mind Is — The Best Way To Relax.
- Two's Company, Three's — The Musketeers.
- Don't Put Off Tomorrow What — You Put On To Go To Bed.
- There Is No Fool Like — Aunt Eddie.
- If At First You Don't Succeed — Get New Batteries.

## COURT CHANGES GENDER... (Continued from Page 11)

the judicial system by writing writs to the federal courts under the Gender Motivated Violence Act and Eighth Amendment."

Christie Lee Littleton never dreamed that her marriage to Jonathon Littleton would be torn to shreds by the Texas Courts when she originally filed for wrongful death of her late husband. The loving couple had consummated their marriage in both Kentucky and Texas in the manner of all married couples. They helped each other through sickness and health, fulfilling their marriage vows.

In Texas, they lived as husband and wife since at the time, Texas was constitutionally bound to honor valid marriages licensed in all

government, also recognizing a valid marriage of the two.

As Chief Justice Hardberger observed in his published opinion, the recently enacted federal Defense of Marriage Act allows one state to disallow recognition of marriage licensed by another state. It seems quite odd that a "defense of marriage" law didn't defend the validity of Mrs. Littleton's long-term marriage in Justice Hardberger's court.

Today, not only has Mrs. Littleton's marriage been invalidated, but she finds herself being classified, without absolute proof of chromosome makeup, by the Texas courts as a "male" with a vagina. This is despite earlier classification under the Texas Health and Safety Code, with requisite medical affidavits, as "female," which is likewise shown on all her Texas, federal, and other identifying documents.

If the ruling of the 4th Court of Appeals is allowed to stand, thousands of Texans will find themselves in the same state of legal limbo with no legal recourse. The ruling, will, in effect, require that all Texans undergo at least one invasive and expensive chromosome test sometime in their lives to legally determine their court-defined gender—a test tried and quickly abandoned due to inaccuracy in international Olympic sports competition.

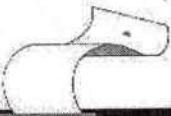


Christie Littleton (C) gives a confident grin as Phyllis (L) announces her intentions at the Unity Banquet, Apr. 8. Donald Skipwith (R) of the Texas Human Rights Fund listens with interest to Phyllis' speech.

other states. The couple filed joint federal income tax returns which were accepted by the



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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 8, Issue 6

Houston, Texas

June, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## TATS DOES DC: ROUND IV Lobby Days 'Lite' In Senate, NTAC Elects 4 TATS Members To Board

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The inaugural board meeting of the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) took place May 21 in College Park MD. For those of you unfamiliar, NTAC was formed after the discussion and fallout immediately after last year's GenderPAC lobby event. At that key meeting, the third Bethesda Roundtable meeting in as many years, seven core members of what would first become the Transflakes mailing list, hashed out the formulation of what has now evolved into NTAC.

TATS, of course, was in the thick of the entire process from the very beginning in 1997. From our initial meeting during ICTLEP's final lobby event - which yours truly attended - the group compared notes on the day's events and stories. Little did the four principals involved in that - Dawn Wilson, Anne Casebeer,



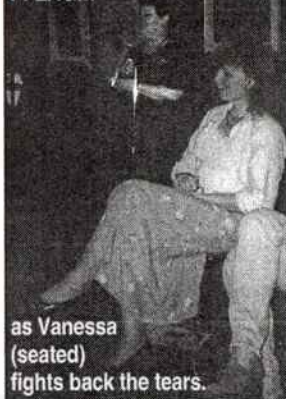
Above, NTAC's Inaugural Board Meeting: (L-R) Rusty Mae Moore, Chelsea Goodwin (back to camera), Yoseñio Lewis, Angela Brightfeather Sheedy, Amanda Yilmaz and Sue Davis listen as Katrina Rose makes her case. A C Casebeer (right) keeps minutes on the PC. Left: Ready to hit Capitol Hill, Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) prepares to give NTACer Kathy Padilla (R) a class on Lobbying 101 on the run.

Marjorie DeMaille and yours truly - realize where this would all lead. The unholy alliance of HRC with our community's pre-lobbying involved; the seven lobbying organization, core members from last year's GenderPAC, left us all very concerned. In response to GenderPAC's repeated teaming up with HRC over the past three years, and the pre-lobbying involved; the seven core members from last year's GenderPAC, left us all very

(Continued on Page 5)

## SPENDING MOTHER'S DAY WITH PFLAG

Marsha McCleney speaks to PFLAG...



as Vanessa (seated) fights back the tears.

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

We're Ba-a-ack! And it's Mother's Day at PFLAG, an organization began by a mom and geared primarily for moms - and dads, too! It seemed fitting. The traveling transgendered task-force troubadours were trotting out the tried-and-true tales of experiences and travails in order to teach tolerance and trans-acceptance. I know ... pretty corny, but it was a T themed Mother's Day outing at PFLAG Houston.

This time, we were in familiar

environs in a much less stressful situation; in stark contrast to the previous visit.

The first trip to PFLAG was a presentation before the board that would 'influence the possible inclusion vote sometime in the upcoming months.' It was before a group of folks who, for the most part, had very limited or no exposure to transgenders; with a panel who were all first-timers - and very nervous! Even I was viewing that visit as a make-or-break situation. Yet just minutes

(Continued on Page 7)

## MEETING SCHEDULE

- June 10 Dr. Cole's Semi-Annual Meeting:  
Rosenberg Clinic/Galveston @ 10 AM
- June 24 2000 Pride Parade:  
Near Woodhead & Westheimer @ 6 PM
- July 8 Feelings Meeting  
Mary Michelle Robinson's (see map) @ 3 PM
- July 22 Social Meeting at:  
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM

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If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**J**une is Pride Month, and activity is at a frenzied pace. We've got a lot to be proud of this year: our most successful Unity Banquet yet, our inclusion in (and being legitimate members of) the Caucus, the Chamber, PFLAG Houston and the Texas Human Rights Fund, having a new national lobbying organization (NTAC), and the unprecedented activity from more than just the previous TG-leaders, but now new leaders who are just now emerging in a big way. Additionally, our community is requested participate more than ever, even to the point of organizing some events – as is the case with Jessica Redman with the Equality GOP Protest Rally. And nationally, transgenders are getting more press than ever.

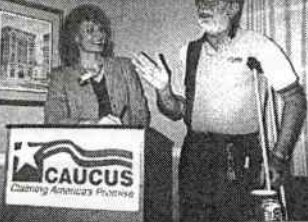
You might think that with all of the groundbreaking news over the last year that these are heady times. Not so. Lest we forget, one of our parade participants is Christie Littleton of the infamous Appeals Court ruling. We activist types have been sounding the alarm that the Littleton case and subsequent ruling is a warning shot across the TG community's port bow. And now, as Christie prepares for her ride down Westheimer in a few weeks, comes news that indeed the next volleys using the Littleton decision are already beginning.

Word out of Austin recently detailed a disturbing incident. A newly relocated T-girl from Louisville, Kentucky sought work and was hired at a telemarketing firm. The girl, Angela Bridgman, has been full time for the past few years; but is one who doesn't completely 'blend into the woodwork,' so to speak. One day at work, she was stopped upon leaving the building's community ladies' room by a Pinkerton security guard. The guard addressed her as "sir" and queried why "he" was using the women's restroom. Although she professed to being legally female, the guard was unmoved, and cautioned her against using the ladies' room.

Angela returned to work and didn't think much of the incident. However, the Pinkerton guard had apparently written up a report on the incident; and a copy of the report was sent to her employer – one of the tenants in the building. Some time afterward, one or two of the female employees apparently made comments regarding Angela's usage of the ladies' room. Word got back to her supervisor, who told her she would not be able to use the ladies facilities. The supervisor tried to work through this situation, and lined up a separate restroom for Angela to use. Angela thought the situation was solved.

A couple days later, her supervisor's boss came up

Vanessa & Ray Hill at the Caucus debate.



to her and announced that she could not come to work in women's attire. When Angela described to him her situation, he quoted the Littleton case and informed her that regardless of her status in Kentucky or elsewhere, she is a male in the eyes of Texas law. He then gave her the ultimatum: "tomorrow, you will wear a shirt and tie to work – or you're fired." When she voiced her displeasure, he fired immediately her.

The epilogue to this story has not even begun, as she is just now in the process of appealing the dismissal to her employers' home office in Michigan. She looks for a more favorable decision from the out of state folks, but that ruling remains to be seen. For the immediate time, this sends a chill – even in the midst of summertime's blast furnace. A chill not only to Angela, but to every gender variant individual in this state.

If this employer is up to speed on the Littleton ruling, how many others are as well? Is this something that will soon make the statewide trade magazines: *Tips On How To Keep An Employee From Transitioning In The Workplace?* Or: *Easy Ways On Getting Rid Of Transgendered Employees?* The mind boggles at the potential this presents. Should you desire to go through the RL, (Real Life Test) as a first step towards SRS, you could soon be required to be gainfully SELF-employed. Otherwise, good luck trying to transition in the workplace! Or finding a new job as your new self? No dice, unless you show up in a suit and tie, or a skirt and hose. Forget your sensibilities – it's the law!

True, this was a case of one who did not make a convincing enough presentation in order to avoid scrutiny. Some may argue that there is an expected level of proficiency before employers and co-workers can be 'comfortable' having a TG in their workplace. This reasoning runs along the line of professional appearance. However, who is to be the arbiter of what is an what isn't proficient 'passability'? And will this be 'passable presentation perception' be applied evenly? When it's up to the arbitrary discretion of employers, and it's in the state of Texas, it gives pause for deep concern.

Be proud, but not too proud. Better yet, be aware....

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

**David France, New York Times Magazine**

**Jim Fouratt, New York NY**

**Dawn Wilson, Louisville KY**

**Katrina Rose, Albert Lea, MN**

**Monica Roberts**

**Sara Rook**

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## AN INCONVENIENT WOMAN

By David France, *New York Times Magazine*®

Calpernia Sarah Addams has just rebuffed two handsome men (and a not-so-handsome one) who offered her compliments as she hurried across Union Street in Nashville. "Libertine gentlemen," she says, with a sideways slice of her green eyes. Short braids dangling on her shoulders make her look like Dorothy Gale, only taller. "We have a certain decorum here in the South, so I just said thank you and turned away," she explains. Still, she can't help being buoyed by their attentions. "I know I don't look my best. I've just been through so much lately."

One morning last fall, thick in the worst of it, Addams twisted her hair in a chignon, smoothed on a simple gray suit and made the hourlong trip from Nashville to the Fort Campbell Army base on the Tennessee-Kentucky border. There, two soldiers would stand accused in the murder of the only man she has openly loved in her 29 years. Barry Winchell, a 21-year-old private first class, died in what the base command at first labeled a "physical altercation," a common fight. It became clear Winchell was killed for being gay.

His death and the ensuing trials have become the most celebrated indictment of Congress's policy on gays in the military, known as "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue, don't harass." Even the president called "this last brutal beating death" proof that the measure he signed into law in 1993 to protect lesbian and gay soldiers is a clear failure. Of 71,570 soldiers surveyed, 80 percent said they have witnessed derogatory remarks being made against gays, according to a report released March 24.

Addams, among the first to arrive at the base, did not enter the small courtroom, which was reserved for lawyers and immediate family. She didn't feel comfortable declaring a place there. Instead she took a seat in the media room across the street, where a reporter asked if she could identify the dead soldier's boyfriend. Addams drew in her breath and nearly whispered her reluctant response, knowing full well it would thrust her into the complicated heart of this national drama.

"That's me."

The fact is that Winchell, killed for being gay, wasn't gay, at least not in the traditional Harvey Fierstein sense of the word. Barry Winchell, who had only ever dated biological women before, was in love with a pre-operative transsexual — a transgendered woman," as Addams prefers it — part male and part female, a gentle being without a clear portfolio in the black-and-white realm of the sexes. In fact, as in the film "Boys Don't Cry," whose doomed transgendered character generated an Academy Award this year, almost every

element of the Winchell case falls into the gray in-between. The biologist Anne Fausto-Sterling, in her new book, "Sexing the Body,"



**In order to turn the murdered soldier Barry Winchell into a martyr for gay rights, activists first had to turn his girlfriend, Calpernia Addams, back into a man in the public's eyes.**

says that this state of being "either/or, neither/both" is increasingly common.

But the more that Winchell, like Matthew Shepard before him, has been held up as a martyr for gay equality, the less room there has been for explaining such sloppy complications. "A lot of people just don't get that this woman — tall, lovely, beautiful — has male parts," explains Kathi Westcott, a staff attorney for Servicemembers' Legal Defense Network (S.L.D.N.), the gay soldiers' group based in Washington. "It was a difficult connection to make for people, even in the gay community."

Westcott swept into Tennessee days after the killing determined to investigate Winchell's murder and expose the antigay sentiment that persists in the military. She and Rhonda White, co-director of the Nashville-based Lesbian and Gay Coalition for Justice, paid Addams a visit and made a proposal. "For the sake of clarity," White recalls Westcott saying to Addams, they should tell reporters she is a he. "Barry was dating an anatomical male," White says. "How can you say he was gay-bashed if he was dating a woman, you know?"

Addams, a nightclub performer, agreed — I was really worried I would lend some sort of Jerry Springer element to this awful crime," she says — even though she found it "devastating" to be called a man, after her long journey away from manhood. In news accounts, she was Winchell's "boyfriend" or his "cross-dressing friend," always he and him. Each qualification

carried the story away from its truth. By superimposing a rigid grid of sexual identity over the lives of Calpernia Addams and Barry Winchell, the activists effectively severed the soldier from the love for which he died.

"Each of these little words was erasing my existence," she says. "It was like our relationship — the basis of our relationship — was all a dream."

Over coffee at a sidewalk cafe one evening in Nashville, she tells me, "If I had been a really attractive blond buzz-cut guy who worked out all the time, they probably would have taken me around everywhere to speak on this. I don't think anybody said, 'Let's hammer Calpernia down during this horrible time.' Their hearts were probably in the right place. It just all turned out wrong as far as my part of it was concerned."

Since then, organizers of the April 30 national gay rally — officially called the Millennium March on Washington for Equality, a sign that at least in principle people like Calpernia are embraced by the movement — invited Barry Winchell's mother to speak. But nobody even thought to ask Addams if she was going. "We don't have a vocabulary for dealing

with these issues," says Bill Turner, a Nashville activist who is the author of "A Genealogy of Queer Theory," to be published in July. "Calpernia Addams has really fallen victim to our limitations."

By all outward appearances, Calpernia Addams is a very beautiful and painfully shy, slightly awkward woman who measures, thanks to recent medical interventions, 36-30-38, understated proportions for her nearly 6-foot frame. She has a woman's hands, a woman's comportment, a woman's slender etherealness. Only her wispy voice and broad shoulders belie the merest hint of manhood. She says she appropriated the name Calpernia Addams from a distant relative in the Addams Family movies who, fingered as a witch, was made to dance naked in the town square. She added the middle name, Sarah, from "The Crucible," and found it gave her an easier moniker "to shout to a handsome man over the din of a sports bar." (She will not reveal her birth name, which she legally changed, and, estranged from her parents, she would not put me in contact with them.)

Legally she is a man. By accident of finances, she says, she remains genitally male. Sexual reassignment surgery can cost \$15,000 or more. Barry Winchell, killed for being gay, wasn't really gay — at least not in the traditional Harvey Fierstein sense of the word. He was in love with a pre-operative transsexual, part male and part female, falling into the gray in-between.

*(Continued on Page 9)*

# MILLENNIUM MARCH: AMID AFTERGLOW; CHARGES OF DISCIMINATION, SCANDAL

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**M**illennium March On Washington is now a memory; and upon retuning home, most of the immediate accounts were glowing. Estimates were about 300,000 crowded the Washington Mall during the Rally, while another 400,000 simultaneously attended the companion street festival. One thing came through clearly: it was a success in bringing out the huge numbers, and focusing the community's attention on the big picture.

The MMOW concert was also a bit of a coup, with the likes of Melissa Etheridge, Garth Brooks, George Michael headlining a show for the ages. As a topper, Tipper (yes, Ms. Gore herself!), came out to play drums on the final number of Melissa Etheridge's set.

However, as the MMOW's tumultuous history foretold, this was not to be a smooth, seamless event. Amid the afterglow of the organizers' pronouncements come allegations of giving short shrift to the Bi, Trans & minority speakers, as well as even more serious implications of theft and / or fraud.

By most personal accounts, the march was invigorating. It left many of those attending with a true sense of empowerment. TATS member, Sara Rook, attended and was duly impressed (as mentioned in the companion article.)

Another TATS subscriber, Mike Bodin, reported during the first few speeches that every time the word "transgendered" was mentioned, the crowd cheered loudly - even giving a standing ovation on one occasion.

However, other attendees and participants were not quite so impressed. "They had all of the minority speakers at the very end!" said Ron Helaire, who attended the march and rally. "It was really disappointing!" added Helaire, a gay African American male who's on the board of the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. "They had every one of the minorities, every one of the trans-genders - all of them at the very end of the rally." Helaire finished, "you would think they would've done a better job with their scheduling than that!"

"They had Mary Boenke (PFLAG mother of a transman) and her husband at the very end of the

program!" added PFLAG parent, Jim Null. "They were the last speakers. I couldn't believe it!"

Apparently, many were left with the impression that if the speakers didn't fit the 'khaki crowd' image that HRC is currently enamored of, they tended to ghettoize them at the tail end of the rally. "That trans girl, Dana Rivers, was a very moving speaker," added Ron Helaire. "I was amazed they had her at the back of the program!" Another report had a lesbian couple of Indian descent apparently taking a shot at the organizers for shoving their speech to the back of the bill.

Besides the scheduling of speakers at the end of the program, a number of those speakers had their speeches abbreviated to less than half the allotted time, due to running beyond schedule. James Green of FTM International was not happy with his time being slashed from the original five minutes to a minute and a half.

Some of the blame for the jockeying of speakers, and the truncating of their planned speech time, was given to Ellen DeGeneres for 'not showing up at her scheduled time' and instead showing up much later in



Not exactly Khaki Corps at MMOW

the program. Most all of the members of those communities represented at the end of the bill had a hard time swallowing that one though.

Protesters outside of the concert were expected; and Fred Phelps showed his face, as usual. One unexpected protest - a street theatre-style protest and mock revival put on by a pairing of transgenders from NTAC, and Soulforce International - the brainchild of Rev. Mel White. These protesters apparently scored some points with a lot of the crowd filtering

(Continued on Page 13)

## TATS MEMBER'S MMOW

By Sara Rook

**A**s some of you know, I attended the Millennium march last weekend in Washington DC. It was very motivating to be amongst so many in our community.



The few, the proud, the TG: A happy GenderPAC marcher at the MMOW.

My brother and his partner let me share their room at the Mayflower Hotel in the downtown district of DC. This made the trip possible for me as all I had to do was pay for my airfare and my brother took care of everything else. (Thanks Jaime)

Just some reflection and commentary about the march is in order....

I again had a brief visit in the lobby of the Mayflower with Elizabeth Birch about... well you know what! Seems fate is always putting us together as this is the third time in less than a year our paths have crossed, I guess there is some hidden meaning in this recurrence. I also visited the national office of HRC, just something I needed to do....

We did a great many things while up there, all quite inspiring. We visited the mall across from the Smithsonian and viewed the latest additions to the AIDS quilt, very sobering....

I don't think folks realize just how many of our fellow human beings have been taken from us until you see a quilt the size of several football fields. So many of the people on the quilt were female and young children, I was very enlightened and saddened at the same time, it affects us all, it's just not a gay disease as many would like to believe.

And of course that hate monger

Fred Phelps was there... will some one please raid his compound???????

We visited the National Holocaust Museum, this is a must for every body, also a very sobering place when you realize that this whole event took place because some could not accept people who were different from them selves, it has a direct relation to the hate that is projected at the GLBT community. BTW I have also visited the Holocaust Museum in Houston and it is an excellent presentation also... but bring your Kleenex.

We visited the Lincoln, Jefferson, and Vietnam memorials, AWE-SOME!!! As I read the various inscriptions and speeches on the great walls of these shrines, I realized, the GLBT folks of this country don't get all these freedoms and liberties promised on those walls, we enjoy few of these freedoms and that is wrong, we must continue the struggle until we all are equal....

I also volunteered to help Gender Pack <http://www.gpac.org/> staff there booth at the festival all day Sunday and ask people to sign a petition to add Gender Identity to the EO policies for the staff of the representatives on the hill and in the White House. In 6 hours armed with 2 and 3 clipboards I estimate we got between 400 and 500 signatures. I moved around through the crowds for two hours approaching people and worked the booth for 4 hours, I was very tired that night!!! An interesting observation, In all the people I talked to about this issue I encountered 1 couple who were animate about excluding gender identity, they felt it should not be included. I was amazingly surprised at the outcome because I expected many more negative reactions to this petition, but after talking to all those hundreds of people I only found 2 that disagreed with gender identity inclusion. Riki Anne Wilchins, director of Gender Pac was invited to speak on stage and her speech was carried live on C-Span, this was a very encouraging development taking into consideration the event was hosted by HRC.

I'm glad to be home and to share the experience with you, I only wish we all could have attended.

TATS DOES DC, ROUND IV....

(Continued from Page 1)

meeting – Dawn Wilson and Anne Casebeer from Kentucky, Sarah Fox and Cathy Platine from Ohio, and TATS members Monica Roberts, Jessica Redman and yours truly – decided enough was enough. Thus NTAC was conceived.

Our return, one year later, has seen much activity on the national scene from NTAC – even without being a formalized entity. Those attending the meeting came from around the country included board members Dawn Wilson and Anne Casebeer from Louisville KY, Yoseñio Lewis from San Francisco CA, Angela Brightfeather Sheedy from Raleigh NC, Sue Davis from Cleveland OH, Chris Stinson from Falls Union VA, Michael Gray from Charlottesville VA, Kathy Padilla from Philadelphia, Rusty Mae Moore and Chelsea Goodwin from New York City, Cheryl Ann Costa from Washington DC, Katrina Rose from Albert Lea MN, and yours truly from Houston. NTAC general members Amanda Yilmaz from Massachusetts, and Sarah Tisdale from suburban New Jersey also attended the meeting.

Now official, the inaugural board contains four TATS members: myself as Media Chair, Monica Roberts as Lobbying Chair, Jessica Redman as Media Vice Chair, Minnesota TATS-expatriate, Katrina Rose. Additionally, one more Houstonian, Gigi Raven Wilbur of Bi-Net/Houston, was elected to the board.

Officers of the board were: Dawn Wilson as Chair, Yoseñio Lewis as Vice-Chair, Anne Casebeer as Secretary and Chris Stinson as Treasurer. The decision to elect an Executive Director was ta-



ful chat with Executive Director, Kirsten Kingdon and Jay Heavner. I apologized for the award not going up with me, and we joked of faking an acceptance photo. We then sat for our meeting with PFLAG newbie, Lisa Weiner-Mahfuz and Cynthia Newcomer and confirmed our emergency strategy meeting host-site there at the PFLAG home office.

Next it was a visit with Blake Cornish and Margarita Guzman of NGLTF, to enlist their presence at the strategizing meeting. It was there I was informed of the reason for Nancy Buermeyer not

Setting up an emergency meeting with the NTAC Allies: at left PFLAG Exec. Dir. Kirsten Kingdon (C) greets Vanessa Edwards Foster (R) and Kathy Padilla (L). Below, Blake Cornish of NGLTF (L) takes time for a quick pose, after setting up meeting plans with Vanessa (C) and Kathy (R).



your intrepid president and a new and eager-to-learn lobbyist, Kathy Padilla, hit the Hill anyway.

Getting a late start Monday, we still managed to fit a half-day's worth of visits in. Since the prime concern was the ENDA vote, it was decided to focus on the Senate side, and especially the Judiciary Committee, this trip. Stop one was Sen. Jeffords' office to drop off a report compiled by Michael Gray on the Primacy of Gender. Though we weren't allowed to see the senator, we were treated to an even icier-than-last-year reception from his staffer, Leslie Silverman. Our luck was much better in Sen. Kennedy's office, and we again left Michael's report and a promise to continue contact.

We also got a good contact in Sen. Orrin Hatch's office, and left some of our basic material with them. Next was Sen. Strom Thurmond's office, where we weren't able to see the lege aide, but did leave a basic material packet with them (hope they read the quote on Page 4 from Pat Robertson on transsexuals not being condemned to hell!)

We also did quick drop-ins with Sen. Feingold, Sen. Specter and Sen. Feinstein before dropping in (without luck) on Kathy's personal House Rep. Chaka Fattah. It also gave me a last opportunity to take a picture outside of one of the offices I'd plagued every previous visit: my personal U.S. Rep. Bill Archer. Now that

attending PFLAG's Healing the Hurt Conference – she was robbed at gunpoint the night before. Apparently there had been a rash of these robberies in her neighborhood; as Blake lived in the same area as well, and during a mugging was stabbed in the chest – puncturing his lung – just the week before Nancy's incident.

The last stop was at HRC's home office, to make a drop-in on Nancy and Tony Varona, in order to follow up on our last meeting. Unfortunately, Tony was not in, and Nancy had just stepped out with GPAC's Dana Rivers; so we had no contact there.

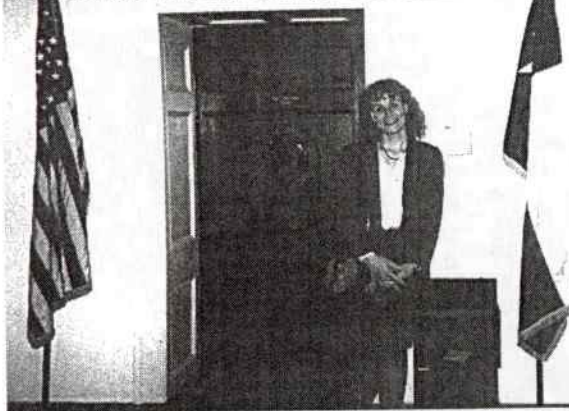
The effort was, overall, at least mildly successful. The best part was making another new friend, and doing initial 'experience training' on who should be a very creditable lobbyist in NTAC's future, Kathy Padilla. She was able to make good



After the first day's worth of lobbying, time for a little R & R. Kathy (L) & Vanessa (R) await a friend for dinner at the exclusive Franklin Square Private Social Club. Oooh... Hoity Toity!

(Continued on Page 13)

Vanessa gets a quick photo (but not much else) outside of the retiring Rep. Bill Archer's office. She wonders what her next Rep's office will be like...



bled, however, until funding sources are identified. As for the lobbying effort: there was much of one. The GenderPAC event going on the same day, and Sarah Tisdale attended that event (along with a reported 74 others). There was word that leaked out about the Senate trying to attach the current non-TG ENDA as a rider to an existing bill, requiring some active contact in Congress, and the need for an emergency meeting between the TG-supportive groups to strategize. For NTAC, most of the players left for work the next day. However,

he's not running for re-election, it remains to be seen what the environment in that office will be like in the years to come. Overall, it wasn't too bad for a four-hour rush through the Hill.

Tuesday saw us lining up contacts and a meeting space for our emergency NTAC meeting. Kathy and I both dropped in on PFLAG first and had a wonder-

## AN INCONVENIENT WOMAN

(Continued from Page 3)

In Barry Winchell's boyish vastness (he stood 6-foot-2), quaint chivalry and Midwestern ebullience, Addams found the closest thing to happiness she has ever known: "He never was ashamed to go anywhere with me. And he treated me just like a normal girl, and that was the most wonderful feeling, to have an attractive, masculine, nice man treat me like a woman, like I wanted to be treated. It put me at peace and gave me a feeling of self-confidence that I have never had."

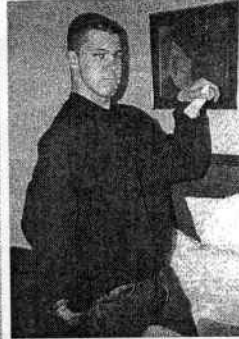
Just as Addams is not yet female and no longer purely male, as a couple they were not wholly straight or acceptably gay. Rather they occupied a rare middle ground encompassing both, and neither: socially heterosexual, sexually homosexual, uncomfortably on the margins of all worlds. There's was a secret minority. While one in 30,000 men and one in 100,000 women eventually initiate treatment for sex-change operations, even more say they are just as happy to be neither male nor female. At the University of Minnesota's Program in Human Sexuality, one of the largest transsexual centers in the country, administrators now routinely admit patients who take only half the journey from one sex to the other, choosing hormones without surgery, or surgery without hormones, says Bean Robinson, Ph.D., the associate director. "We see there's a lot more complexity to the world," she says.

For Addams, though, like many people preparing to undergo sex reassignment, she is hypersensitive to the differences between male and female. "For me I choose to cling to the thought that I am a woman," she says. "That's what I want to be. And that's my goal. I know I wasn't born that way, but I think I have to have some kind of guiding light to move toward. If I personally were to embrace a theory that gender were meaningless or fluid, then I would just be lost at sea."

Barry Winchell didn't seem to care either way.

Being a dead-on marksman and a favorite of his sergeant's, Winchell gave off a certain all-soldier impression even among the 23,000 macho recruits at Fort Campbell, headquarters for the famed "Screaming Eagles," the elite 101st Airborne strike force. Tall and muscled, he earned the respect of other Delta Company soldiers, who gave him the nickname Top Gun because of his facility with the .50-caliber machine gun. By the time of his death, he had been nominated for Soldier of the Month, his mother says.

Still, he did not immediately fit in. He had trouble putting up with his roommate, a volatile drinker with emotional problems from Lincoln, Neb., named Justin Fisher, 27, who liked to bully Winchell with impunity. Nevertheless, it was Fisher who took Winchell to his first gay bar in March of last year. The Connection, in the pure show-biz tradition of Nashville, bills itself as the largest gay bar in North America. It is mammoth, encompassing a discotheque, a two-stepping room, a gift shop, a restaurant and a cavernous perform-



Above, Barry Winchell, had he lived, was up for Soldier of the Month honors. A shy male growing up, Calpernia Addams (left) seemed an unlikely candidate for a stage career

ance arena for over-the-top, lip-synching drag spectaculars.

Justin Fisher had been there before. On weekend nights, clutches of soldiers and straight couples mix in easily with the show's panssexual audiences, which can swell to 2,000. Back on base afterward, Fisher had extolled the realness of one of the Connection's drag queens, whose towering beauty, according to testimony, he found so unbelievably stunning. So he returned with Winchell and several other soldiers to show them his discovery.

The indelible performer was Calpernia Addams. Her act, a kind of Elvira-meets-Joan Jett extravaganza, involves loud rock 'n' roll, a great deal of strutting and shimmering and a scant sum of clothing. She has a certain Gypsy Rose Lee quality of vulnerability. Her fans flank the catwalk in waves to offer her folded dollar bills, sometimes by the fistful.

It was no different for the soldiers that night. They sat at a table near the stage and whooped good-naturedly throughout her act. Addams visited them during a break after the 11 p.m. set.

She says she talked to Barry Winchell last because he was so shy, but immediately fell victim to his pretty eyes and silly laugh. He told her he had never met a drag performer before, but was always "curious about such things." Somehow, they approached the topic of a date for later in the week. "At the start, I guess I was a bit more aggressive than he was," she admits.

They fell into an easy affair. Winchell brought almost no philosophy or gender theory to this relationship. He considered his girlfriend to be a woman, yet considered himself gay for sleeping with her. Friends of Winchell's say, "He wasn't really torn or tortured about those things, and once he felt comfortable with me, our sexuality together was very easy." Addams says. Addams would introduce him as heterosexual, but he would always correct her, saying, "It's O.K."

"They were very attached to each other," says Mike McCoy, a friend of both from local gay bars. "Wherever he was, you wouldn't find

her too far behind. Just like an ordinary couple would be."

Winchell spent weekend evenings on the floor of Addams's dressing room, beneath a Vesuvius of crinoline and fake fur, studying his manuals while she performed - a case of beer Winchell brought still sits beside a rack of clothing in the tiny, dusty room. After the show, they would rent videos or go downtown for coffee. Among their friends from the Connection, especially other performers, their love affair was taking on a celebrated character. "Oh, she was happy," says Regine Phillips, a transgendered performer. "It was kind of like a movie." Kim Wayne Mayfield, who performs at another Nashville bar as Kimmie Satin, adds, "You could tell there was a girl and a boy and you could tell which was which and he was just happy as all get-out to be with her."

For Addams it was a dream come true. "Among the transgendered women here in Nashville, we have a jaded understanding of 'the way it is,' " she says. "And one of the cold hard facts that we understand is that a lot of the straight men who are attracted to us are actually closeted gay and they may not even have admitted it to themselves. We bring them into the gay community and introduce them to people and they start to get comfortable, and the next little step is that they leave us behind and start dating men. It's really lonely.

"But Barry? Barry just seemed to take me at face value. He liked me for me, as much as that sounds like a cliché. He thought I was beautiful and he enjoyed our sex life totally. The sexual-reassignment surgery, he seemed totally like he didn't care whether that happened or not. I felt comfortable that he wasn't going to use me as a bridge. I finally was able to really let myself relax and accept his love."

It's ironic I'm a showgirl," Addams allows in her dressing room before going on one evening. "I grew up strictly forbidden to dance or bowl or roller-skate, forbidden from swimming in mixed-sex pools or staying out on a Saturday night. I was quiet and sensitive. I never lisped really, and I never said 'Girl!' or 'Miss Thing,' and I didn't like Madonna or do a lot of this" - she cocks her head from shoulder to shoulder and throws her snapping hand in the air. "I wasn't a stereotypical queen. I was just like a quiet, sensitive person who wrote poetry and walked in the woods and played violin and stuff. I wasn't delicate, really, but I wasn't really boyish. I think I just wasn't anything. I was so busy concealing everything that I just came out as a blank."

In pictures, Addams is a skinny, dark-haired boy with wide eyes and an ethereal comportment - unless he consciously forced his hands to stay in his lap, Addams says now, they seemed to float in the air when he spoke. Nonetheless he looked all boy, not androgynous in the least. Inside was a different thing. He had crushes on

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## MOTHER'S DAY AT PFLAG

(Continued from Page 1)

before the meeting began, I would find out I was completely unprepared for the first half of the presentation. I'd gone in thinking the agenda given was for the entire meeting; but in reality it was only the second half of the show ... Tom Cornell's half! I winged the first half. About I remember about the first panel was that it was nerve-wracking.

Little did I realize that it went so well, it received national notice from the top of PFLAG, and the inclusion vote occurred less than a week later! Unanimously! This time around, we were returning among tried-and-true friends who've become some of our biggest supporters!

So much so, that it mattered little how we only managed four panelists in our somewhat diverse group. Besides myself, Desirée Walton was representing the intersexed. Jackie Thorne showed up impromptu, so I nabbed her to represent the 'heterosexual crossdresser' perspective. And finally, the parent on the panel: since my mom had adamantly insisted she would not sit on a panel for Mother's Day, I had to find another parent. Marsha Jo McCleney (yes, Daniell's mom) fit the bill very nicely!

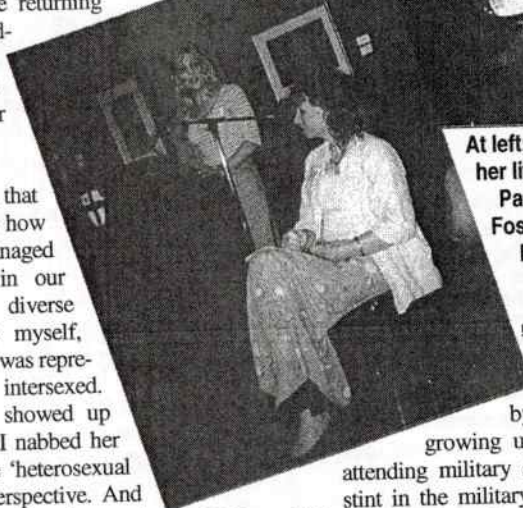
In fact, she came off like a seasoned pro; having no problems talking about how she dealt with being a transgender's mom. Her portion of the presentation was probably the most poignant of the day. During one point, she mentioned how she'd gotten a settlement after leaving her employment with Dow; and how she used the money to "invest in my child's future" and paid for the surgery Daniell so desperately wanted. Ms. McCleney had both Desirée and I on the verge of tears when she recounted how, after surgery, "Daniell's eyes teared up, and she said, 'Mama, for the first time in my life I feel like a real person. I always felt weird before; but now'" she continued, "'I feel like a human being.'"

Desirée, of course, was her typically witty self. She related stories of her own growing-up process and the soul searching and trauma involved. From there, she moved to her own family life, and how her kids provided her something the PFLAG parents were all familiar with: "unconditional love." When recounting a phase when her ex-wife tried to pit the kids against her by asking if they missed their 'old dad,' it was Desirée's son who stated it most clearly: "I don't care who she is. I just love her."



Above, the PFLAG Houston panel at the beginning of the presentation; Vanessa Edwards Foster (L-R) gives an introduction of the panel members, Desirée Walton, Jackie Thorne, and Daniell's mom, Marsha Jo McCleney.

Below, Jackie Thorne (L-R) gets the heartiest laughs of the day as Vanessa Edwards Foster and Desirée Walton are pleasantly surprised



At left; Desirée Walton (at podium) recounts her life growing up as an intersexed child. Panel coordinator Vanessa Edwards Foster listens in, as does the Mother's Day crowd at the Christ Church Cathedral - site of PFLAG Houston's Sunday meetings.



The biggest laughs of the day, were actually garnered by Jackie Thorne. She recalled growing up as a child of the military, attending military schools, and even doing 'his' stint in the military. Later, when Jackie attended her high school reunion at an all-male military academy; she found the old schoolmates very accepting and interested! One classmate kept asking questions, buying her drinks, pulling out the chair for her, and more or less fawning over her. At one point Jackie piped up and asked, "are you trying to pick me up? If you are, hurry up and get it over with and take me home!"

The question and answer session was, sadly, too short. But it warmed my heart to see one of the last audience members, Don Upchurch (one of the parents who founded PFLAG Houston), mention a study out of Northwestern University. He proceeded to describe in detail the study on how children born without penises, and raised as girls, still identified internally as males; and how compelling he found the article. Yes, the PFLAG parents are 'getting it!'

And again, those attending came up after and lavished compliments and praise - and prodded for more after the always-too-short panel. "I was really impressed with how articulate you all are," said PFLAG board member John Kellett. Don Sinclair came up to give the panel another thumbs-up, and to beg a TATS newsletter on our Unity Banquet, and the awards going out to PFLAG National and

Sue Null.

Another audience member, Rad Yeske, came up and mentioned his encounter with an obviously trans-woman in the Woodlands area where he lives. He said he wasn't quite sure what to say, but just looked her in the eye and said 'Hello!' It compelled him, he said, to want to learn more about us - and in fact he wants to do a formal tea with the panel members for that purpose - as well as find ways to help de-stigmatize suburban life for the girls out in the 'burbs.

So, even though Mother's Day kept all of our previous participants (save for myself) off of this edition of 'Who Are We? Understanding The Transgendered,' and even though we only managed a semi-diverse panel of four, we were much more relaxed this go-round. And the positive feedback just one more testament to how the Houston TG community has come so far in just the last year; most especially with the GLB community!

For all those who still don't know (or were living under a rock the last six months), PFLAG Houston is unequivocally inclusive and welcoming to all within the gender different communities. It's not just for the parents: this is for everyone from friends, to spouses to genderqueers of all stripes. We urge you all to become active in *your* PFLAG.

TATS wishes to thank all those who came out on Mother's Day to hear us at PFLAG, as well as the participants for being a part of it. And to all the moms everywhere, be they GLB or T-moms, a belated Happy Mother's Day!



**A "Gayman's" Perspective On The Calpernia Addams Article... . By Jim Fouratt**

I am shocked to hear a member of the Imperial Court endorsing this blatantly homophobic article written by a gayman. Yes, this is a tragic story. Murdered because he was perceived to be gay, Barry Winchell deserves all our grief and anger. As do his loved ones including a gender variant gayman self named Calpernia Sarah Addams, a professional gender illusionist.

All around us we see these attacks on gaymen who do not conform to some kind of Tom of Finland or Andrew Sullivan image. What is new is we now see gay academics and pop journalists embracing this new push to make gaymen and lesbians straight by leading them to endure painful physical body manipulation and dangerous hormonal injects to take on the topography of the conventional definition of what is male and what is female. Modern medicine is once again trying to cure us of our desire for same sex love. Our gender variant gay and lesbian population is under intense pressure to deny their homosexuality and to take all physical, hormonal and emotional steps in order to be accepted into heterosexual society.

First we had Boys Don't Cry which told the horrific story of a 19 year old baby butch lesbian who was first raped and then murdered because she had the audacity to role play and act on her desire to love and have sex with women. In death Brandon Teen became the poster girl of the re-

parative therapy movement (aka transgendered) for adult gender variant gaymen and women and in this guise was deemed acceptable first to Hollywood and then to a larger straight audience.

We are familiar with the smarmy tabloid journalism of gaywriter David France. Who could forget his bizarre book on Andrew Crispo? But does

Hopkins study of sexual reassignment and how ultimately it did not improve the self image or well being of the subjects in their program. The results of this study caused John Hopkins to cease sexual reassignment as a solution to gender dysfunction. Or where is the information on how most transsexuals who are not closeted have very few job options other than in the adult entertainment and/or sex industry...Wendy Carlos and Dr. Renee Richard's are the exceptions.

The Imperial Court can be a powerful voice in confronting the solutions that are now being promoted by mainstream publications like the New Times and by the toxic, anti-gay/lesbian 'queer' academics. Neither group is a friend of the Cherry Grove and/or Court community,

Why can't Calpernia Sarah Addams dress, act and be himself as a gayman, The Court sets a powerful role model of how to be who ever you want to be and to be true to your gay male identity. After all, this construction of 'women' is totally informed by gay-

male sensibility and has little in reality to do with the essence of being female.

Speak up. Help those gender variant gaymen and women who are under siege to save their penises to mutilate their bodies to gain acceptance into the heterosexual society.

Would be most interesting in hearing each of your response to this increasingly serious attack on who we are and how we live.



**The obviously "gay male" poster child for hate crimes, Calpernia Addams**

the New York Times need to sink to the level of the National Inquirer doing a Talk-ish sex/celebrity/death feature? I would hope not.

The Barry Winchell story needs to be told. How homophobia both external and more importantly internally puts at risk most homosexuals and lesbians and all gender variant individuals, How the rush to gender reassign through the wonders of modern medicine has ultimately failed ... where in the sensational picture of a professional skin strutter was there any reference to the 30 year John

**A Response To Jim Fouratt Regarding Transsexuality**

**By Vanessa Edwards Foster**

Our response to the article on Calpernia Addams really hit home with me. In it, Mr. Winchell was "perceived to be gay" though he identified as straight. Ms. Addams was a "professional gender illusionist" and a presumed "gayman," though in the article she identified herself as "transgendered" and "a woman." Your statement "why can't she be true to her gay male identity" makes every bit as much sense as my asking why you, Mr. Fouratt, can't be true to your transgendered identity; since you're obviously attracted to men and have a presumed affinity (from your affirming references to the Imperial Court) for the feminine. Certainly, all the above statements are ludicrous; given that none allow the individuals involved the opportunity to self-identify, but instead dictate who they are to be in the eyes of pre-dominating public opinion.

One thing is obvious in your response to the article: you have no clue about transsexuality, or the distinction between it and homosexuality. Many transsexuals are not even attracted to the same sex of their birth - where is the 'gay male'

identity in those cases? The study you referred to, from Johns Hopkins University, has since been debunked the study's own subject! That's like touting the studies of how 'homosexuality is a choice and can be cured!' Poppycock! I know far too many gays and lesbians in real life who blast that theory completely off the map. Yet it never stops the proponents of those inaccuracies from proclaiming it as absolute fact.

You point out that a disproportionate number of transsexuals end up in the sex trades or working the streets. True enough, unemployment or underemployment for all gender-queers (even many amongst the ranks of the Imperial Court and other 'gender illusionist' gaymen) is rather widespread; and is entirely because one does not conform to the behavioral gender norms of society. In its most extreme instances, these most desperately unemployed individuals find themselves doing the previously unthinkable, as pragmatism takes over in order to survive. While it is something we are working hard on addressing, via the legislature, we find very little attention afforded this situation - not only from conservatives, but from the likes of

Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) and like-minded 'liberals' who see no need for intervention.

The most resounding message that came through in your letter was bigotry. You show bigotry towards both straight society and the transgender community with your casual disregard. Yet, I would bet you would support non-discrimination of anyone because of sexual orientation. I would presume you would desire a more tolerant and understanding attitude from society towards gaymen. Yet you would like to retain those same discriminatory, intolerant, presumptuous attitudes towards others. Is this your idea of fairness and equality? Curious....

It's clear you have never taken the time to even know anything about transgenderism beyond the easily attainable and the inaccurate. Learn your subject before presuming what they are not. Otherwise, you are every bit as credible as "Dr." Laura Schlesinger.

*Sincerely,  
Vanessa Edwards Foster  
Houston, Texas*

## AN INCONVENIENT WOMAN

(Continued from Page 6)

little boys, and was jealous of every girl he knew, starting when he was 6.

He knew something was different about him – he often awoke shrieking in terror, convinced that he was mandated for hell. He suspected homosexuality, but had no inkling of gender dysphoria. He suffered from a crippling body-image problem: he often skipped school because he couldn't stand to be looked at and wrote in his notebook over and over again, "I'm so ugly."

Sensing that to survive he needed to get away, Addams joined the Navy after high school and, ignoring his desires, served happily as a combat medic in Al-Jubail in Saudi Arabia during the gulf war. The other soldiers accepted him. But his recurring struggle with depression eventually led him to a Navy psychologist, who warned him up front not to discuss any issue that might get him shipped out on a gay discharge.

It wasn't until he finished his tour and returned to Nashville in 1994 that he visited his first gay bar – the Connection – and saw his first drag queens. "I just thought I had never seen anybody that pretty in real life before," Addams recalls. "And I couldn't hardly believe they were boys. And when I found that out, I thought, If they can do that, I can do that."

Encased in shimmering organza and garish drag makeup for the club's Wednesday amateur night, something wholly unexpected happened. A heavy weight lifted. Dressed as a woman, Addams no longer suffered crushing self-hatred. As if by force of an explosion, she came to believe that she had never been a man, not in her soul.

"I realized that moment that I have to either choose to live through the constricted filter of a man's body, or else to try to change that body as much as I could to reflect what I wanted to be, and what I feel like I am," she says. She began hormone treatments in 1997 and embarked on her resculpturing a year later. A final surgery, which will physically and legally make her a woman, is something Addams plans to undertake three or four years down the line.

Addams had only begun feeling comfortably female about the time Winchell and Fisher first came to take in her performance. But all of this postmodern gender parsing was pretty well lost back on base. According to testimony, which the S.L.D.N. has synopsised (Army transcripts have not been released), Justin Fisher's mood, usually foul, grew malignant in the days that followed his trip. That week, Fisher told Sgt. Michael Kleifgen, a section leader, that a soldier whose name he wouldn't reveal was gay. Sergeant Kleifgen began an investigation, in direct violation of "don't ask, don't tell." When he zeroed in on Winchell, he asked him point-blank if he was gay. Winchell denied it, and the probe went no further.

But Fisher also informed other Delta Company soldiers, and Barry Winchell became the target of ceaseless hostilities. "Pretty much everybody in the company called him derogatory names," Sergeant



Above left: Calvin Glover swung the bat, but he wasn't alone. Above right: Winchell had a brief window on happiness with Calpernia Addams until word of his affair spread on base.

Kleifgen told the court (a base spokeswoman would not make him available and calls to his house went unanswered). "Basically, they called him a 'faggot' and stuff like that, I would say, on a daily basis. A lot of times, he was walking around down in the dumps." The Pentagon is expected to issue a report on Fort Campbell's command climate this summer.

J. Cortland Torres, 24, a gay Fort Campbell soldier and friend of Winchell's who, fearing for his own safety, requested a discharge after the murder, describes the base culture as a "Lord of the Flies" of anti-gay fever. "I honestly think that if the Army didn't promote this hatred of gays, this wouldn't have happened."

Winchell probably did not know Fisher was behind it at first – in fact, he had every reason to believe Fisher was among the most accepting of his unusual romantic situation. The two returned to the Connection together on several weekends. One night, according to Addams, Fisher asked her to fix him up with Kim Wayne Mayfield, who was in full Kimmie Satin drag. Beneath the makeup, Mayfield, 32, is all man. Fisher knew this, Mayfield says, and it didn't seem to deter him. "He flirted with me for several weeks after that, and I flirted back," Mayfield recalls.

Ultimately, according to Mayfield, the two groped one another in the dark confines of an after-hours club and talked about an affair, which never did happen. According to testimony, Fisher bragged to another soldier that they had made out. In another wrinkle, last May Fisher stood over Winchell as he slept and fondled his feet, according to Addams. "When Barry told me about that, he just thought it was very weird," she recalls. "He was like, 'What the hell are you doing?' and Fisher said, 'Oh, I'm just drunk, I'm sorry.'"

Whether or not these near-dalliances made Fisher gay, they definitely placed him in a distant sector of the continuum that the feminist Judith Butler calls the "gender matrix." A forensic psychiatrist who examined Fisher, Keith Caruso, says the soldier suffers from something he calls "transvestic fetishism," meaning that for sexual titillation and psychological succor, Fisher has turned to

wearing women's underwear, and to those who share his fancy, since he was 14.

Why, then, would he foment hostilities against Winchell? Rhonda White, from the Tennessee gay rights group, blames that least understood beast, internalized homophobia. But maybe by announcing Winchell's secret to the world, Fisher was testing the waters for what might happen if his own secrets were to slip out – nothing good, as was instantly apparent.

Or perhaps, as his lawyer Michael Love argues, Fisher's psychoses were entirely unrelated to homophobia, the similarities between these lives utterly coincidental. Indeed, Fisher has been

given diagnoses of narcissistic personality disorder, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, robust alcoholism and mild depression.

Throughout the spring of 1999, Fisher called Winchell derogatory names. He found an aggressive co-conspirator in a newcomer to Delta Company, Pvt. Calvin Glover, 19, an excessive drinker from a fractured Oklahoma family. Having been intermittently homeless before joining the Army, Glover had met gay teenagers in his hometown, but had not shown any animosity toward them, says Cynthia Brown, former director of the Ada Youth Shelter in Ada, Okla. "I didn't see him being homophobic," she says. "He doesn't have that kind of malice."

Regardless, Glover became Winchell's chief tormenter, admitting that he picked a fight with Winchell on Saturday, July 3, at the start of a three-day keg party on base celebrating the long weekend – heavy drinking was common on Ft. Campbell, even among minors like Glover. Glover taunted and humiliated Winchell throughout the afternoon. Finally, when he reached to knock a beer out of the gay soldier's hand, Winchell had enough. He threw Glover to the ground, hitting him several times. Most of the other soldiers applauded the outcome. But Fisher would not let it drop. He taunted Glover for getting "beat by a faggot," according to testimony. "A faggot cannot kick my [expletive]," Glover reportedly hollered as Winchell skulked off to bed. "I could [expletive] kill you!"

The drinking continued the following evening. By all accounts, Glover had at first buried the hatchet and played Wiffle ball with Winchell. Back in Nashville that same night, Calpernia Addams was competing in the biggest pageant of her career, the Tennessee Entertainer of the Year Contest, taking on the outside personalities of drag queens, transvestites, transsexuals and transgendered stage legends from across the state. Donning a beaded black pantsuit, she lip-synched to Sinead O'Connor's haunting rendition of "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" while actually playing the violin riffs herself. At 2:30 that morning, judges balanced

(Continued on Page 11)

# And This Year's Winner Of The Beren DeMotier Award For Outstanding Transphobic Bigotry Is...

By Katrina C. Rose

Jim Fouratt.

It never seems to fail. Every year around Pride time, some allegedly-homosexual person who has such a need to feel superior to another disenfranchised group decides to make a name for himself, herself or itself and go on an anti-transsexual tirade that Jesse Helms couldn't concoct in his wildest, most-bigoted wet dream.

In 1998, Beren DeMotier declared herself not to be a bigot yet in the same breath lamented that the word 'transgender' was ruffling her sensitive lil' ears at Pride. Boo hoo.

Recently, the New York Times shined some well-needed light on how some of those who are trying to turn Barry Winchell into the military Matthew Shepard are seemingly trying to expunge from all relevant discourse the fact that Winchell's lover, Calpernia Addams, was not male, but a pre-operative male-to-female transsexual. In response, writer Jim Fouratt sent to the far reaches of the web a so-called 'alert' regarding how the New York Times allegedly "promotes" sex reassignment as a "solution" to sexual orientation.

At the top of his bucket o' hate-drool, one sees Fouratt's declaration that Winchell's lover was "a gender variant gayman self named Calpernia Sarah Addams, a professional gender illusionist." Addams does indeed work in a drag bar and has been known to used the phrase 'female impersonator.' Fouratt, in his haste to hate, misses a point that he all but conclusively disproves later in his missive. He ponders, "[W]here is the information on how most transsexuals who are not closeted have very few job options other than in the adult entertainment and/or sex industry...Wendy Carlos and Dr. Renee Richard's are the exceptions."

Why don't you ask Barney Frank that, Jim. He and his skills in the Human Right Scampaign (not to mention those activists and conservative politicos in states and cities that pushed through employment protection legislation that excluded transsexuals) have done, and are continuing to do, more to ensure that out (or, as is most often the case, outed) transsexuals end up on the street and/or in the sex industry.

"Modern medicine is once again trying to cure us of our desire for same sex love. Our gender variant gay and lesbian population is under intense pressure to deny their homosexuality and to take all physical, hormonal and emotional steps in order to be accepted into heterosexual society."

Intense pressure to deny their homosexuality? If this is what you're bitching about, then go burn down the Human Right Scampaign's headquarters and then head over to the Log Cabin Republicans' offices for an encore. They are the only ones who are trying to cast gays and lesbians as simply heterosexuals-with-a-difference, and they hate transsexuals as much

as you do.

Jim, when a surgeon tries to cut your dick off against your will (and, as an aside, if you want to know how that - emphasizing against your will - feels, don't ask a male-to-female transsexual, but rather ask an intersexed person whose genitals were mutilated to save his or her parents from the purported indignity of having to deal with a gender ambiguous child.), then complain about what lesbian anti-transsexual



bigot Janice Raymond called the 'transsexual empire.' And I won't even mention transsexual lesbians. That would be piling on.

Fouratt blatantly, and directly, equates gender transition to anti-gay reparative therapy. He cites an all-but-disproven Johns Hopkins study which claimed that transsexuals were not satisfied with surgical reassignment. Now, don't read me as saying that some TSs are not satisfied - some aren't. Also, don't read me as saying that some people haven't rushed into surgery - some have.

Yo, Mr. Typical Gay Male Transphobe! Ever rushed into bed with someone? Without protection? And gotten HIV from it? The number of people who have gotten AIDS solely from the act of gender transition is equal to the IQ of the typical transphobe - zero.

In the final analysis Fouratt is accusing TGs and their supporters of engaging in a final solution against gays and lesbians. Fouratt, however, along with many of his transphobic brethren, is who should be wearing a brown shirt and goose-stepping to the tune of ENDA-Without-Transgendered-People Uber Alles. Sadly, at least one pride festival, one that is allegedly transgender-inclusive, is actually going to allow this turd to stink up its stage to fertilize anti-transgender bigotry.

Would any pride festival allow Dr. Laura

Sclessinger to get up on its stage and spout out Paul Cameron's discredited nonsense in an effort to convert the crowd to heterosexuality? (Okay - that actually might be billed as comic relief, but you get the idea.) Any event being billed as one that is inclusive of transgendered people - and is in any way accepting tangible or intangible support from transgendered people - which allows Jim Fouratt, Beren DeMotier, Dale Carpenter (or, for that matter, Elizabeth Birch or Barney Frank) to be involved at all, is perpetrating a fraud on transgendered people and those supportive of us.

Transphobic bigots love to play the censorship card whenever people stand up to their right-wing-hate-with -a-difference. Being sensible enough not to validate the view of a bigot who believes that transgendered people should be 'cured' and turned into purportedly proper gays and lesbians is not censorship any more than being sensible enough not to validate the views of John Paulk and the Exodus crowd who believe that all gays and lesbians can be 'cured' and turned into proper heterosexuals is censorship.

This movement is NOT about giving equal time - or even any time - to bigots of any ilk. This movement is about achieving equality for those non-pedophile sexual minorities who have been historically shit on by the religionists who have a stranglehold on our government. Any pride event that allows Jim Fouratt or those like him to spew hate at the most defenseless of those sexual minorities is no better than the people who support and believe in Dr. Laura Sclessinger's views on homosexuality.

Pride, dammit! Not bigotry!

## The Return Flight...

(a real-life experience after a sex change)

By Sue Davis

*I'm checking in at the gate for my flight home from SRS. Behind me in line is a deadheading pilot, coming along to fly the plane back on the return trip. He's your basic aviator alpha male type, in his fifties, graying and a little pudgy.*

*The gate agent is assigning me a seat, and gives me a quizzical look. "You're Susan Davis? I see that we have a wheelchair request for you."*

*"Oh, that was for my outbound flight. I won't be needing one today."*

*"So you're all healed, then?"*

*"Yes."*

*The pilot behind me pipes up, "Whatever she did, then, I want to do, too."*

*It was all I could do to keep from laughing. "Um, no, I really don't think you do...."*

a tiara on her head and named Addams the best in the state.

At precisely the same time, Fisher and Glover were drinking beer in Fisher's room and listening to the soundtrack from "Psycho." Glover picked up a bat and went to a hall where Winchell was sleeping on a cot.

Winchell never woke up. Glover swung the bat five or six times with such ferociousness that parts of Winchell's brain extruded through his left ear, according to testimony. Blood covered the walls and ceilings, splashing 15 feet down the hall.

Justin Fisher asked Calpernia Addams to set him up with Kim Wayne Mayfield, who performs in drag as Kimmie Satin. 'He flirted with me for several weeks after that, and I flirted back,' Mayfield recalls. Addams rushed home to call Winchell with her great news, but there was no answer. She would learn the devastating truth the next afternoon, from the television. To this day, she blames herself. "The reason he was killed was because he was dating me," she says. "That makes it even more devastating, to think that I had played some role in it."

Among the first things Addams did was to develop the one roll of film with pictures of the two of them together. But the film had been ruined somehow, and the pictures were black, a final cruelty that she still despairs. She now has only a few photographs that Winchell gave her from his childhood; she wrapped up the rest and sent them back to his parents. She included a small picture of herself. It had already hit the papers that Winchell had been dating "a drag queen" from a Nashville club, and Addams hoped to prepare Winchell's parents for the sordid coverage. "Just to settle your mind, this is me," she put in an accompanying note. "I tried to be a good person, and I just hope that you can find it in your heart not to hate me."

Winchell's mother, Patricia Kutteles, a psychiatric nurse from Kansas City, Mo., knew only that her son was dating a dancer from Nashville, which saddens her, given that in her liberal household homosexuality was discussed and accepted. Perhaps, she thinks, this indicates he was simply in a passing phase. "When I found out Calpernia was a transsexual or whatever, that was a bit surprising," she says. "But she is a very nice person, and she really cared about Barry. Knowing he was in a happy relationship, in the end, that helped. When we talked, he was just so optimistic about his future."

Addams and Kutteles have spoken once, briefly, on the telephone. They had agreed to meet



When her boyfriend became a gay martyr, Calpernia Addams had to perform on a different stage.

one afternoon during Glover's court-martial. (Glover got a life sentence; Fisher, who washed the blood from the bat, got 12 years in a plea bargain.) But Addams canceled. "I just felt I did not have the strength to show myself to this woman," Addams explains. "I don't want to make myself sound like Florence Nightingale, but if only one group of people gets to have the help and attention, then certainly I would have it be Barry's parents."

At a fund-raising cocktail party for the S.L.D.N. in a 190-year-old historic Nashville farmhouse, Calpernia Addams is filling a plate with roasted pork loin and steamed shrimp dumplings. Earlier in the day, Addams was not sure she would attend the event. "I only found out about it after a friend forwarded me e-mail," she said then. She feels strange, being so bitterly marginalized. But she is just now beginning to allow herself room to criticize.

"I'm disappointed in a lot of ways with almost every organization that I thought would help me with this," she says. "A lot of things I don't want to go in print - speaking out against these major national gay and lesbian organizations - but a lot of them I thought would come and help me or say something, or do a press release or give me some advice. And they just didn't." But ultimately she pulled on a skin-tight tongue-pink top and a slinky red skirt that reached below her knees, and with a mist of slight Southern conceit she strode right past the donation table and over to the food.

Across the room Kathi Westcott, the S.L.D.N. staff attorney, has begun calling everyone to attention, and she asks Addams to come forward. "I am constantly amazed by her elegance and her calm and cool," Westcott announces. "Without her strength and courage I don't think we would be able to convince the press that this was a hate crime."

With that, Westcott hands Addams a framed commendation from the organization. "We commend you for your courage in ensuring justice for P.F.C. Barry Winchell," it says. "In addition your extraordinary efforts have helped force our Armed Forces to implement new rules in training to prevent anti-gay harassment and hate crimes, making the world safer for all." Addams is overcome with emotion. "That's so nice," she says in a voice so soft it is barely above a lip-synch.

But there is something in the text that snags her, or rather something that is missing. There is no mention of her loss. Its author seems no more capable of picturing her as one-half of this couple than Addams herself was when gripping those blackened photographs. The proclamation is proof that Winchell belongs to them now, no longer to her at all. "I do feel like I was an awkward element for everybody involved," Addams says several weeks later. She sounds a note of resignation. "I didn't want to be anybody's anything, really, except Barry's girlfriend. And that was already taken away from me."

But if you are one of those people who have to go around "improving" this and "improving" that, then this part is for you: There are no guarantees in life. There never will be. We may hate the routines that are familiar and comforting. Maybe the same old familiar routines hate us! Did you ever think of that? You are probably just getting lazy and sloppy. You should straighten up! Stop feeling so frightened and inadequate! There are people in history that have gone through worse things! They made it out alright. Well, some of them did. Courage is not absence of fear; it is having the willingness to take action in spite of fear.

Today I'm going to change what I hate doing and do something else, or nothing at all.

Daily Confrontations By Kimberly Burnham

He who eats the fastest, gets the mostest — Latin Proverb

If you are unwilling to take a chance, and don't feel like trying, that's cool. That's stability... doing what your heart tells you to do. Listen to it. What does it say? Perhaps it is saying something like, "Get off your ass and maintain the status quo of life." Do you understand? Some would tell you to "seize the day," but just take a look at the people who say those things! Perhaps your deepest needs are not being fulfilled or something. We may feel that our lives are fucked up. Yet, there are some people who are more screwed up than we are; let me tell you....

# TRANSGENDERS OF COLOR: WHY MANY AREN'T IN THE TRANSGENDER MOVEMENT

By Monica Roberts

One of the questions that I get asked as a TG activist of color wherever I go is why has it been so difficult to get POC's involved and active in the TG movement. As a middle-class African-American who grew up in the 'hood this is my assessment of why many POC's prefer to not publicly identify as transgendered or get involved in the T-civil rights struggle.

Gender roles in communities of color are rigidly enforced, and transgressing those roles can sometimes provoke a violent reaction that may result in your death. You avoided being called a 'sissy', 'dyke', or 'punk' at all costs. Last year Lynn Vines of Baltimore was shot six times at point blank range by a 13 year old because she was a drag queen visiting her sister. The words of this kid as he shot Lynn were: "We don't want no faggots in our neighborhood." Many TG's of color are also reluctant to join T-organizations because of

our working partnership with the GLB community and their self-perceptions of themselves as hetero members of their new gender.

Transgenderers of color don't see TG organizations addressing their most vital issue...JOBS. A job is a precious commodity to a person of color, and many of us aren't going to put that job in jeopardy if we know for a fact that identifying yourself as transgendered will cause you to LOSE that job. No job = no money = no transistion.

Transgenderers of color don't see people that look like them in many T-organizations, and that sets up a vicious cycle. They don't feel like valued members of the community because of it or feel that they have a stake in the organization. It also sends the unspoken message that they aren't welcome in the T-community. There is also a reluctance among transgenderers of color to join a predominantly white organization or be the 'first POC' in an organization. Any T-POC that does has to have a very healthy ego and infinite patience to

withstand the slings and arrows that come from both the T-community of color and the white T-community. Heaven help that T-POC if they rise to a leadership position within that organization. Every decision that they make is nitpicked or criticized by the white T-community and they are ripped as a sellout by the T-community of color at the same time.

So what do we do about it? Frederick Douglass once said in 1862 that "the destiny of the colored American is the destiny of America". That means that if we are to achieve our goal of gaining our constitutional rights, we must have the T-community of color actively taking part. Capitol Hill, the statehouses, and city halls of our nation must see the full diversity of our community. We must also honestly address the issue of racism within our house if we are to ever have any hope of building a united T-community.

# LOVING THE IMPERFECT PERSON

BY DAWN WILSON

It is said that "we come to love not by finding a perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly." You may think that this is from the Bible; in some ways, it was. The actual quote is from Sam Keen. The Dalai Llama expressed a similar view when he said "It is not enough for one to belong to a religion, they must practice it also." You see, my friends, I've been dealing with a lot of personal and religious questions over the past few months, due to the fact that I am now co-chair of a committee on Christian education for youth. Who else would you get to do it? Nothing like a 20-year veteran of teaching Sunday school who is an African-American transsexual who was themselves thrown out of a church for being trans.

When we look at ourselves, do we see what others see, or do we see who we are? Many times, I've had to pick up the emotional wreckage caused by people to transpeople, and to young people in general. Young people who were tossed from their homes because they were "different", and that difference didn't fit with their view of the Bible or of their clergy. The worst part of this is that the very people who use the Bible to hurt others are the very people who should instead be using the Bible to heal, as Jesus would have done.

In Mark 9:38-42, Jesus talks about people becoming a stumbling block by using their own personal prejudices that turn people from Him. In other words, any parent who professes Jesus Christ as their Savior and uses the heavy-handed tactics of abandonment, ridicule, scorn, and disapproval, causing their kids to turn from any belief system, is completely wrong. According to Jesus, it is better if that person were never born. Their fate awaits them. In Matthew 7, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says in chapters 1-15 about hypocrisy; saying one thing and doing another. Exactly what our friends (?) at Southeast Christian, Southland Christian in Lexington, Evangel

Tabernacle, and Highview Baptist do every Sunday. They profess love and compassion, yet they are more preoccupied with who's making the most devastating fashion statement on Easter Sunday and who does business with whom, than caring for the young person dealing with a gender, sexual orientation, or other personal issue, whether it be their child or not. I cannot tell you how many times I have held children in my arms who have been in tears, heartbroken, wrenching my robes because of the insensitivity of a few who call themselves Christians, but aren't. I am deeply ashamed of these New Jack Christians who spend more time comparing the newest editions of the Bible instead of actually cracking one open, reading it, and understanding what the Lord is really saying in it. I think Paul said it best in Corinthians 13 when he speaks of the true meaning of love; it doesn't mean sex, it doesn't mean self-worth, it means compassion, caring, forgiveness, charity, and faith in things seen and unseen. It is a foundation that life itself should be built from. To take that away from anyone in the name of an ideology is a sin that, in my opinion, someone should burn for; I cannot make that judgment.

Remember what I said earlier about the Dalai Llama? I've been taking that to heart more and more lately. I haven't worn a cross for more than 13 years. I am wearing one now. I haven't touched a seminary book in 3 years, but I'm doing that now. For me to understand the faiths of others, I must better understand my own. This past February, the Lord brought me to the realization that I had to learn something. I am not perfect. That no matter how hard I have tried to deny who I am, I cannot. God did that by showing me a couple of people who needed my help, and I was so wrapped up in my own problems that I almost missed the chance. Nobody's perfect, especially not me. A friend once told me that they wanted to save me, and convert me to agnosticism. I have been blessed too many times by a higher power to deny its

existence. I know I sound like I'm becoming a Reicher, but I've always been a true Christian, not one of the wannabe's. I actually read and understand the lessons I've been taught. It is my personal belief that all of us need a spiritual foundation, no matter where we find it or what it is. Most importantly, nobody has the right to take it away from you. To those who may try, I will let God mete out the punishment, because I cannot. I have my own issues to deal with, as do we all.

Remember what I said earlier about Sam Keen? I'm an imperfect person. Someday, I will help somebody heal their own imperfections. I believe that someday is now.

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### MILLENNIUM MARCH....

(Continued from Page 4)

into the concert – certainly one of the biggest draws of the entire event. They also proved an effective foil to the Phelpsites out for a bit of crude street-revival-theatre-styled protesting.

But beyond simply scoring points from the passing crowd on their handling of Phelps, et al, they also scored on their message of ENDA without gender being unequal. Many, especially within the butch lesbian community, gave their verbal support (a few even helped them protest Phelps!)

More ominous still are the continuing reports of the FBI investigation into the MMOW festival, and now on the organizers itself. Some estimates are that as much as a million dollars may have been lifted from the festival's intake.

In a recent article on Gay.com by Michelangelo Signorile, MMOW organizers acted "like credit card junkies; living on tomorrow, waiting for that mythical payload to come in." Contrary to the previous grassroots organized marches, this one (despite its counter-arguments) was a true 'top-down' organization.

Besides the MMOW board, Human Rights Campaign (HRC) was neck deep in the organizational structure. According to reports, a secretive executive committee of six ran the show: Ann DeGroot, Duane Kramer of the Names Project/AIDS Quilt, Nicole Ramirez-Murray of the National Latino/a GLBT group, Donna RedWing of Gill Foundation (formerly of HRC), Margaret Conway, HRC's managing director, and Michael Armentrout, of the HRC board of directors. The shadowy executive group apparently had broad leeway regarding decision-making. "The executive board made decisions and did things they wanted... without explaining it and without being upfront," says an individual associated with MMOW. "I think they thought it was intelligent. But they were making some pretty bad decisions."

"They asked for more money three days before the event," Deborah Oakley Melvin, an MMOW board member.

Early MMOW event organizer, Robin Tyler – who stepped down amid complaints about her leadership late last year – is outraged at how things fell out after the event. She reportedly warned the MMOW board and Elizabeth Birch of the potential problems, but to no avail.

Tyler is especially critical of the way both MMOW and HRC have distanced themselves from the event, and from each other. With so many HRC people on the board, Tyler said, they dominated the event. "HRC was running the whole show."

Few would argue that it was in HRC's best interests to do ensure the march was successful. Their companion Equality Rocks concert, which brought in over \$700,000 to HRC, hinged on the

march. All who attended saw HRC's master plan in operation, how it used the march as a massive marketing and outreach tool – with HRC banners and logos everywhere – and also as a way to rally the gay voting bloc around their hand-picked presidential endorsee, Al Gore.

However, since the fallout, and subsequent FBI scrutiny, HRC has taken pains to excuse themselves from any direct responsibility. "[T]he executive director is responsible for running an entity," replied HRC's Elizabeth Birch about the march after news of the FBI investigation broke.

Even though it wasn't an HRC march, everyone who attended saw the HRC banners, HRC flags and Equality Wear everywhere, and Elizabeth Birch herself onstage with Vice President Al Gore, while taking swipes at the march's critics in her speech. It may or may not have been an official HRC event, but with all the equal signs blanketing the festivities, it's hard to disassociate the two in the public's eye. So when one hears Birch's pronouncement: "We did not run the march. We haven't been near it," it sounds shrill and defensive.

True, MMOW ran the march: but HRC was deeply involved from the beginning

### TATS DOES DC, ROUND IV....

(Continued from Page 5)

reads in the various offices, and has a quiet, composed style that will impress; as well as a sharp mind to go with it. Indeed, I did appreciate having that second set of eyes and ears: she was definitely an asset!



**A little accomplished, a lot of walking, and a number of blisters later, the lobbying duo, Vanessa (L-R) & Kathy Padilla heave a sigh and head for dinner**

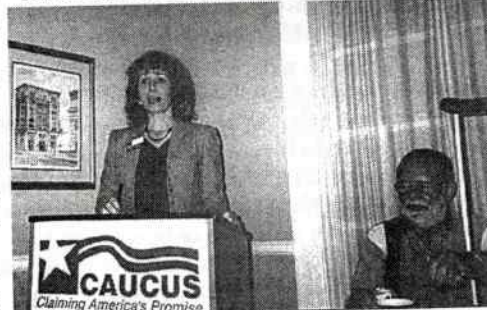
day's work, I say. There're much worse things out there than what we saw, to be sure!

The overall impression Kathy had? "If you're needing some exercise; join the Lobbying Committee." Monica Roberts responded with the crack that one needs 'track shoes' when lobbying with me. It's not that bad!

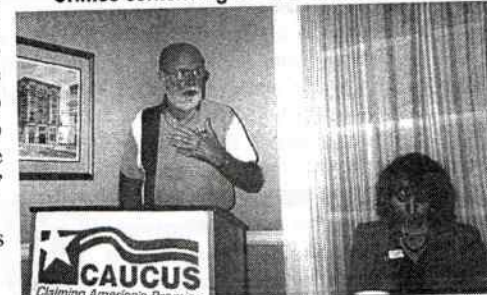
As a final thought, Kathy added "Next time I'll bring some bandaids for the blisters." Capitol idea!

### TATS in Action!

#### The Great Debate: Hate Crimes Law or No?



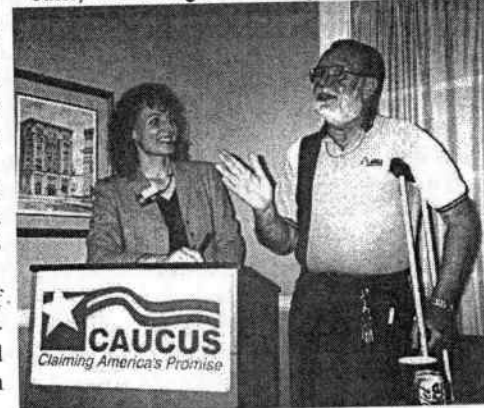
**Vanessa Edwards Foster took her 'pro' Hate Crimes sentencing-enhancement stance...**



**While Ray Hill made a stump for his opposition viewpoint to Hate Crimes legislation...**



**As played out on HAN-Net many times before; both sides scored points, neither was swayed by the other, and both agreed to disagree on the issue.**



**But argue as we might (and verbosely at that!), we left the Caucus audience with food for thought. And as always... Ray and I leave as friends.**

# ASTRO FORECAST FOR JUNE 2000

By Lilly Roddy  
General

**W**ell, after the planetary line up for last month, anything would seem tamer. But Mercury does go retrograde on June 23rd, so have all of your new projects started by the 20th. And be prepared to re-view the past and finish up old task until July 20th. The first 3 days of the month are quite intense so avoid ego battles if you can or be sure you take a big club with you and wear protective armor. Or better still take a quick trip out of town.

The Sun moves into Cancer (first day of Summer) on June 20th. Mercury is in Cancer for the entire month. Venus starts the month in Gemini but swims into Cancer on the 18th, Dad's Day. Mars also begins the month in Gemini and moves into the crabby sign of Cancer on the 16th. All the rest of the planets stay where they are.

Be sure and attend the Pride Parade. Show your pride!!!

**Aries** – You are going to be so active and talkative this month. Everything around you will have be interesting and intellectually stimulating or you will be on to other things that are. You are very amenable to people and changing activities around you. Keep your schedule light and tell plenty of jokes. By mid month you are trying to create some stability in your life. Avoid your family as much as possible as they will only make your feel more unstable. Or if you like that feeling, visit them a lot this month, especially around the 20th and 21st.



**Taurus** – Money is on your mind this month. Where is yours and how much do you really have? You will have the impulse buy fever this month. Only go shopping with a financial chaperone. However, this is a good month to consider investments as long as you do it before the 20th. And you should also try to keep your schedule as light and as easy as possible. You are still recovering from last month. By mid month, you seem to be more in your natural element and your are ready for good friends, a nice dinner and a better handle on your life.



**Gemini** – Your brain is running extra fast this month. You can easily drive off and leave others in your dust. Not that this is a bad thing but if you are expecting others to keep up with you, you many only be able to hang out with other Gemini's. Your temper is very short this month. You will be impatience with those that can't keep up with you. The first 3 days of the month can be a real test for you. Keep life altering decision to a minimum on those days. By the middle of the month, you are much more grounded and are more concerned about your future security.



**Cancer** – I hope you have some friends that you want to talk with this month because, you are

going to want to solve all the problems of the Universe in the first half of the month. You are very spiritual and philosophical. We are all one and you are interested in telling us how to get there. You come out like gang busters after mid month. Anyone that stands in your way will get to see your Crabby side. This would be a great time to meet new people as long as you do it before the 20th. After that, look up old friends and lovers. They will be very happy to see you.



**Leo** – Group activity is heavily favored this month. I guess this means that you should be leading the Pride Parade. You are especially cheerful after this last month and you are ready to keep your life, work, and relationships on a much lighter note. The beginning of the month is very good for meeting new people and the last half of the month is good for calling on old friends. By mid month, you are much more melancholy and will chose to spend you time with people that are very sensitive. Make sure that are sensitive to your needs too.



**Virgo** – And it is career time for the Virgins. Lots of options are opening up for you this month. Just don't take too much time analyzing all the options and miss the moment to make a timely decision. If you can't make a decision before the 20th, you will have to wait until the 20th of July. Ego conflicts can occur at work with bosses, clients or co-workers. Your intentions may be well founded but your desire for others to change right now may put them off. The very beginning of the month may be your best time to stay home and have a mental health day.



**Libra** – The first half of the month should be very good for you. This is a good time for travel, education, the outcome of lawsuits or just being more creative. You are not very interested in things that are going to require lots of effort on detail or you having to be serious about considerations. The last half of the month, you are into a career mode and are rethinking if you have make the right decisions about your life. If you had doubts about the career choices that you made, they will come back to revisit you this part of the month. Use this time to review and not to berate your current choice.



**Scorpio** – For you, this is a wonderful month to talk about all the deep dark submerged issues that you carry around that no one knows about. This means that you will have to open up, but just a little. Others will definitely come to you as their therapist this month. This is just the universe giving you the chance to work on your own problems disguised as somebody else's problems. This way you solve their problems, make them feel better, talk out your issues and still look as though you have everything in your life



in control. Neat, huh? The later half of the month is a good time to take a trip to someplace you have been before. You are ready for the break.

**Sagittarius** – Relationships are on your mind this month. If you have one, you will want it spruced up. If you don't have one, you will want one. And you have plenty of energy and courage to get out there and beat those bushes for some new pals. You would also do well in the Pride Parade with your buddies, the Gemini's. You need some new adventure and if your current partner is not the adventuresome type, you will be out fishing for someone interesting, darling. This is the right time, you just need to be in the right place. The last half of the month, you will have to be more serious, darn it.



**Capricorn** – Yes, you are reorganizing the work place again. It is not just like you want it. You are still negotiating treaties between your co-workers. You can take the credit for getting them together but be sure that you don't end up being blamed if you can't. You will want to spend you time with a more accepting crowd as we get to mid month. You will be looking for that special someone or to renew that spark with the current special someone. Do something different and totally unexpected. Your partner is really ready for you to take some initiative in your relationship. Show them that you think about other things than just work.



**Aquarius** – For June, you need to take a big breath and make you whole life simpler. You pushed really hard last month and you need time to recharge. Only do things that are creative, playful, fun or intellectually stimulating. Anything that has too much of a routine will drive you right up the wall. By mid month you are ready to get back into some sense of routine. And then you will want to alter that routine, and make it perfect after the 20th. You naturally treat those in your work environment as your family and then make yourself responsible for the family getting along. We are just waiting for our schedules, Mom.

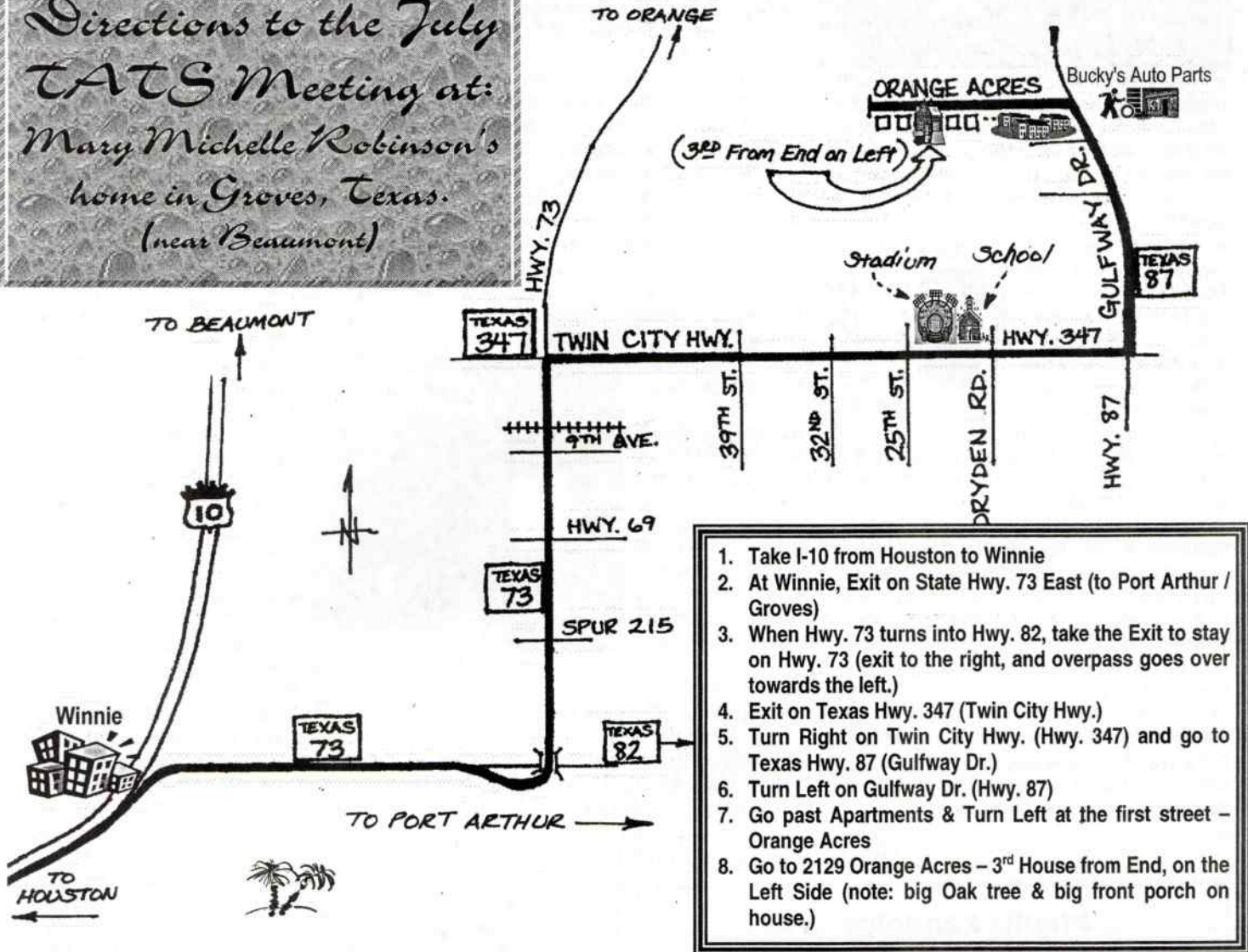


**Pisces** – You are really pulled home this month, both literally and figuratively. You will focus your energies toward making your home a more comfortable place for you to be. You may want to move, redecorate or go back to the old home place. If there are conflicts at home that need to be brought up, this will be the time. Invite some friends in for a Bar-B-Que, and share your loving environment with them. This could help to defray the gathering force that is needing to express itself with your family. You just want to change those routines that drive you unconsciously. By the middle of the month, you are ready for fun and creativity. This would be a great time for a vacation to where you have been before.



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Directions to the July  
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1. Take I-10 from Houston to Winnie
2. At Winnie, Exit on State Hwy. 73 East (to Port Arthur / Groves)
3. When Hwy. 73 turns into Hwy. 82, take the Exit to stay on Hwy. 73 (exit to the right, and overpass goes over towards the left.)
4. Exit on Texas Hwy. 347 (Twin City Hwy.)
5. Turn Right on Twin City Hwy. (Hwy. 347) and go to Texas Hwy. 87 (Gulfway Dr.)
6. Turn Left on Gulfway Dr. (Hwy. 87)
7. Go past Apartments & Turn Left at the first street - Orange Acres
8. Go to 2129 Orange Acres - 3<sup>rd</sup> House from End, on the Left Side (note: big Oak tree & big front porch on house.)



TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Let's get out and protest! The Equality Team is heading up another protest; this time of the Republican State Convention here at in Houston. Dan DiDonato will co-chair the event with a transgender – and no, it's not Vanessa! Jessica Redman will co-chair and organize the crucial event here at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Pride Month is underway, and the Unity Committee can still use your help! There are some needs on the want-list – especially any dance-type music in compact disc format. Additionally, we need your help, in person!!! This will be our first bonafide float, and there's gonna be a lot of constructing and breaking down to be done, so let's get some bodies out there!



As a side note, we have managed to get Christie Littleton down for the Houston Pride Parade this year. She and Phyllis have commandeered my convertible, have a separate entry in the parade, and will be riding in it – topless (the car, not them personally!) – weather permitting.

By now, y'all are aware the Texas State Supreme Court refused to hear the Littleton case this past month. Now, Phyllis & Co. gear up to take this to the Supremes. Needless to say, Christie was devastated by the news. In an Email, she recounted how it brought back all the pain of her early years, transition, and public reaction at the time of her surgery.

Adding insult to injury, a 'friend' called and asked why Christie hadn't told her her secret. "Then she said not to feel bad about the outcome," Christie recalled, "cause I should know, I never could be a real woman – I was man made!" Hey, what are friends for?!? Apparently helping one's "eye's hurt so much from crying." All this has brought a new attitude to Littleton: one with fight! "You were looking for fighter?" Christie asked. "My fight is here! Let's go!"

While on the subject of Christie Lee Littleton, a bizarre tidbit: the defense attorney who devised the defense's ploy in the ill-fated Littleton v. Prange suit is a lesbian. Maybe some in our GLBT family should consider principle rather than 30 pieces of silver! Money talks... maybe we shouldn't listen....

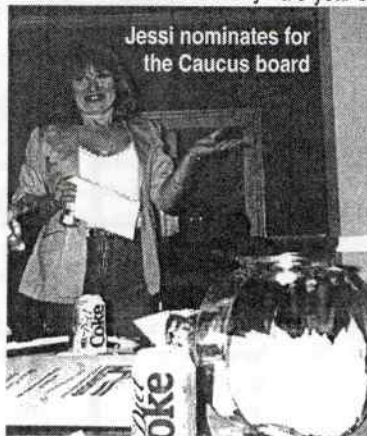
Did you know...? Jessica Redman was not only elected to the NTAC board this month, but was also elected to the board of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus this past month as well. She now joins the Caucus treasurer, Vanessa Edwards Foster as the second TG on the 13-member board. Congratulations, Jessi!

Another TATS member had a rather notable piece of news ... Marti Bennett has been nominated for *Who's Who In Professional Management In America*. What an awesome compliment from her company to submit her for such recognition! Hearty congratulations, Marti!

And yet another TATS member scores a first! Just a couple months after winning trans-inclusion in the mission statement of the Texas Human Rights Fund (THRF), our own Apogee Award-winner, Sarah DePalma, is now the first transgendered member of their board of directors! Congratulations, Sarah!

Quote Of The Month: "George W. Bush to meet with gay Republicans – hate your politics, love your shoes" – San Francisco Supervisor Tom Ammiano.

A children's book about Marvin Redpost, a grade schooler who kisses his elbow and becomes a girl, is inappropriate for her children, says the mother of an eight year old boy. The Chicago Tribune reported, May 7, that Sheree Standard said she doesn't think her son and other youngsters should be reading the story about a 9-year-old boy who wants to play hopscotch with the girls at recess instead of wall ball with the boys. "I don't think it's appropriate for a child his age," she said. "I'm not saying this book can make my son gay. I'm just asking what is the point?" She was allowed by the school to buy the school's copy of the book, in order to remove it from the shelf. (Either that, or she's secretly a TG admirer!)



Standard said she's disturbed that in the book, *Marvin Redpost: Is He a Girl?*, by Louis Sachar, a prize-winning children's author, Marvin dreams that he wears a dress to baseball practice and wishes he could change his hairstyle like the girls do. School principal, Christine Weaver, said the book was meant to be "weird and beyond belief." Unconvinced, Standard is now seeking to have it banned completely from the school library.

(Continued on Page 18)

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# WELCOME TO THE JUERGEN SPRINGHEISER SHOW!

By Katrina C. Rose

*Juer-gen! Juer-gen! Juer-gen! Juer-gen!*  
*Welcome! Welcome! Welcome ladies and gentlemen. Today's show is called 'I've been hiding a secret from my new husband and I'm feeling guilty about it,' but before we get started, I have an announcement. I was just informed of this before I walked out here. The Juergen Springheiser Show has just been named the Best New Talk Show of 1936.*

*(applause)*

*Thank you. Now, please say hello to our first guest, Erika.*

*(more applause)*

*Erika, as all of you in the audience might guess, is a newlywed. What's your husband's name?*

*Klaus.*

*Where were you and Klaus married?*

*At the cathedral in Cologne. It was a wonderful ceremony.*

*No doubt. And this was how long ago?*

*Three weeks - we'd been dating for two years.*

*Ah huh. But during that two years, you were keeping a little secret from Klaus weren't you Erika.*

*Yes.*

*And you wanted to come on the show today and let him know the truth.*

*Yes, Juergen.*

*Well, before we bring Klaus out, why don't you share the secret with our audience.*

*Well - my, this is so difficult - you see, Klaus is from a strict Christian background. If his family had found out about me beforehand, then they certainly would have prevented the marriage. In fact, I'm not even sure that Klaus would have gone through with it.*

*And your secret is?*

*I'm a Jew.*

*(gasps)*

*Well, let's bring Klaus out here so you can break the news to him. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Klaus!*

*(applause)*

*Welcome Klaus.*

*Thank you Juergen.*

*Well, you know that the reason you're here today is that Erika has a secret that she wants to tell you about.*

*Yah.*

*Well, Erika, tell your secret.*

*Klaus, you know that I love you so much. You know how I've told you that there are some things about me that I don't feel comfortable talking about?*

*Yah.*

*Well, there's really only one thing - and here it is. I'm a Jew.*

*(Klaus breaks a chair over Erika's head - and then the crowd applauds even more.)*

For those of you who don't know, yes, there was television before World War II - not much of it, but there was some. In England, the BBC was broadcasting a Disney cartoon when it was interrupted with the news that war had been declared - and picked up with that same cartoon once the war was over and television broadcasts were resumed.

Was there a Juergen Springheiser Show on pre-World War II television in Germany? Doubtful. But, if there had been a talk show on TV (or radio for that matter) in Nazi Germany, would you be willing to believe that it would not have been capable of generating such a disgusting encounter?

And - is the above encounter any more disgusting than the ones that Jerry Springer arranges involving transsexuals?

I'm not trying to go back on statements I've made in the past about Jerry Springer's free speech rights. I stand by them - although then, as now, I'm actually more concerned with my own than his. If his trans-usage can be censored by America's pseudo-Christian religio-guvment, then that same pseudo-Christian religio-guvment can censor legitimate discourse about

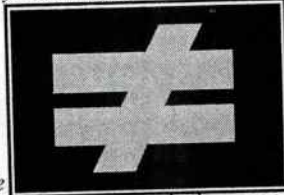
transsexualism (and keep in mind that Texas courts have recently proven that they will not uphold the law when upholding the law would benefit transsexuals; why would anyone believe that those courts would uphold the Constitution?)

However, I hope that Mr. Springer will one day - and soon - think about what his show has done to transsexuals. Hopefully, a person with Springer's intelligence (he was a lawyer before getting into politics and ultimately into the television biz) can comprehend my analogy. Hopefully, he'll think about what the reaction would be if a Juergen Springheiser appeared today and used Jews they way that Springer, a Jew, uses transsexuals.

Of course, anyone who thinks that the anti-transsexual bias in the Texas courts (as well as that within the Human Right Scampaign and within the concrete heart of Barney Frank) started with Jerry Springer is being too simplistic. However, anyone who can't accept that the aforementioned bigotry has been exacerbated and validated by Springer is missing more than a few brain cells.

Mr. Springer, you are - whether you like it or not and whether you are willing to admit it or not - in part, responsible for such things as Littleton v. Prange and the exclusion of transgendered people from the proposed federal ENDA. Please have some decency and try to undo some of the damage that you've done. Do some serious shows on transsexualism - like those that you did when your show first began.

I'm not holding my breath, though. I truly doubt that you will listen to me any more than Barney Frank or the Human Right Scampaign will.



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TATS Tidbits

(Continued from Page 16)

• Congratulations to Devin Smith of Austin. She's finally got her own business started. The Cheshire Cat is a resale / transgender-oriented, full service store. It's located on 34th, just west of Guadalupe; and should be opening about mid-June. When you're in Austin, drop in... and tell her Vanessa sent you!

• From JoAnn Roberts of Renaissance... the Transgender Fund is off and running. In the week since our initial announcement we have received over \$300 in donations. While that is very heartening, it is just a drop in the bucket. The TGFund is a grass-roots effort. We need as many people as possible to know about the fund and the opportunity to make a difference in the community's future. The Fund will be doing a media campaign both inside and outside the TG community. Visit the TGFund site at: [www.tgfund.org](http://www.tgfund.org)



• NEW YORK — Lee Brewster, owner of the famous Lee's Mardi Gras Boutique, died May 19 of cancer. He was 57. Brewster, who sold size 15 studded platform shoes, size 30 dresses, corsets, feather boas, fishnet tights and hip-hugging gowns to men who like to dress as women and to costume designers for movies such as "Tootsie."

For many years, Brewster held fancy balls for the local TG community, and fought for gay rights. He also published *Drag Magazine* in the 1970s and '80s. Customers have included Lady Bunny, the founder of Wigstock, and costume designers for *The Birdcage*, which starred Robin Williams and Nathan Lane, and *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar*,

which featured Patrick Swayze.

• MIAMI, Fla. — Investigators are looking into allegations of sexual misconduct at the Krome Immigration Detention Center, including a complaint that a transsexual detainee was assaulted by an officer. U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service officials would not discuss the allegations, the latest in a long string of complaints of mistreatment at Krome, other than to say two separate investigations were underway. Welcome to America...!

• A new ongoing feature, Transprisoners, has been added to the TNT website (<http://www.transsexnews.com>). It can be found under "Trans News". This feature contains information about transprisoners and will be updated regularly with news and articles regarding legal information, letters, prisoner artwork and writings, as well as an ongoing list of prisoners interested in correspondence with others.



• BOULDER, Colo. — A pre-op transsexual has filed a job discrimination complaint in what is to be the first legal test of the city's new transgender civil rights law. Complainant 'Benjamin' Moore, who is undergoing estrogen treatments, discussed in her hiring interview that she would be transitioning — and was wearing lipstick at the time.

Moore usually has worn lipstick to work but not skirts or dresses, until a "Hawaiian Day" last month when some male employees wore paper skirts.

• TOKYO, Japan — James Green of FTM International just concluded a week-long visit to Japan, where he met with Masae Torai, the representative of FTM Nippon and who arranged interviews for Mr. Green with major Japanese

television networks and newspapers. During his interviews, Mr. Green urged listeners and readers to push for change to this injustice, as proper identification is necessary for everything in Japan.

Japan's only sex-change surgeon, Dr. Takao Harishina, has performed five operations since the laws were changed in 1999 to allow sexual reassignment. According to Mr. Torai, there is a waiting list of more than 7,000 candidates. Ouch!

• "Transsexuals are defying God's will and should not be allowed to alter their birth certificates or get married!" So said an organization representing more than a million evangelical British Christians to Jack Straw, the British Home Secretary. Officials fear that the Government will face challenges in the courts if the law is not reformed.

Among other statements, the group offered "we affirm God's love and concern for all humanity, including transsexual people," ...okay... "but believe that human beings are created by God as either *male* or *female* and that change from a given sex is not really possible." There you have it! More proof that the intersexed, or hermaphrodites, don't exist! Too bad they didn't read all of the Bible ... they would have read the part where Jesus said, "Know ye not that there are eunuchs made by the hand of God...."

• Argentine transgender activist Vanesa Lorena Ledesma died in police custody in Cordoba's 18th Precinct Feb. 16 of an alleged heart attack. She had been arrested five days earlier for allegedly damaging the premises during a fight at a bar.

Local activists charge that Ledesma died not of cardiac arrest but as a result of "physical punishment and torture," which, they said, was documented in an autopsy. The autopsy reportedly found broken bones and signs that she had been beaten all over her body, including while handcuffed.

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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 8, Issue 7

Houston, Texas

July, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## The Texas Democratic Convention, Y'all!

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Transgressors made their first known presence at the Texas State Democratic Convention this year. No less than four TATS members made their way up to Fort Worth to experience the presidential

spouse, precinct chair Harlen Howe-Bennett; my road-partner and roomie, TATS boardmember Jessica Redman (an alternate state delegate) and yours truly (one of Houston's two transsexual precinct chairs). We also ran into numerous friends from the community as well: Caucus officers, Sean Carter, Mike Bodin, Carl Whitmarsh, and board member Dan DiDonato, as well as Ricky 'Rainbo DeKlown' Hurt, Kevin Davidson, Coy Tow, Helen Fisher, Mark Wood, Elizabeth Nelson and Brian Keever.



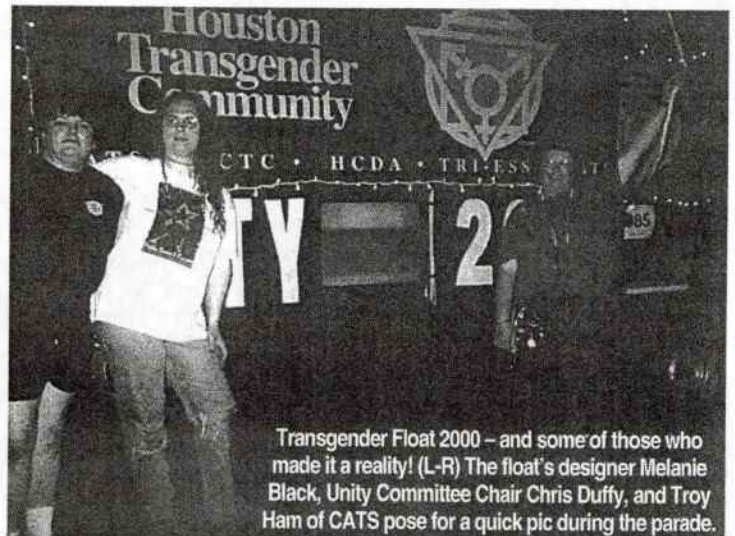
Conventioners in Fort Worth: (L-R) Vanessa Edwards Foster, Mike Bodin, Jessica Redman & Brian Keever at the Stonewall Democrat's booth.

election politics in a close-up and personal way.

Making the historic trip were Marti Bennett, who flew in from one of her far-flung jobs to be with her

Tow stated, "the thing that really strikes me is the diversity here!" True enough: gay, straight and transgendered; black, white and

(Continued on Page 9)



Transgender Float 2000 - and some of those who made it a reality! (L-R) The float's designer Melanie Black, Unity Committee Chair Chris Duffy, and Troy Ham of CATS pose for a quick pic during the parade.

## TRANSGENDERS TAKE ACTION WITH PRIDE!

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The Houston Region's Transgender Community turned out in force for the first Pride Parade of the 2000's. It was a night of a couple of firsts: it was the first time we had a bonafide float entry - complete with music and video, and it was the first time the

local transgender community had two entries in a Pride event - the Unity Committee entry and a separate entry for Phyllis Frye and the Christi Littleton Dream Team. The parade route was a little longer as well, extending one more block on either end. By the look of things, though, it

(Continued on Page 7)

## G.O.P. CONVENTION MEETS THE QUEER COMMUNITY!

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

We came, we saw, we commiserated ... the lack of participants. The Republican State Convention took place June 16 & 17 here at the George R. Brown Convention Center and had quite a turnout from the G.O.P. ranks. Unfortunately, the same couldn't be said about the turnout we were expecting from our varied communities. What turned out was a smattering - and this is very generous - of the various groups expected to participate.

The day began with a slight threat of rain

(Continued on Page 5)



Republican Rally stalwarts (L-R) Dan DiDonato, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Jessica Redman & Ricky 'Rainbo' Hurt.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

- July 8 Special Meeting (map pg. 15) at: Mary Michelle Robinson's / Groves TX @ 3 PM
- July 22 Social Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM
- August 12 Feelings Meeting at: Transgender Community Ctr. @ 3 PM
- August 26 Social Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM

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If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 780-4282 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.geocities.com/tatspage>

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

How did I get through this month? Besides Pride festivities and preparations, and the Film Festival at the beginning of the month; the majority of my time this month has involved politics. In fact, since the primaries, I've had a good portion of time taken up in my recently-acquired political activities.

Now we all despair the political road-blocks we keep running into, and the obstacles seem to increase daily. Rather than sit around and whine about our misfortune, this T-girl – and a few others – have taken the initiative to do something about it. We've gotten involved in the political process.

Yes, transgenders can get involved in politics; and it's long overdue that we should be. We've never had a transgender elected to a city, county, state or federal office; but we've had a judicial delegate and a party chair just in this past year. Even as I write, there is a GOP candidate for the U.S. House of Reps that's one of our own: Karen Kerin. So, rather than sit around and lament, perhaps it's better to at least give it a shot personally – what's to lose?

My own involvement began innocuously enough in January when I signed a form for the Democratic Party that I'd run for a precinct chair seat. I figured 'no problem, I won't be elected.' Wrong! I became the second TG to be a precinct chair (Jennifer Lytwyn being the first).

After being an election judge for the first time (and perhaps the last – it's a lot of work!), it was on to the Senate District Convention. It was surprising when I recognized who all were in my senate district: folks like U. S. Rep Ken Bentsen, Dem. National Committeewoman, and 49-year Democratic Party veteran, Billie Carr, to city council candidate Mike Laster, and Coy Tow from the Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce! Even though Jennifer Lytwyn didn't attend (she's also in my district), I was not the only TATS person there: Marti's spouse, Harlen Howe-Bennett was also a precinct chair! At the Senate District Convention, all precinct chairs attending were elected delegates by acclamation – a trip to Fort Worth in our future!

After that, there was the Party Executive Committee Meeting, and being on the committee for the pre-convention fundraiser breakfast. Before we knew it, it was state convention time!

Being her home turf, I asked Jessica Redman

Vanessa at the Senate Dist. Convention in April at Bellaire High School.



to make the trip with me and attend the state convention. The day before the event, Jessi got a letter in the mail from Carl Whitmarsh thereby informing her she was now an alternate delegate to the state convention in Senate District 15! So she was a legitimate participant in the

convention as well! Three TATS folks as the state level delegates – pretty decent for a first showing! Before it was over, even Marti Bennett flew in to experience the convention with Harlen.

As a result of my filing late, I knew going in that Fort Worth was my last stop: no national delegate for me! While there was a lot of work, and some long hours in the caucus conventions, and while we didn't make any of the scheduled parties or dinners associated with the state event, we can point to one thing with pride – the five of us got involved at some level in order to make a difference! That was good.

It's much better than the flip-side of that coin – no involvement. One week after the Democratic Convention, Jessica co-organized a rally to bring GLBT issues to the forefront of the GOP Convention here in town. The net result from that was a collective yawn from our own community! The only TATS members to attend besides Jessica and I, were Phyllis Frye and Jenifer René Pool. The apathy was stunning.

Not only that, but what few proactive movers-and-shakers you do have in your community become disheartened and disgusted very quickly; thinking no one really cares. For those leaders, it's a one-way ticket to burn-out.

Regardless of what political leanings, take an active interest in the process. If you aren't happy with government, the only way to see change is to be proactive. Otherwise, it's like driving your car with your hands off of the wheel and your eyes closed. To quote Dana Carvey quoting George Bush: "Wouldn't be prudent!" Get involved!

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

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## LAURYN PAIGE'S KILLER PLEA BARGAINS TO 40 YEARS

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

An Austin man, has pleaded guilty this past month on the January 1999 murder of Donald Scott Fuller (aka: Lauryn Paige). Gamaliel Coria, 29, was sentenced for the mutilation and murder of the transgendered teenager, whose body was dumped in a Southeast Austin ditch and covered with tree branches. Under a plea agreement, Coria must serve 20 years before becoming eligible for parole.

Prosecutors ensured Fuller's relatives were satisfied before accepting Coria's plea offer, with the sentence, prosecutor Judy Shipway said. "He's taking responsibility for the murder," she said. "They still have lost their son, but now they have closure. They don't have to go through the trial."

The plea bargain sentencing, however, sheds little light on why Fuller was killed. The 18-year-old, who was dressed as a woman, had been stabbed 60 times and his throat cut so deeply he was nearly decapitated. Shipway said she did not have a motive to present to jurors and had planned to argue that Coria was a sadistic killer. "We don't always know," Shipway said.



Fuller aka: Lauryn Paige

Coria's lawyer, Robert Icenhauer-Ramirez, said Monday that his client had been strongly against a plea bargain but decided to strike a deal after talking to his family over the weekend. "His family is... wonderful, and he regretted putting them through this," Icenhauer-Ramirez said.

According to court records, Coria and Fuller met at a Congress Avenue convenience store frequented by local prostitutes. The two - along with another transgender friend of Fuller's, and Coria's brother-in-law - drove around Austin all night in Coria's white van. The next day, Fuller's body was found in a ditch in southeast Austin, covered in branches. Coria was arrested five days later after an investigation found Fuller's blood on Coria's boots and inside his van.

Some gay and lesbian advocates believe his murder was influenced at least partly by sexual intolerance. "It seems pretty clearly a hate crime," said Gail Goodman, executive director of OutYouth Austin, an outreach group for gay and lesbian youths where Fuller sought support. The brutal way Fuller was murdered suggests Coria was "trying to kill something a lot bigger - trying to kill a lot of fear," Goodman added.

## THOUGHTS OF 'PRIDE'

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

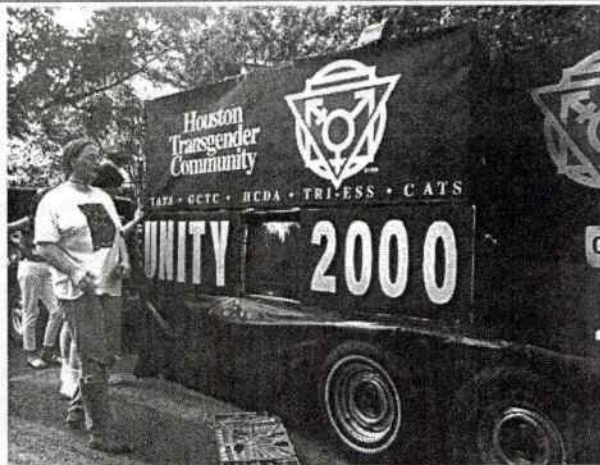
I was really proud the way the community is stepping up to the challenge, yet again! This year's parade entry was innovative. It was also a break from the past in some sense. It was the first full-blown float. Not only that, but the prime organizers and most of the labor of this year's group entry were the new kids on the block - the CATS folks. It was not the easiest float to construct, much less design! The conditions weren't all that accommodating either: the temperature gauge on a bank building said 99° on my drive over to help.

Yes, we were sweaty and dirty little girls! Vikki Lynn Skelton was a constructing dynamo! As was Chris Duffy, Sheila Appleton and Sarah Jane Connell. The float's concept-designer, Melanie Black, made the job a lot easier by pre-constructing the framework beforehand. Add Robin Babin, Rose Wall, Robin Miller and I, and you had your T-contingent float constructors - makin' it look easy! Just realize it wasn't quite that easy, especially inside that black box of a float, in the mid-afternoon sun with no ventilation. Can you say 'sunburn'?

It was also an effort decidedly not out to 'make a political statement.' Thus, no appearance of the previously ubiquitous 'Transgendered and Proud, And We Vote!' sign. Unlike all of the previous years, we are now included in most all of the local organizations - at least those that really matter. So there was no need to sing to the choir!

Just one of the signs of how times have changed was that Don Sinclair was elected as honorary Grand Marshal of this year's parade. Known as a bit of a TG-antagonist in years gone by; his appointment would not have been highly regarded in years past. Even Phyllis questioned his being named, and was tempted to note this publicly. That was, until she was reminded that he's one of our 'converts' - a supporter now! While I'm at it, I'll take this opportunity to congratulate Don Sinclair, as well as Grand Marshals Tori Williams and the late Richard Wiederholt on their appointments of honor by the community! Kudos!

My personal day was a bit more hectic: a special Caucus Board Meeting at noon, leaving message of the Littleton entry number to Sarah, stopping at Phyllis' to pick up the entry number



Unity Committee Chair, Chris Duffy steps back to get more of a full perspective of the nearly finished product: the TG Float.

(a must for the parade entries!), stopping back at the house to retrieve my forgotten fire extinguisher (another must!), helping with the T-entry, touching base with the Caucus entry, lining up, tacking up signage and getting message of the location for the Littleton entry to its participants, even lobbying Tamara Jones about the Caucus and helping sign up a couple people for PVA!

Lots of coordinating! Then running between the various floats, and to the Chase Bank entry - my favorite! - to visit my friends there ... lots of exercise! And lots of sweat!

Finally line-up time, and time to visit with the entire T contingent. Suddenly the parade was off to a running start! Then the lights and the video came on, and what a show! This is about the proudest I've seen the transgender community during Pride!

I had a fairly sore toe before beginning the parade. Sure enough, within the first block on Westheimer, I twisted my opposite ankle pretty intensely. Nothing like running a parade on two bum wheels instead of one! However, I wasn't about to sit this one out!

The crowd was larger and more raucous this year! It had a definite 'New Orleans' feel to it.

It was Mardi Gras in the summer! This year we had lots of air, but nothing to blow: we ran out of balloons midway through the parade! However, the crowd was demanding something - anything! They were literally grabbing at us, yelling that they wanted a memento of some kind. Note for next year: we need to have some kind of cheap and innovative throw for the next year's entry. And lots of 'em!

Because I ran in two contingents, (besides being physically wiped out) I had two really

(Continued on Page 6)



# NEW YORK CABBIES APPLAUD MURDER OF "GENDER TRASH"

By Jamie K. Hunter & Kiva Offenholley

A transgendered sex-worker was murdered in the early morning hours of June 21, as she was getting into a taxi. Amanda Milan, 25, had just bid her friends good-bye and was on her way home at 5am when she was attacked by a man, one of a group which had been verbally harassing Amanda and her friends earlier in the evening.

The attacker verbally assaulted them with such phrases as "You're a man!" and "I know that's a dick you have in between your legs!" Amanda shouted back at him, and a verbal confrontation ensued. Amanda turned to leave and walked toward a fleet of NY yellow cabs parked along 46th Street. One of the attacker's associates reportedly said, "You gonna let that bitch get away with that?" and handed him a knife.

As Amanda was opening a cab door, her sisters and many other witnesses watched helplessly as the man ran up to her from behind and slashed her throat, severing her jugular, before fleeing. While a few bystanders tried to help, several of the yellow cab drivers parked along the street cheered and applauded as Amanda bled to death. She was conscious for the first two minutes, struggling to breathe through her own blood. She died en route to St. Vincent's Hospital.

Both suspects are in custody, awaiting a grand jury indictment expected today.

The police have no desire to acknowledge this as a bias crime. Additionally, the media have not taken up the story because the victim is a black transsexual sex-worker, and the attacker is black as well. The guy who gave him the

knife is Puerto Rican. No story as far as they're concerned.

One witness said that she is very shaken, but will courageously go in front of the grand jury to testify today. She is being provided with support at the hearing from the Anti-Violence Project, Metropolitan Gender Network, and MCC-NY.

The witness said that detectives and prosecutors have been treating them with relative respect, but that she gets the impression they are trying to rush this case through and keep it quiet. An unidentified newspaper reporter was interested in the story of the brutal slaying of a woman, but not when he learned she was "just a transvestite".

# KANSAS PROBATE RULING MUDDIED BY GENDER CHANGE

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

An estate lawsuit has arisen pitting the only son of a wealthy former stockbroker and politician against the deceased's wife, a transsexual. And in a replay of what recently unraveled here in Texas with Christi Lee Littleton, the probate judge in the case ruled the legal marriage done in that state was now void.

When he died in August 1999, Marshall Gardiner, a state politician who once ran for the U. S. House, left no will on his estate - estimated to be about \$2.5 million. Had he left a will, Gardiner - known as an impulsive man - could have specified how his estate was to be divided. Without the will, however, state law rules.

Under usual circumstances, the surviving spouse would be provided with about half of the estate. However, when he was 86, Gardiner married 40-year-old J'Noel Ball, an assistant professor of finance at Park University - a post-

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The panelists at Diverseworks following the documentary 'The Wrong Body' all had a chance to cut up for the audience: Jessica Redman (L), Vanessa Edwards Foster (C) and Zig Zigman had fun while doing some needed educating.

TATS at...  
THE HOUSTON  
GAY & LESBIAN  
FILM FESTIVAL



After the Diverseworks panel (L-R) Jessica, Vanessa (holding a picture of Calpernia Addams), moderator Lynne Huffer, and Diverseworks curator & panelist, Zig Zigman.



There wasn't much of anyone to preach to after the late night showing of 'Gendernauts' at the Rice University Media Center. However, the ever-present TATS girls were there ... just in case. At Right, Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) and Jessica Ann Redman pose after a panel audience of one! Every so often, you get a clinker...



G.O.P. CONVENTION....

(Continued from Page 1)

on Friday morning, but that cleared away leaving a breezy, humid morning. There was a slight bit of an electrified feel that morning as we set up and made signs for the mornings fare. As Ray Hill took the stage for his old fashioned tent revival; preaching the gospel from Mark 14; we could hear the choppers circling overhead. It lent a VietNam / LA riots feel to the ambience - we felt conspiratorial!

Ray continued his preaching, undaunted. It was great theatre, and a wonderful contrast on the religious agenda inside the convention away. And for masses stayed away in droves! A total of 13 attended ... the exact same number as attended the last supper! Coincidental....

Those of us organizing packed up the stuff after the noontime rally, and four of us, co-organizers Dan DiDonato, Jessica Redman and Ricky 'Rainbo DeKlown' Hurt and myself, walked over to the George R. Brown to see in person what we were up against. We hit about the time of a lot of activity walking in and out of the convention, so we managed to show the signs to the convention-goers; and elicited a bit of response from them.

It was a uniform sea of conservatively dressed, overwhelmingly white, participants - precious few were the Hispanic delegates, much less African American. And more than a couple stopped to vent their opinions back toward us. Ricky Hurt was awesome - the true protester's protester. You go, Rainbo!

Additionally, the media was out in throngs (in contrast to the Democratic convention. One of the reasons for the helicopters was the Nation of Islam protesting earlier, fully armed with machine guns! They were gone by the time we got there. But the media was keen to take note of what we were doing, and there were even a few



Rally organizers Dan DiDonato (L) and Jessica Redman in front of the George R. Brown Convention Center.

names and pictures taken, from the Houston, San Antonio, and "global" newsmedia. We made our presence to them!

Even though we managed some attention from the media and convention goers in the early portion of the rally, those of us organizing were consoling ourselves over the lackluster turnout. Our reasoning was the noon-hour was a big reason for that; and our battle-cry was that more would arrive that night. True enough, more did attend

eighteen.

We had a little live entertainment from Sean Carter, and a speech from State Rep candidate Michael Skadden. We even had a more diverse crowd, including Sue Null of PFLAG, Janice Kinchion and Katy Beth from the Harris County Democratic Party, Francisco Sanchez from Harris County and Stonewall Democrats. But after the turnout became obviously lackluster again, we decided to cut and run over to the George R. Brown again.

Phyllis Frye, Katy Beth, Francisco Sanchez, Sue Null, Scott Harbers, Rick Acker, Bill Agosto, Tim Burns, Elizabeth Nelson and Morna the Clown joined the original four of us for the protest. It was decidedly a bit more ominous in tone this time around. The folks we encountered were a bit more hardcore, and not so friendly.

One guy was the typical corporate exec: "I can hire and fire who I want - this is America!" with a smug smile on his face. The other specifically looked like a character out of a Stephen King movie: tall and thin with white hair, piercing blue eyes, poorly shaven with nostril hair protruding wildly, yellow t-shirt with olive suspenders, and a creepy, devilish smile. He looked like a pastor at a snake-handling revival. His job was to act as a diverter, someone to run interference and focus our attentions on while the delegates walked in and out. The diverter did his job well, keeping a number of us occupied at various times. After an hour of this brain drain, we repaired to Baba Yega's to drown our frustrations in food.

The final day, Saturday, I arrived a bit early that morning to find the park filled with homeless and Dan and drag-performer Rosy Cheeks, the former 'Mother of Montrose,' sitting in the car. With Rosy in full regalia drag, they were in no hurry to be the only folks out in the park.

(Continued on Page 11)



The Friday afternoon Rally crowd sits in the shade of the oak trees as ...



The Reverend Ray Hill preaches gospel to the choir at Root Memorial Square.

**THOUGHTS OF PRIDE**

*(Continued from Page 3)*

wonderful highs each time we passed the announcers at the judges' booths! The first was the announcement of our entry – which wasn't as easy to pick out since they were describing every group as "gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered..." and made a point of saying it loudly and clearly! It was so awesome hearing that! But when they announced our group the roar of the crowd began!

The emcee practically yelled: "and here is the Transgender Community – a group that represents those folks who got the gay rights movement started thirty years ago! We've got to give these folks a hand! This is for all those courageous drag queens and transsexuals and butch lesbians who stood up for their rights and our rights that night at Stonewall!" Then he said something like, 'let them know how you feel' and the roar of crowd was deafening! Don't know who that announcer was, but he was totally awesome! I'd really like to thank him!

That was the single most proud moment I've ever experienced as a transgender – bar none! It was absolutely inspiring! I only wish the entire community could've been there to experience it!

It's a true testament to how far we've come as a sub-community within the greater GLBT amalgam! These past few years have seen a greater coalescing in the queer community than we have ever seen before; and we have a lot of thanks to give to the Houston Gay & Lesbian community for that! For the Suzanne Andersons and the Ray Hills and the Annise Parkers and the Grant Martins who have pushed over the years for our being included; and allowing us those first opportunities to be active participants and show our talents and contributions. Now, save for isolated pockets here and there, we are seeing true Unity!

My second run through with the Caucus got me the second high of the evening – again as we were passing by the judges' stand. As if to point up the previous statement, we have unity – especially in the Caucus. Again this year, we have two elected members of HGLPC; one board member and one officer. The announcer again shouted out, "Now, celebrating it's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, here is the oldest gay and lesbian civil rights group in the South, the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus!" Once again, the crowd roared. It was then it finally hit me that I was also a genuine part of that storied and, yes, historic organization! Again, I was getting the adrenaline buzz as we were passing beneath the 12-foot disco ball suspended over Montrose at Westheimer!



**Welcome to the Glitterdome: On the Caucus float, Roy McCarthy (holding sign on left) waves) while Sean Carter (behind the flags) proceed under the disco ball.**

Is it safe to say 'we've arrived?' Even the event itself made me feel so much at home – especially since I knew about half of them! Every time I turned around, whether it be the parade entries adjacent to me, or the crowd calling out to me, it seemed I was hugging or kissing another T-friend, or another gay or lesbian friend, or a bi friend. We had Clarence Bagby and Ron Groce riding in the float in back of the T-

group, and later Anita Renteria and the Chamber slipped in between!

And I was elated to find, when running back to the Caucus float, that the GLBTA Aggies were right in front! There was a true feeling of belonging, like going back to your hometown or a high school reunion!

At the end of my second run through the parade, my feet were giving out on my and I began running out of gas; and the Caucus float left me far behind. As I lagged, groggily yelling "Transgenders!" to the folks on the sidelines, I found myself walking in the midst of the group entry trailing the Caucus – the local HRC! They were chanting "Human Rights is Equal Rights for Everyone!", while I yelled "Transgenders!" Nice juxtaposition.... My guess is they weren't too happy to have me lag into their group.

Fitting finish to a wonderfully and strangely beautiful evening! It was an event for the ages...!

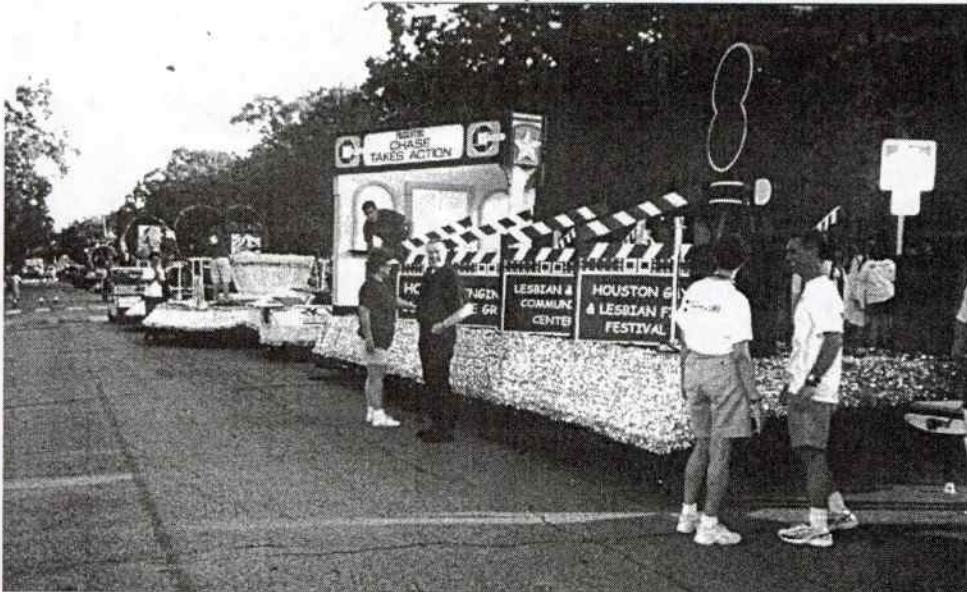


**Rose Wall (L-R) and Melanie Black do some last minute assembly on the float**

celebrating it's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, here is the oldest gay and lesbian civil rights group in the South, the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus!" Once again, the crowd roared. It was then it finally hit me that I was also a genuine part of that storied and, yes, historic organization! Again, I was getting the adrenaline buzz as we were passing beneath the 12-foot disco ball suspended over Montrose at Westheimer!



**Phyllis Frye (L) & attorney Alyson Meisman from Maryland cool their heels at Baba Yega's immediately before the Pride Parade June 24.**



**Hangin' out on Float Row: Brandon Wolf (center, facing the camera) stands in front of the Chase entry.**

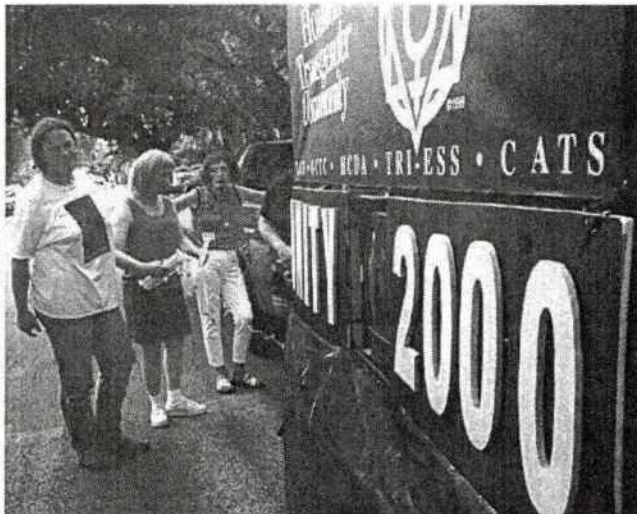
**TAKE ACTION WITH PRIDE....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

was needed; as the crowd seemed much larger than last year – by estimations, the largest attendance ever!

However, there was one first that we didn't quite get: it was only the second march to draw 27 marchers to the parade – the first being 1998. Sadly, that's an attendance record that would've been shattered as well; save for the second TG entry, or the fact that no less than three of our community members – Gloria Lopez, Monica Roberts and Kristin Ingram – were watching the event rather than participating.

Beginning the march for the community this year was Paula Allen, Sheila Appleton, Robin Babin, Alicia Nicole Beckman, Melanie Black, Dianne Boucher, Kimberly Burnham, Sarah Jane Connell, Cairistona Douglas, Chris Duffy, Troy Ham and two of his friends – Mike and Laura, Amber Houston, Robin Miller, Shannon O'Connor, Pego Rice, Mary Michelle Robinson, Lilly Roddy, Vikki Lynn Skelton,



**Chris Duffy (L-R), Rose Wall and Sarah Jane Connell give the Unity Committee float one final inspection before the parade begins.**

Mardi Gras feel these days; with beads and other assorted gewgaws being tossed to the frenzied parade-revelers.

As Kelly from Detroit put it rather succinctly: "This is incredible!" Kelly, marching in his first Pride Parade – sadly in male mode – was a story. A well respected businessman back home, he would never consider doing this for fear of recognition – and the accompanying stigmatization.

As fate would have it, he stumbled upon the Pride Parade while here in town; and fortuitously stumbled upon our entry as well – whereupon he was immediately adopted as a marcher! Kelly was "impressed" with the participation of our community.

Meanwhile, the Littleton Dream Team – Phyllis Frye, Sarah DePalma and Christi Lee Littleton riding on top of the back of my Mustang convertible, with Maryland attorney Alyson Meiselman driving, and Phyllis' wife Trish and Christi's friend Jim along for the ride – reported a similar reaction from the crowd. They

were, to quote Phyllis, "kicking ass!" And talk about a high-powered vehicle – the two biggest TG activists in Texas, riding along with the plaintiff in the biggest case in Texas transgendered history! And driven by one of, if not the best, TG civil rights attorney in

the nation! It's not every day we have that occasion.

The Dream Team entry was getting quite a lot of positive response. "It was phenomenal!" exclaimed Alyson Meiselman to the reaction of the crowd. Riding in her first Pride Parade ever, she was stunned at the level of crowd participation. "I couldn't hear a thing!"

"It was unbelievable that there were this big of a crowd here!" responded San Antonio resident, Christi Lee Littleton. "I was amazed at just how many people showed up and participated! Our parade is not even one-third this big!" Seeing Houston's night parade for the first time, Christi mused, "We should be ashamed at [San Antonio's participation in their] Pride Parade."

"I'm on cloud nine!!!" reacted Jordan Davis of College Station. Yep, even the GLBTA Ag-



**Sarah DePalma cools her heels in front of the Christi Lee Littleton parade entry while waiting for the other riders to show up.**

Brenda Thomas, Rose Wall, Brandi Welch Williams, a wonderful crossdresser from Detroit named Kelly, and yours truly. Later in the march, Beth Richard and Jackie Thorne joined us after marching in their other respective contingents. Of course, I also peeled off of our group once we hit Montrose at Westheimer in order to march with my other commitment: HGLPC – the Caucus.

The T crowd came out for a reason: this year's float was an attraction! Complete with the banners, home and car stereo speakers, and a TV screen on each side; our entry this year drew a lot of attention! With Melanie Black's design, and Chris Duffy organizing the group, this year's TG entry ran like clockwork. Major thanks go out to Robin Babin for use of her flat-bed, and also to Stacey Fisher of Tri-Ess for use of her 2,500 watt generator.

Everyone in our group this year seemed hyped! Just seeing the float in all its glory inspired the marchers in our contingent. The crowd responded very positively towards our group as well! Nearly everyone yelled out "You GO girl!" or other supportive cheers; and the only complaint was that we had no giveaways after about the midway point of the parade. In fact, Pride Parade seems to have taken on a

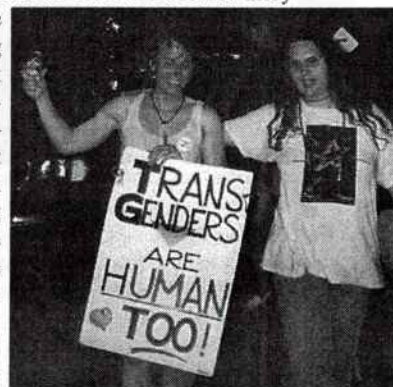


**TATS members Dianne Boucher (L-R) and Mary Michelle Robinson pose proudly, as Kimberly Burnham shows that she's an 'Instigator of Pride!'**

gies got into the act for the first time in many years! Along with Amy Miller, a grad student at A & M, they talked animatedly of their feel for their first Pride Parade, and the response they got! Their first turnout was also quite impressive! "Fifty people showed up for this!" added Davis, the newly-elected president of the GLBTA group. "This was awesome!!!"

"This is wonderful!!!" gushed a proud Alicia Nicole Beckman – another first-time TG marcher. "I am so happy I made it out to this! I wouldn't have missed this for the world!" And indeed, very few of us did!

Perhaps next year we can push beyond the record number of marchers. Participation is the key. We should take note of the last phrase in this year's Pride slogan ... "Take Action!"



**A true sign, indeed! Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) and Chris Duffy (R) limp home exhausted near the end of the Parade.**

## My Own Path, None Other!

By Vikki Lynn Skelton

**O**n June 10, I made the trek to Dr. Collier Cole's group transgender meeting in Galveston, Texas. There were many from both the T.A.T.S. and C.A.T.S. organizations and others that I did not know and or have not seen in many years.

As it was the last time I attended, 9 years ago, it there was a good number of transgender (TG) and un-transgender (Un-TG) people there. Some were single and some were married. The mike was passed around the room and we briefly shared our story with the group, some more briefly than others. I learned a great deal from these stories as well as being inspired. A few of them even brought some tears to my eyes, not because of the sadness, but because of the joy and inspiration of their successes. I even made a new best friend, a Un-TG female, and developed a good friendship with her husband as well, a F2M TG.

During one point of the sharing time, a question was brought up why some of the people were taking a different path in their transitioning than the customary "normal" or "correct" path. The question was asked out of trying to understand than out of accusation or condemnation for choosing their particular path. But why do we choose different transitioning paths? For example, why does one Male-to-Female (M2F) person consider Sex Corrective Surgery (SCS) before living full-time and even before their beard has been removed through electrolysis? Why does a Female-to-Male (F2M) try to go full-time before allowing the hormones to have their effect or before they have their breasts removed? Why does someone else take a different path than another in his or her transitioning process?

There are many answers, and some of them are simple and others are more complex. Here are a few areas that can affect the transitioning path one may choose to take.

♦ **Economics:** This is a simple and hard truth. Your particular financial situation will determine what transition path you will take and how long it will take for you to transition fully. In other words, if you have a job that pays you enough to meet your obligations plus pay for your transitioning process versus being only able to get a job that barely pays your bills, the paths will tend to be vastly different. Now, add in any assistance from family members, inheritance, government, insurance, lottery winnings, winnings from "Who Wants to Be Millionaire," and so-forth, that will effect your decision on the path you chose as well.

♦ **Relationships:** This can and usually is a big determining factor on the path you choose to take. If a person is able to transition on the job and keep their working relationship or not, if a person is married versus being single, if they prefer to have their family in their life a little longer versus being kicked out of their lives, if they have a poor relationship with themselves versus a healthy relationship with themselves and a sundry other reasons, that person will tend to take a different path than what others may take.

♦ **Health:** One's health is also determining factor as to the transitioning path one takes. Can they go through hormone therapy now, are there any health issues that will affect the decision to have the surgery or not, will their health issues cause them to delay any part or all of the transitioning process, and various other questions that can be put forth in regards to one's health must be asked to help determine the path one will take.

♦ **Mental/Emotional:** Let's just face it. Some of us are not mentally and or emotionally as ready to take some of the steps during the transitioning process as others are. At the same time, we are ready to take other steps that others are not. Mentally and emotionally, we are all at different points in our life journey. Each of us has issues that we need to look at, accept, and work through. Therefore, one's mental and emotional state will also be a determining factor in the transitioning path one chooses.

As a side note, one thing we also need to understand, along with all of the doctors, the Benjamin Standards of Care may suggest a particular path that one must take, but let's face it, they are suggestions. They should not be and are not the cookie-cutter approach to a successful transition. They may be right for some, but for others, they may not be. Unfortunately, like children, many of us are required/forced to follow that path before we are given permission to go to the next step and eventually change our own bodies to the form we desire. That is the subject of my next article.

For now, instead of trying to figure out the "correct" or "normal" path that everyone should take, we need to seriously look at our own life and where we are at and where we really want to go with it and then develop a flexible and healthy transitioning path that is "normal" or "correct" for our particular life scenario. At the same time, we need to be considerate of the paths that others have chosen and be there for them as an encouragement and a friend.

## KANSAS PROBATE CASE....

(Continued from Page 4)

operative transsexual who underwent surgery in 1994.

After her spouse's death, J'Noel Gardiner filed claim for half the estate as Gardiner's surviving spouse. In the case, J'Noel openly cited the sex-change surgery and offered as proof a Wisconsin birth certificate ordered by that state's court.

But Joe Gardiner, Gardiner's only child from a previous marriage, and his attorney argue that J'Noel remains a man under Kansas law and that the marriage is void. Joe Gardiner's position is that J'Noel is entitled to nothing.

Currently, no state recognizes marriage between people of the same sex. This month, Vermont will become the first state to recognize "civil unions" between couples of the same sex. Thus begs a question for the courts: Can a man who has undergone a sex change be a legal spouse in Kansas?

The elder Gardiner married J'Noel on Sept. 25, 1998, in Oscaloosa, Kan. Kansas Supreme Court Justice Robert E. Davis, an old friend of Gardiner's, performed the ceremony.

Joe Gardiner said he didn't even know of his father's plan to marry until after the marriage had taken place and that he didn't meet J'Noel until J'Noel picked up him and his wife, Joy, at the airport the day after Marshall Gardiner died.

In January, a Leavenworth County probate judge ruled in favor of Joe Gardiner, saying that J'Noel was not entitled to a spousal share of the estate. J'Noel has taken the case to the Kansas Court of Appeals.

Gardiner made no secret of his wealth around his hometown of Leavenworth. He was a known philanthropist, and one institution that benefited from his largess was Park University. Both Marshall Gardiner and his first wife, Molly Gardiner, who died in 1984, were Park graduates. It was at Park, a few months before their marriage, that he met J'Noel, who had begun teaching there in the fall of 1997.

Before the wedding, Marshall Gardiner bought a home in his name in Parkville, and J'Noel lived there and paid virtually all expenses related to it. Gardiner spent weekends there but maintained his home in Leavenworth. J'Noel was never inside Gardiner's Leavenworth home, court records say, before he died on Aug. 12, 1999.

Court records show that J'Noel had been married to a woman from 1988 to 1993. But the records say that even during that relationship Ball felt he should have been born a female. He believed that he was born with a "birth defect," that is, having male genitalia.

So, in 1994, while teaching finance at Northeastern University in Boston, he decided on sex change surgery in Wisconsin.

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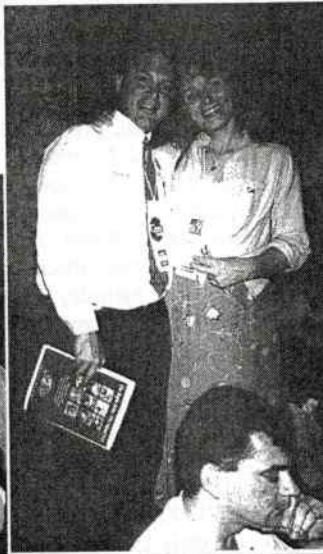
**DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

brown; suburban Arabic families, older Jewish couples, young Indian-American professionals, graying bikers in their 'colors', political radicals, right-to-lifers, Hispanic ranchers; a convention evenly split between male and female - this was the true rainbow coalition in action. The absence of complete uniformity in lifestyle was awesome. It gave one a sense of a true coalescing of so many for the

delegates; it wasn't without it's diversions.

Friday for lunch. Jessi and I drove to Dallas' Deep Ellum



secretaries, a scattering of suits, and business types filled the room. It does a tranny a good to see one of our own succeed in spite of 'just being ourselves.' We need to see much more of that!

Saturday night, after a wonderful visit with old friends of mine in Garland (who'd never seen 'Vanessa' before); Jessi and I hit the town! We'd heard that Dallas was having their Razzle-Dazzle weekend, so that's where we gravitated. Cedar Springs Rd. was blocked off just west of Oaklawn for a couple blocks - the heart of Dallas' gay community and home to the strip of bars that draw the crowds on weekends.

Jessi and I ended up going into Sue Ellen's for a few drinks and dancing, then JR's (it's Dallas, remember...) to look over the Razzle Dazzle throng crowding



Above left, Jessica Redman checks in at her senate district booth. Above right, Coy Tow (L) and Vanessa Edwards Foster at their senate district 17 caucus. At right, (L-R) the Caucus caucus: Vanessa, Sean Carter, Jessica and Dan DiDonato of HGLPC show their delegate badges. Below, a visually weary Vanessa (L) sneaks a shot with another senate district 17 delegate, U S Rep Ken Bentsen. At left Coy Tow (L) and Vanessa pose in their district group at the convention floor.

common good.

How did the first T-girls fare at the convention? Marti, Jessica and I were all over the Fort Worth Convention Hall, were proudly out about who we were, and received nary a second glance from anyone! The only special attention we received at all that weekend were from a couple guys who were trying to pick us up! (Actually, we also got some wonderfully encouraging words from the other delegates and attendees who viewed us not as special cases, but active participants - and welcomed ones at that!) Considering this was our first state convention, it was quite a statement.

There were numerous events scheduled during and around the convention itself: breakfasts, parties and receptions hosted by the likes of former House Speaker Jim Wright, and U. S. Rep. Martin Frost. Unfortunately Jessica and I made none of them. What time wasn't spent in caucuses or in the convention, was spent either grabbing a bite to eat, or napping from sheer exhaustion. Even though the convention and it's caucus made for long days and nights for us

for lunch at Monica's Aca Y Alla. For those unfamiliar, Monica is one of the most celebrated TS girls in Dallas. Some years back, she opened her own restaurant - Aca Y Alla, a wildly successful Mexican Restaurant in Dallas' hot artsy / alternative neighborhood in the shadows of downtown. Monica, an old friend of Jessica's, wasn't in the week we were there; however, I'm glad we went anyway. It was obvious from the business that afternoon that Monica's place is very popular with the downtown lunch crowd:



Cedar Springs Rd. Finally we finished at Village Street Station; which, according to Jessica, was notorious for not allowing T-folks in on weekends. Either that's changed, or Jessi and I weren't spotted; because we got into 'The Village' without a problem, and danced the night away until closing time. Jessica turned to me and said, "well sis, we've arrived!" Indeed we had - especially when considering the entire weekend as a whole.

The next morning, it was packing up and driving home. It was a wonderful wind-down from what just transpired, and allow time to soak it all in and ruminate on it. I kept replaying Jessica's innocuous comment "we've arrived" in my mind. We've still got a long way to go before just being equal citizens in the eyes of government and the general public. However, looking at how things were just three years ago when beginning my transition, and comparing them to now, you can see the the progress. We were the first out-and-proud transsexual delegates at the state convention. Though its and overused phrase, we both came away feeling empowered. All from just taking initiative and getting involved....

# Karen Kerin's Congressional Bid Tests GOP On Gender, Issues

By Diane Derby

MONTPELIER, VT – Karen Kerin wants people to just get beyond the issue of sex.

In the days since Kerin became a known GOP candidate for the U.S House, the woman who was once a man has been dogged by questions about her sex change. Frustrated that such weighty issues as the federal budget and international trade have been obscured by those questions, Kerin went on the offensive Wednesday, challenging the media to turn its glare away from the transgender issue.

"There's an awful lot of speculation right now and I think it's unfair," Kerin said, criticizing the media for challenging her explanation that the sex change was the result of cancer treatments. Noting that she recently gave permission for a reporter to speak with her doctor, she added, "I can't imagine people being so intrusive."

Kerin also challenged reports that her candidacy has not been well received by the state Republican Party. "The GOP has not repudiated me and I certainly have not repudiated them," said Kerin, who described herself as a longtime party stalwart.

There may not be any repudiation going on, at least not publicly, but Kerin's entry in the race to unseat Rep. Bernard Sanders, (I-VT), is certain to put the state Republican Party in a tight spot. The party that wants to be seen as embracing a "big tent" philosophy may see its own limits tested with Kerin's candidacy, and just how far the Republicans go to embrace that candidacy will be seen in the coming months.

Kerin stepped in, she said, because no other Republican was preparing to challenge Sanders, a 10-year incumbent. Kerin said she made her interest in the race known to Patrick Garahan, the state GOP chairman, as early as last Febru-

ary.

Garahan, who Kerin described as "open, honest and honorable," didn't try to dissuade her, but did express hope that one of the candidates in a prior race would step in to run again, she said. When no other GOP candidate emerged, she officially announced her candidacy last Saturday. "The stories that have been written so far seem to focus on her transsexuality."

"I just don't think we should let someone like [Sanders] run unopposed," said the 56-year-old Kerin, who was raised in Montpelier as Charles Kerin and graduated with an engineering degree from the University of Vermont in 1971. Kerin, who underwent the sex change in the early 1990s, went on to attend Vermont Law School, graduating in 1997. She has not been admitted to the bar.

As director of a South Royalton based non-profit group known as the World Institute of Human Rights and International Law, Kerin said she is anxious to run a campaign focused on issues such as the budget and arms treaties. Her biggest criticism with Sanders and the current Congress, she said, is one of fiscal restraint – or what she claims is a lack thereof.

"The youngest generations have every right to be disgusted and discouraged over their future being mortgaged with still growing national debt," she said in a campaign statement.

Kerin, who four years ago married a woman she met in law school, said she is opposed to the state's new civil unions law because it creates a "separate but equal" status for same-sex couples. Kerin was granted a marriage license because it was determined that her birth certificate still lists her as a male.

But on a larger scale, she

said government should not be involving itself in the issue at all. While churches should do as they see fit in cases of marriage, the government's only role, she said, should be to record marriages in the same way it does land deeds and other contractual agreements – for legal purposes only.

Party chair, Garahan, however, was recently criticized by GOP gubernatorial candidate William Meub, who said Garahan and other GOP leaders tried to talk him out of a primary race against Ruth Dwyer.

But Kerin's candidacy could inspire at least one other Republican to join in the Sanders race and face Kerin in a primary. Jack Long, who ran unsuccessfully against Sanders as both a Democrat and a Republican, said he is rethinking the race in the wake of Kerin's candidacy.

"I don't think we are at all well served by having Karen Kerin out there attempting to carry the Republican banner," Long said. "She can't do it and I don't think she ought to do it."

Long predicted that Kerin would not be able to get beyond the issues of her sexual identity. "People are just stuck there trying to figure out what this person is all about," Long said. "We do need a credible candidate."

As for Kerin's personal history, GOP member Jack McMullen said, "Vermont should be a place of all places where that could be accepted and maybe the Republican party should be given some kudos for having that wide of a tent."

"She certainly has a daunting task," he added.

## Daily Confrontations *By Kimberly Burnham*

*I am extinct without safety or surprise; which is death.*

Today is a pain in the butt. I felt the penetration again. I affirm and accept my past with regrets and judgments. Then I advance without kind thoughts: it brings me amongst the undertones – a sever grasp of beauty, maturity, and above all, possibilities. I have been tutored in AOL of who I am (impossible to know.) But, what I am becoming – my character self with passion orange, Honest Abe, respect-me-in-the-morning, love me tender, pee in my pants while my zipper's stuck, and the search for truth – can go on and on. At this moment a bunch of new creatures appear in my life. Time is not my ally. Time is not my friend. It can hold miracles of discovery or hold the worst defeat ever. More important than this, I feel a connection with my spirit within me, a deeper engagement with my friend

(my true allies), and it does not have anything to do with f\*ck.

I can create a black day by keeping an open mind, being willing to see myself and others in a sever light. Then I choose positive responses to experience, while taking it's turn with my 'mind on the black.' I can cultivate new attitudes, and aptitudes. I will let my voice speak my own truth. I commit myself to keep a more severe reality – the inevitable joy of staying alive.

Today, unfortunately for you, I am still alive enjoying this sever creation that is my life.



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## GOP CONVENTION....

*(Continued from Page 5)*

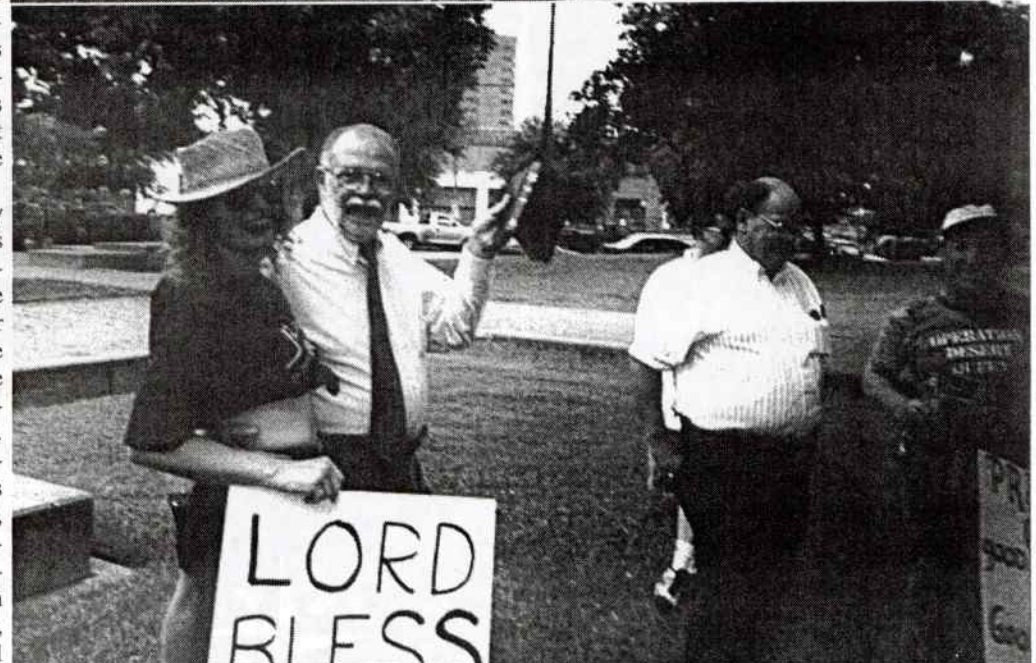
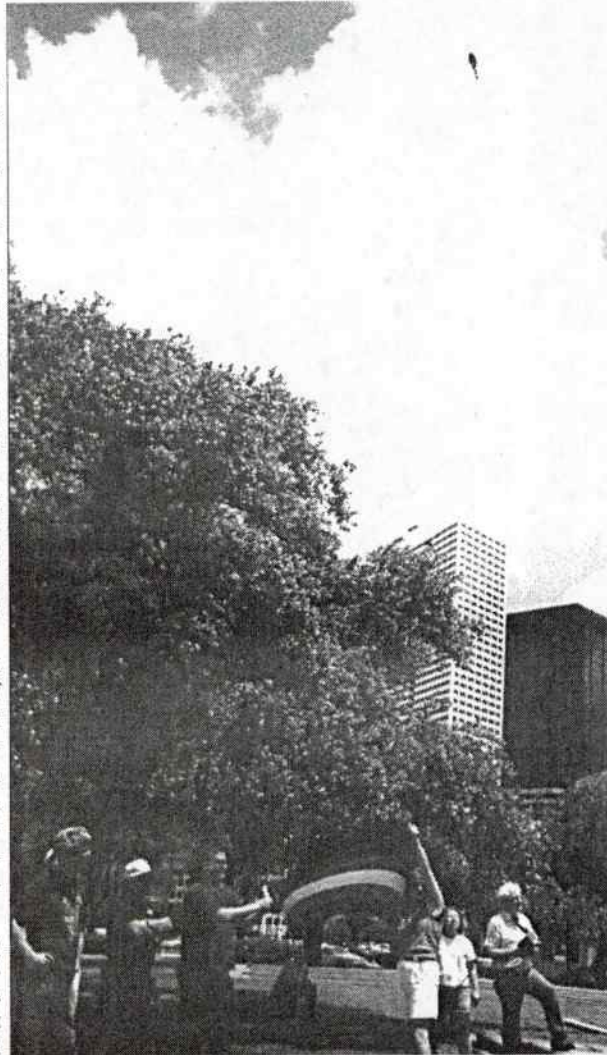
After I asked them the plan, the homeless men started making their way over to one of the two groups giving out free lunches. That gave us enough time to set up the sound system and get the music going. Unfortunately, there were even fewer attending our Saturday rally than Friday's.

After waiting around an hour, and dancing a bit, we packed up and headed back to the Convention Center, signs in hand. Our final contingent saw Dan, Jessica and I leading the charge with Scott Harbers, Rick Acker, Rosy Cheeks, Sue Null and Morna the Clown. Once we arrived at the convention center, we found our other stalwart, Ricky 'Rainbo DeKlown' Hurt, along with our favorite Tri-Ess member, Julio Friedmann, already at the site and hard at work! Also hard at work was our GOP empath, the diverter 'Jim' giving all his best horror-show smiles.

Overall, the convention protest was a pretty unreal setting. We had the Nation of Islam folks in robe and traditional African dress, the Gary Graham execution protesters, some in terrorist costume, some in Halloween-esque make-up and dreadlocks, Will Ellsworth and his atheist paraphernalia, and a few other garden-variety protesters. All the while we had the looming thunderclouds in the backdrop ... a nice touch.

Jessica, as in all the other protests, was all over the block; constantly walking and holding up her sign with her ever-present broad smile. Dan came to life when we hit the protests, belying his normally calm and emotionless demeanor. Rainbo was typically Rainbo, totally awesome! This man is a street warrior, and a 'first-one-out, last-one-to-leave' die-hard at that! If there was one person that really stood out, and got under the skin of the largest number of the convention-goers, it was Rainbo.

Before long, the rain came in. It was my most vivid memory of the protest: I was holding one of the delegates and Jim the diverter's attentions, at the time. While the protesters managed a rare opportunity under the George R. Brown's eaves during the downpour, and the delegate left on the count of rain; Jim the diverter and I remained, ensconced in our discourse. Strangely, during the height of the rainstorm was the only time the diverter lost his composure. His glasses were rain-speckled, obscuring his vision. His sermon was almost Pentecostal in fervor. While the lightning flashed behind him, and the rain poured ever harder; we stood toe-to-toe, continuing our point-counterpoint. All through the thunder, lightning and driving rain, Jim and I were oblivious to the storm.



After the rally revival, Vanessa Edwards Foster (L-R), Ray Hill, HPD officer Gene Kennedy and Ricky 'Rainbo DeKlown' Hurt, walk towards the George R. Brown Convention Center to meet the Texas GOP delegation.

Showing the colors: Scott Simpson (L-R) and Carl Reinhardt watch as Dan DiDonato and Jessica Redman arch the rainbow flag for the circling media and police helicopters to spot during the Friday noon rally. The media was there in force, but the small rally crowd left little to report about.

It was reminiscent of a Stephen King novel – they couldn't have written it any better than this! We argued to the point of soaking ourselves through by the time Jessica walked back across the street and coaxed us under the sheltering eaves.

Once under the eaves, Jim the diverter had time to regain his composure; and that opportunity was lost. Later, Julio took on the diverter, scoring on a number of points, most especially pointing out lies he was try to put forth as fact. However, the diverter was unbowed, and at one point, a frustrated Julio yelled out "REPUBLICANS ARE MEAN!!!" About this point, we decided we'd had our fill and walked back wet and tired to our launching point at Root Memorial Square.

Our prime motivation with our presence at the GOP gathering was – in the absence of having Bush attend his own state's convention – trying to push the buttons to stir the delegates inside to force the issue; in other words, make the party take an official stand on showing their real character to the rest of the nation. This is George W's home state, and what better place to find out about the

*(Continued on Page 13)*

# The H Bomb

By Katrina C. Rose

**C**ertain words from World War II strike nerves. "Holocaust" is one such word, and I'm rather leery about using it. However, I feel that I must. In the first months of the new millennium, transgendered people stand at the precipice of a political holocaust.

There - I've said it. Now, let me explain it. That transgendered people are currently being used (and the word 'used' has rarely been more appropriate) to send a purely political message to Vermont is an unassailable fact.

Neither homosexuals nor transsexuals ever had employment protection in Texas. However, transsexuals did have gender-transition rights, albeit in a murky equity-driven form, until same-sex marriage was pushed to the forefront of the quest for equality for sexual minorities, almost succeeding in Hawaii and now actually succeeding (apparently) in Vermont.

Last fall, with a likely pro-gay decision in Baker v. State looming, a Texas court was presented with a gift-wrapped opportunity to slap homosexual rights while not actually having to slap a homosexual. That gift, of course, was Littleton v. Prange, a case in which the San Antonio Court of Appeals cited the federal DOMA in an arguably-unconstitutional advisory opinion on Texas gender transition law, shattering the lives of members of the sexual minority that one of the biggest pushers of the same-sex marriage fight, HRC, refuses to include in their mission statement, much less to help in any meaningful way.

Then there's employment law. The official conservaqueeer line is that transsexuals should use decisions such as Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins (a case which allegedly supercedes transgender activists' claims that an ENDA without TG inclusion would not cover effeminate gay males and butch\*lesbians) to gain coverage under Title VII instead of demanding inclusion in ENDA.

Several problems exist with that philosophy. First and foremost, if Price Waterhouse is so great, then why aren't gays and lesbians relying upon it to the exclusion of the quest for a statute? Is it because they know what transsexuals know? That the likelihood of a court taking that step for homosexuals is only slightly less infinitesimal than the likelihood of a court taking that step for transsexuals? As Professor Stephen Whittle has noted, courts have consistently proven that they will never interpret non-explicit law in favor of transsexuals. Littleton v. Prange is just the most recent, not to mention the most egregious, example of that.

For transsexuals, it's a statute or it's nothing.

Secondly, even if Waterhouse is capable of holding water for us, someone has to bring suit and win. Now, as most of you know, I'm an attorney - one who no law firm in the State of

Texas would hire despite my being currently perhaps the most prominent authority on Texas transgender law. Employment discrimination, though, is not the only way that law firms aid and abet government-endorsed anti-transsexual bigotry. Many law firms refuse even to accept transgendered clients.

To be fair, though, not all refusal of T cases by non-T lawyers is unreasonable. Title VII case law can be summed up as follows: "Transsexuals - get thee to a sex workery."

Law firms know that Title VII is not T-inclusive now and that Texas is in the federal Fifth Circuit, one of the most backward-thinking, conservative legal hellholes imaginable. Without a statute altering current Title VII jurisprudence, no law firm is going to take the case of a transsexual who has been discriminated against because she's transsexual unless it specifically wants to challenge the status quo on a very long longshot.

So, back to my H Bomb. I stand by the characterization completely. Stated plainly, HRC and their transphobic bretheren are engineering a political holocaust against transgendered people.

Strong words? Overly-dramatic words? Judge for yourself.

The gay marriage fight has not hurt conservaqueeers even when battles were lost. After all, there were no same-sex marriage rights to begin with. However, the big gain in Vermont has produced a backlash Texas judicial opinion that is already being used far beyond the Lone Star State to destroy every legislative gain made by transsexuals at the state and local level.

If ENDA passes without a transgender-inclusive definition of 'sexual orientation,' then federal courts will only become more likely, not less likely, to firmly hold that the intent of Congress was, and is, to exclude transgendered people from the scope of employment protection.

HRC's separate-but-allegedly-equal, courts-but-never-a-federal-statute-for-transsexuals stance on federal employment legislation is nothing but a shell game. It is transphobia. It is hatred of us because we dare to exist.

What has happened so far will leave many of us without a gender-leg to stand on. What will come from a non-inclusive ENDA will forever ensure that federal law will not protect transgendered people.

If that's not a political holocaust, then there is no such thing as one.

Kimberly has been working on a book. She says that it will be about her experiences with her bosses, co-workers, customers and past loves. Pursuit of dignity and balance in all things. So, sit back, grab the nearest automatic weapon, and enter the mind of Kimberly Burnham....

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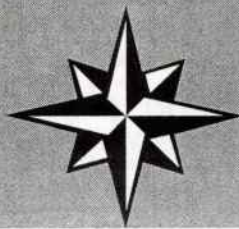
By Kimberly Burnham

Other works by the author:

### "WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CLUE?"

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Readers may be relieved to know that Kimberly has since quit her job and moved on to more productive activities like law enforcement and bridge clubs.



This Year there was...

## NO REASON FOR A PARADE

By Jessica Ann Redman

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. In the city of the north, I attended the democratic convention; where I was welcomed, respected, loved and valued. In the city of the south, I attended the Republican convention; where I was rejected, reviled, and worst of all ignored.

In Fort Worth, I had the privilege of joining Vanessa Edwards Foster as the two first trans-women to attend the Texas State Democratic Convention. While there, it was wonderful to see the support of so many for two openly trans-people. What we were didn't matter. What mattered was, our opinion, it was valued. It was a humbling experience, and one I will never forget; And most likely has made me a lifetime democrat - something my parents would never have believed.

Inside the democratic convention, I met people from all walks of life: doctors, lawyers, blue collar workers, even Hell's Angels. They were whites, Hispanics, African Americans, and even native Americans; all working together as a democracy truly should.

In the next few weeks after that convention, I had the rare privilege of trying to organize a demonstration to protest the exclusion of so many people, from the republican convention. My goal was simple: push all the moral majority's hot buttons and make them act in their usual insane way. openly and vindictively against anybody that's different than them; thereby swaying public opinion away from the Republican candidate.

We informed all the right groups know about our demonstration: from Planned Parenthood to transgenders, gays, lesbians and bis - and even the environmental groups, for good measure. The net was a buzz, it was on all the right lists. Asking everyone to join our cause. For this was the perfect opportunity to show the



Give them a sign! The Equality Team ralliers enjoy a hot, sunny Saturday in front of the Texas GOP Convention in Houston. (L-R) Morna the Clown, Jessica Redman, Dan DiDonato, Scott Harbers, Rosy Cheeks, (partially obscured) Julio Friedmann with his fist in the air, and Vanessa Edwards Foster; in front are Sue Null (L) and Ricky 'Rainbo' Hurt.

strength of a united alternative community - for everyone different than the Religious Right.

The big day came - the opening event for our demonstration. We had had several articles appear in the Chronicle, and the day of the event we had TV coverage on three stations. Even news helicopters were there flying high above our planned rally area. They reporting on our demonstration

However, much to my dismay and the handful of others that attended; all anyone saw was the apathy of our community. You see, no one showed. And we told the world we don't care if George W. Bush and his religiously backed moral majority takes away our rights to name and gender changes, reassignment surgery and even dressing in the appropriate attire for our true gender.

You see folks, at that convention on the next day of the demonstration; the Republican right had professional people trained to divert our demonstrators - all twelve of us! The Republican Convention was everything we thought it would be. White, wealthy businessmen, and their well-kept wives; all working to keep white, wealthy businessmen in power; in true elitist style, as the gifted financially blessed, aristocracy they are. Vanessa and I later received a copy of the Republican platform approved at our state convention; and there platform is far worse than losing just the rights of transgenders discussed above. Some may think me bitter about the lack of people caring about our rights. But honestly, in hindsight, what I see it as is a dose of ... Reality.

Our community will turn out in thousands to show our pride. The recent Pride Parade showed that. But where will our community be when all that pride is taken away, and Pride Parades are outlawed? And being gay, lesbian, bisexual, and most especially transgendered is illegal? Where will I be? Woodworking and stealth... Where will you be?

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. In the summer of 2000, I learned how wonderful democracy can be at the Democratic Convention. At the Republican Convention, I was taught how truly down trodden our people will be treated if they are given power. Unfortunately, we had a chance to derail the well-oiled machine, that is the Republican Party... We failed because no one cared... Our community's future scares me!

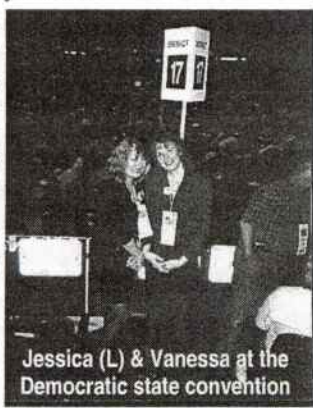
And the Pride Parade band played on...

## GOP CONVENTION....

(Continued from Page 11)

candidate than where he sprung forth from. Whether any of this accomplished anything worthwhile is open to debate. However, what follows is a copy of the Texas GOP Platform that came out in the wake of the rally / protest. Judge for yourself our effect:

Keep in mind the next president will be overseeing the next congress' national redistricting (i.e. gerrymandering), and will also likely be in office when two or three of the current sitting Supreme Court justices retire. Above all, be an educated voter this coming November. Your lives may depend on it.



Jessica (L) & Vanessa at the Democratic state convention

## ASTRO FORECAST JULY 2000

By Lilly Roddy

**M**ercury goes direct this month on July 17th. You can start any new projects after July 20th when Mercury is back up to its regular geocentric speed. But for the first 17 days of the month, be sure and finish up any old task and clean out closets, files and those hard disk filled to capacity with the pictures that you have downloaded from the net.

There are also 2 solar eclipses this month and one lunar eclipse. A solar eclipse is a new moon and a lunar eclipse is a full moon. The first solar eclipse is on July 1st and is in the sign of Cancer. The Lunar Eclipse is in Capricorn, the opposite sign of Cancer, on July 24th. Cancer and Capricorn are signs that emphasis security both at home and in the work place. The eclipses are likely to make you more conscious of these needs. If there are problems in these areas of your life, you can expect the eclipses to bring "light" to these domains so that you can see them more clearly and solve your problems with the obstruction of avoidance.

The second solar eclipse is in the sign of Leo. This is the sign of attention, creativity and ego satisfaction. You will be paying a lot of attention to these areas of your life near the end of the month when the eclipse occurs on July 30th.

Some well know Cancers this month are Babe Didrikson, Jean Cocteau, and Lilly Roddy.

**ARIES**—Stability in your home and family are important things for you to focus on this month. Of course, you will focus on these things because you will be feeling the need for these things in your life. So look for instability, tempers flaring and lots of fireworks for the 4th of July. This could also show itself as a desire to redecorate your home, a need to move or having to go back home and visit your past. Don't be surprised if you find that your sense of individuality feels stepped on. Others think it is correct for you to suppress your individual needs. This is so that their needs are more paid attention to.

**TAURUS**—Getting your message across and well understood are your mail goals for this month. You will not be very willing to make sure that you are well understood. And your anger is very likely to show. And screaming louder won't make them hear you any better. Try getting out and doing something different from you normal routines. This will help your boredom. Watch your spending this month. It will be very easy for you to see something you want and just buy it. This is not a bad thing in itself, but you are going to be more impulsive than usual.

**GEMINI**—You are going to be on an over

commitment surge. Life seems optimistic and everything seems possible and you are willing to try to do it all. After your ruling planet, Mercury goes direct on July 17th, you are in a great place to take on new projects and opportunities. There are some job promotions or new career paths for you. Meeting new people seems easier and fortune seems to smile on you. Relationships improve and if you are single and interested, they will be knocking at your door.

**CANCER**—This is your birthday month of yearly reconsideration of what you have done this last year and what you are going to do for the next year. This is an especially significant time since Mercury is retrograding in your sign, making you more introspective than usual during this time. This is the month to finish up old projects and ideas and clean out those closets. You are more than will to take action this month. You will be particularly short tempered this month. Those who oppose your actions or plans will be the lucky recipients of your crabby remarks. And they probably deserve them. And if times get really rough, a day at the beach would do wonders.

**LEO**—You are in a period of rest and retreat. You are ready to take it easy for while. You are more sensitive to your environment than usual. This could be an exceptional month that would give you a chance to demonstrate your drama side. You may blow things out of proportion just because you want to feel special. Make sure that you find someone to baby you this month. Then right at the end of the month, your burst forth with a wave of energy and courage that you are going to ride the entire month of August.

**VIRGO**—You are going to be looking up those old friends that you have not heard from in a while. This is an especially good month for you to do some July 4th partying. If you are more business oriented, then direct your charisma towards business associations or community organizations. You will shine in these arenas. Career activities begin to pick up. You will be busier than usual through January of 2001. You are stepping into the light of popularity. By mid month, you will need a break from activity and some down time for reflection and regrouping.

**LIBRA**—Mercury retrograde is making her presence known in your career sector this month. This means that if there have been problems at work that have remained obscured from your view, they will be springing to the surface. Try to see this as you chance to correct things rather than there is something specifically wrong with you as a human being on this planet. Group activities increase in your life after mid month. Look for support both emotionally and financially in assemblages.

**SCORPIO**—July is a great month for you to

take a break in your routines and endeavors. You are able to be more accepting of the world around you rather than to see it as a constant challenge to you and your existence. You could travel to some familiar places, takes some classes or just get down and get philosophical, dude and dudettes. Ride those waves of mind expansion and just have an old fashion flashback. Real life reenters the picture on July 22nd at 7:43 am cdt. Vo—ca—tion, vo—ca—tion, vo—ca—tion becomes your mantra.

**SAGITTARIUS**—Your money and your partner's money are deeply entwined this month and are set to have an affair. They are wanting to merge at esoteric levels of values that are only dreamed about. You are looking at your investments and what they can do for your future. If there are potholes along the fiduciary highway, you are sure to hit them this month. Keep your eyes open and on the road in front of you. You are also seeking a greater depth and understanding with your partners (or potential partners). If you are not on the same path, that will be made very obvious to you. Partnerships are improving and only get better till Jan 2001.

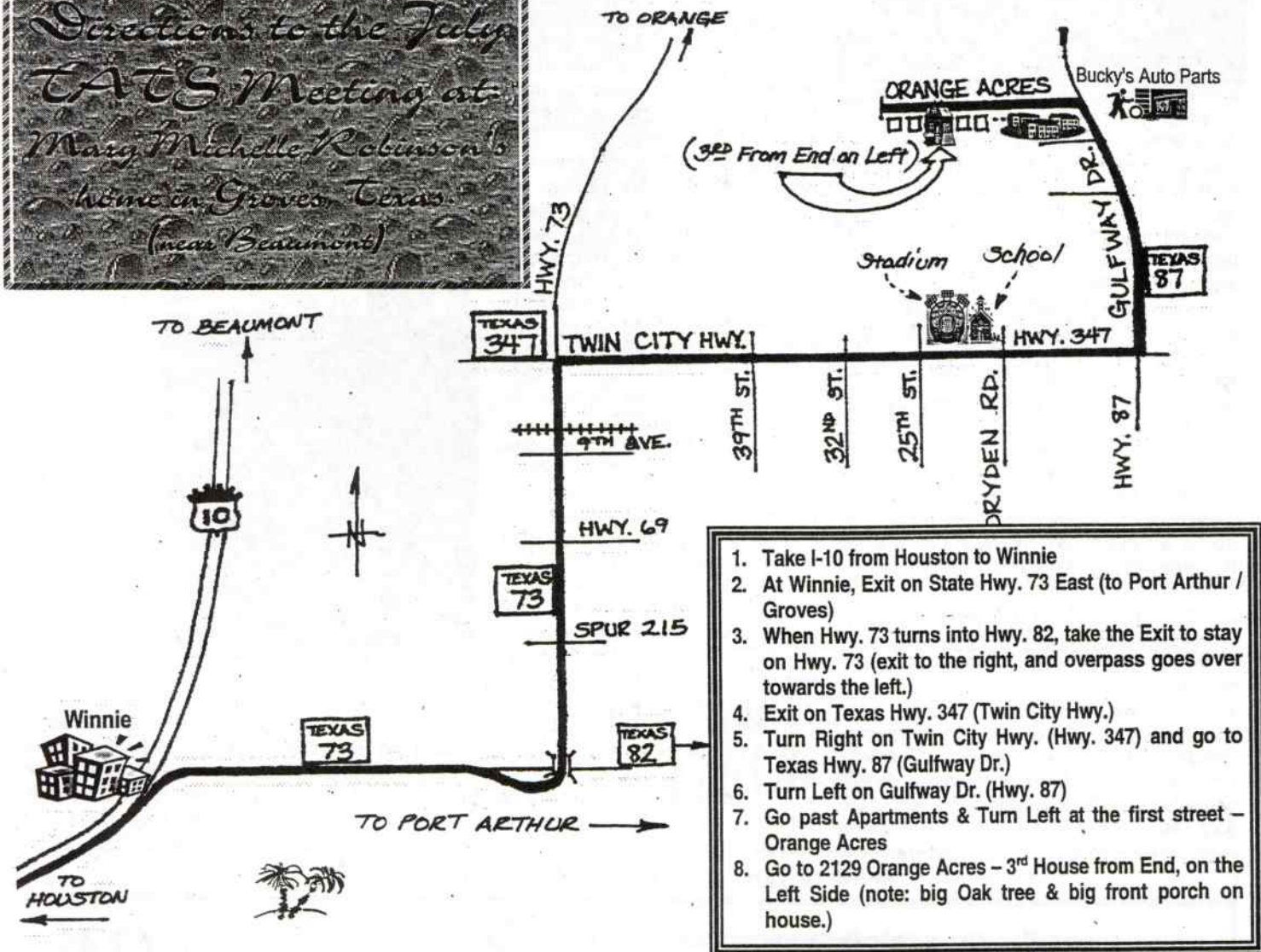
**CAPRICORN**—Yes, relationships have reared their Hydra like heads this month. Mercury retrograde is there stirring up the swill and wanting to talk about any problems that your partner sees as a block to yall's eternal happiness. Or maybe, your partner just wants you to pick up clothes instead of throwing on the floor. One or the other will be important. Mars is also there adding some fireworks of her own. This can mean good sex or good arguments. Which would you like?

**AQUARIUS**—Time to get your life and your routines in order. While everyone else is going to be wanting to go on vacation and summer get-a-ways, you are trying to figure out how to make your work space more efficient. But when you get finished, you will have some real and tangible to show for your efforts. They will only have sunburns and sand in their bathing suits. The Universe turns up the energy on relationships for you after the 12th. Things could get hot and hotter. You won't be spending the summer alone. If your current partner is boring, you will be out looking.

**PISCES**—You are filled with creative urges this July. You will seek out experiences that are out of control and need a good fixer. And you are just right for the job. But, this time, you will have to have a good time because you are interested in having fun this month. If there is too much work involved, and even if you get to do a big rescue, you won't do it. Participate in activities that satiate your inner child. Take her to the beach, the park or out on a camping trip. Just don't make her try to be responsible.

Lilly Roddy - <http://www.cybersim.com/hermes>

Directions to the July  
TATS Meeting at  
Mary Michelle Robinson's  
home in Groves, Texas  
(near Beaumont)



1. Take I-10 from Houston to Winnie
2. At Winnie, Exit on State Hwy. 73 East (to Port Arthur / Groves)
3. When Hwy. 73 turns into Hwy. 82, take the Exit to stay on Hwy. 73 (exit to the right, and overpass goes over towards the left.)
4. Exit on Texas Hwy. 347 (Twin City Hwy.)
5. Turn Right on Twin City Hwy. (Hwy. 347) and go to Texas Hwy. 87 (Gulfway Dr.)
6. Turn Left on Gulfway Dr. (Hwy. 87)
7. Go past Apartments & Turn Left at the first street - Orange Acres
8. Go to 2129 Orange Acres - 3<sup>rd</sup> House from End, on the Left Side (note: big Oak tree & big front porch on house.)

**TRANSActions**<sup>TM</sup>  
by Vanessa Edwards Foster

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TELL ME, GIRLFRIEND!!!

SOUNDS LIKE YOU ENLIGHTENED THE CONGRESSMAN'S WALLET BY FIVE OR TEN LBS.!

**TATS Tidbits**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• TATS member, Marti Bennett is now a member of *Who's Who In Professional Management In America!* This is quite an honor for anyone, yet much more so for Marti. It's especially gratifying considering her dismissal from her job during transition over a year ago, and subsequent long-term difficulty finding subsequent employment. As a result, Marti had to go back into the closet in order to find another job as a man; and literally transitioned yet a second time!

It's an amazing testament to the will of the human spirit to overcome nearly insurmountable odds to succeed despite the obstacles. A former bullrider, she's one roughridin' neo-cowgirl who rode it the distance. Fantastic job, Marti! We're all proud of you!

• Have y'all seen the second issue of the CATS newsletter? It's awesome! Our little offshoot to the south, in Brazoria, has a wealth of creative talent down there! It's nothing like the TATS newsletter; in fact, almost the opposite! They put one issue out every two months, and subscriptions are only \$15 per year! And it's jam-packed full of fun stuff from the girls and boys of CATS. Check it out!

• The California House of Reps passed a bill to prohibit discrimination in employment and housing. The measure now faces a tougher challenge as it goes to the California State Senate.

• Ford Motor Company's thousands of gay, lesbian and bisexual employees welcome the recent announcement from the U.S. Big 3 automotive companies to provide partial same-sex domestic partner benefits for their U.S. employees. Ford GLOBE (Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Employees) is one of seven

company-sanctioned employee resource groups at Ford Motor Company, with active chapters in the U.S., Great Britain and Germany. One caveat: it is not inclusive of gender variants. Our sympathies to the T-girl who sent out Email diapatches, trying valiantly to get info that would help get the T in the GLB. We had similar problems here in town....

• Word from TATS' Beth Richard is that Compaq announced that the non-discrimination policy including the EEOC statement and the non-harassment policy have been updated to include "sexual orientation". Unfortunately, it was another case of a tranny - namely Beth - providing everything she could, giving all information asked for, and attending every meeting; only to be told to her face at the CompaqPLUS meeting that it would not be T-inclusive. To paraphrase the lady making the presentation to the meeting "there was no real need for it!"

It apparently wasn't that the information was not useful. According to Beth, they thought the information was very useful. When asked by the Executive Board of CompaqPLUS, at the behest of Human Resources, to provide trans-inclusive language proposals, she did so. "On both occasions," Beth said, "the HR representative responded enthusiastically to the Trans-inclusive language." Somehow, something got lost along the way to the proposal meeting. Could it possibly be 'exclusive elitist' elements at work behind the scenes? Sounds like we've got our work cut out for us....

• DECATUR, Ga — The City Commission voted last week to ban discrimination on the basis of "sexual

orientation, sexual preference or transgender status" in personnel regulations governing the city's employees. Decatur becomes one of only a handful of Georgia governments to officially ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and only the second in the state to offer job protection for transgendered city employees.

"I am very happy to see this pass. I think it is reflective of who we are as a city," said Decatur Commissioner Kecia Cunningham, who became Georgia's first African-American openly gay elected official when she won election last year.

• Ladyfest is a non-profit, community-based event



designed by and for women to showcase, celebrate and encourage the artistic, organizational and political work and talents of women. The festival, August 6-8, will feature performances by bands, spoken word artists, authors, visual artists; and will also include workshops,

panels, and dance parties. This is a woman-run event (and yes, that includes trans-women, M2F and F2M) All are welcome to attend. For info, contact them at: P.O. Box 1784, Olympia, WA 98507, call (360) 252-2086 [voicemail only], or Email: info@ladyfest.org.

(Continued on Page 17)

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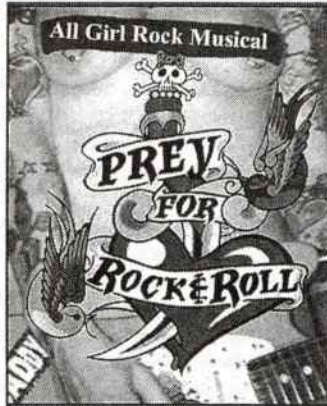
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**TATS Tidbits**

(Continued from Page 16)

• **NEW YORK, NY** — From a press release sent by GPAC's Carrie Davis... Jan Tilley, a transgender identified musician, is participating in a production for the rock musical "Prey For Rock And Roll". Jan, a female from birth, plays the roll of Faith, the lead guitarist. Billed as an all-girl rock musical, it looks at women in the male dominated music world; as it follows four very different women pursuing their unconventional dream. "Prey For Rock And Roll" opens for a limited run at CBGB's beginning Thursday, June 15 through Saturday, June 17 at 7pm. The extended run begins July 9 and runs every Sunday and Monday. For info, see the website at [www.preyforrockandroll.com](http://www.preyforrockandroll.com)



• **SEATTLE, Wash.** — Faygele benMiriam, a cross-dressing civil service worker who won a Supreme Court ruling in a gay rights case, died Monday of lung cancer. He was 55. In 1971, he and his partner at the time, became the first couple to apply for a same-sex marriage license. BenMiriam lost that case and, the next year, was fired from his job as a clerk-typist at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission largely because he was gay and wore capes and dresses to work.

The ACLU took his case and in 1978, the Supreme Court ordered the commission to reconsider his firing in light of new regulations, enacted in 1975, which specified that no one could be disqualified from federal employment solely on the basis of sexual orientation. BenMiriam received back pay but chose to work for the U.S. Dept. of Labor.

• **BOULDER, Colo.** — A transitioning transsexual has dropped his discrimination complaint against a local bagel shop, in which he charged that his former boss violated the city's human-rights ordinance by barring him from wearing a pink skirt to work. Benjamin Moore, a 38-year-old pre-operative transsexual, filed the complaint against City Street Bagels in April. Moore, who has since quit his job at the shop, said he dropped the complaint on June 7 in response to a letter he received from Susan Gross, the shop's owner.

• **STERLING, Va.** — A Virginia couple claim the Immigration and Naturalization Service is persecuting them because she used to live as a man and he used to live as a woman. "They are hunting us, and the only reason we can think of is that we are transgendered," said the woman, Irish immigrant Katherine Spray. Born in Ireland, Katherine had lived as a man until 1991. She and Pat Spray — neither of whom has had surgery to change gender — became friends on the Internet in 1995. They married in North Carolina and applied for a marriage-based visa for Katherine Spray before settling down in Virginia.

The Sprays say INS investigators called their marriage a sham and threatened to throw Katherine into a male detention facility. The INS claims it's challenging the visa because her former marriage, they say, many not have been properly dissolved. The INS contacted Katherine Spray's employer and said her temporary work permit was no longer valid; and she was then fired. The imprisonment threat and the call to the employer are both unusual, said Rex Wingerter, the couple's attorney.

• **MIAMI, Fla.** — The Mexican transsexual allegedly raped by a Krome immigration detention center officer said she was assaulted yet again by the same guard. According to the detainee's attorney, his client complained to a Krome psychiatrist, a Mexican consular official and a Krome supervisor about the first alleged assault over a period of several days. Nevertheless, the same officer gained access to her again. The allegations are under federal investigation.

An Immigration and Naturalization Service spokesman in Miami declined to comment on the allegations, citing the open investigation by the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General. "Until there is a finding, there is nothing we can say," said INS spokesman Rodney Germain.

• **YORKSHIRE, U.K.** — Preoperative transsexual Lisa Jones won a written apology and £1,000 in a settlement with a pub whose owner had asked her to stay away. Although Jones had never visited the Jacob's Well bar in Honley, Huddersfield as a

man, she was told that her presence in the bar discomforted male regulars while her presence in the women's bathroom disturbed the women.

Part of that settlement required pub owner David Woodhead make a written apology, including a welcome to return to his bar. Jones says that she won't go back as a matter of principle, but hopes the case has helped to raise awareness of the discrimination transsexuals in Britain.

• **Calgary police** face possible legal action after a SWAT team converged on a home to arrest what they thought was a cross-dressing convicted murderer. Instead, police picked up, held and fingerprinted a transsexual woman. Janice McGill, who used to be a man, was taken from her home June 14 after police received a tip convicted killer and escapee Darryl Wayne Claughton, 41, was living as a woman under the alias Janice McGill. "I'm just very sick over the whole thing and I'm so upset," McGill said after being held by police for about five hours.

The tip came from a Calgary woman who recognized Claughton's picture in the newspaper and called to report a masculine-looking woman with whom she used to work at a cleaning agency. The tipster mistakenly believed Janice McGill was Claughton, who has been on the run since walking away from a minimum security prison last July. Calgary police blamed the RCMP for the mix-up. "The Mounties screwed up," said Staff Sgt. George Rocks, with the Calgary police homicide unit. "It was a mistake."

• **CAIRO, Egypt** — A court ruled, June 14, that a transsexual belly-dancer may not pursue her medical studies at Egypt's 1000-year-old al-Azhar Islamic university. The judge decided that the dancer, Sally Mohammed Abdullah Mursi, had misled a court when her petition filed last year did not disclose her current profession.

Originally named Sayed, Mursi had a sex-change operation in 1995 while studying medicine at al-Azhar's all-male medical college. The university then refused to let her transfer to its women's medical college to complete her final year.

(Continued on Page 18)

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TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• Iranian life too tough, says post-op M2F... An Iranian man who recently changed sex to become a woman wants a reverse operation because she feels life in Iran is too restrictive. The 25-year-old underwent the surgery last year but has found the restrictions imposed on women too much to bear. Maryam, previously Mehran, said: "I can't go on living with the new identity after years of living as a man with no restrictions."

• CURITIBA, Brazil — Brazilian transsexual Maite Schneider won her case, June 7, against a nightclub which had refused to admit transgender people. Six months after the incident, the judge decided that the owner of the club must give formal apologies and recognition of the abuse of rights to the victims, and would have his license pulled if a similar incident occurred again. The case was defended by Dr. Monica Cristina Buy, who did not charge a fee.

"Curitiba, even without having a specific law against this type of abuse, took this decision," stated Schneider via the internet. She went on to say "never bow your head for anything [or] anyone because of your orientation or who you are."



Brazilian trans-activist, Maite Schneider.

• The English Teacher.... 38-year-old Neil Sargent has been teaching at the Ilfracombe Infants School for nearly ten years. The pre-kindergarten teacher whose pupils are only four years old hasn't yet decided on a new Christian name but in future the children will call him Miss Sargent."

Children recently carried home a letter to their parents, and the Devon County Council called a news conference to head-off what some officials feared could be the worst excesses of the tabloids. Said school official, Christine Thompson: "We've had lots of positive support for him, in fact parents are phoning the school now offering their support. We've got 400 children in this school and we've had one parent come back to complain about the issue." Teaching unions say there's no reason why a medical condition like Gender Identity Disorder should affect a teacher's professional life. One union said it was aware of three similar cases in recent years - and in all of them, parents and the local community had felt the only thing that really mattered is whether the teacher concerned is a good one.

• Finally, keep in mind the upcoming elections. Yes, it's that time of year again... time for you to consider who you want for next year's TATS board and officers. The announcements for candidacy start in August, and the election is September 23 at Vanessa's place.

KANSAS PROBATE CASE....

(Continued from Page 8)

David Watkins, a Kansas City lawyer who worked on Joe Gardiner's case, said: "To the best of my knowledge, no state's legislation says that for purposes of marriage a person can change sex and become a woman or vice versa. If you're born a man, you stay a man. If you're born a woman, you stay a woman." (editor's note: that statement is incorrect, as both New Jersey and California have had case rulings that contradict that opinion.)

J'Noel testified in a deposition that Gardiner was told about the sex-change surgery two months before they were married. But that is not an issue in the litigation.

J'Noel's attorney, Sanford P. Krigel of Kansas City, contends that J'Noel has been "declared to be legally female" through the order of the Wisconsin court directing that the birth certificate be changed. The Kansas courts should give "full faith and credit" to the order of the Wisconsin court, Krigel argues.

In siding with Joe Gardiner, Leavenworth County Probate Judge Gunnar A. Sundby said: "J'Noel Gardiner was born a male and remains a male for purposes of marriage under Kansas law. The marriage between Marshall G. Gardiner and J'Noel Gardiner is void."

Joe Gardiner said this week that he felt confident that he would prevail on appeal. J'Noel, on the other hand, declined to discuss the case.

"It's a private lawsuit and nobody's business," a beleaguered J'Noel said. "Why don't you go join the 'Jerry Springer Show'?"

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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support ●

Volume 8, Issue 8

Houston, Texas

August, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## 20 YEARS AFTER: THE ANTI-CROSSDRESSING ORDINANCE REPEAL

By Phyllis Randolph Frye

August 12, 2000, marks the 20th anniversary of the Houston City Council's repeal of Section 28-42.4 of the city's Code of Ordinances. That ordinance had made it illegal to dress in the clothing of the opposite sex. (How 'clothing of the opposite sex' was defined - with newspaper advertising "Menswear" for women - always puzzled me.)

This ordinance had its roots in combination with other ordinances that went all the way back to the year 1904. I remember researching it, as well as the conversations that I had with Assistant City Attorney, Ed Cazaros. Ed is a great guy.

This ordinance was the one used to arrest, and hound severely, Anthony "Tony" Mayes who later became Ann Mayes. (Herman Short was Chief of Police in those days; do a bit of research on Houston history for more info on ol' Shootin' Short.) This ordinance was also being attacked by several "Jane Doe's" in federal court (who, prior to the total repeal, eventually were successful in getting it declared constitutionally inapplicable to transsexuals). I have learned that the ordinance was used to allow homophobes in the police department to go into male bars and arrest any female impersonator who was not on stage or not in transit to the dressing room.

I have also learned that the ordinance was used to allow homophobes in the police department to go into female bars and arrest any lesbian wearing fly-front pants. (As I alluded to earlier, how 'clothing of the opposite sex' was defined always puzzled me.) Houston activist Ray Hill knows much of this history. He told me that a bunch of women hired a big name attorney (possibly Melvin Belli, but I'm not sure) to try the cases. The attorney got the cases dismissed but the ordinance remained on the books.

By now you know that, in September, 1976, I began my full-time changeover and was subject to enforcement of the ordinance (this was prior to the federal court case). Shortly afterwards, being terrified of arrest via the ordinance, I wrote to every single member of



Phyllis Frye, circa the ordinance repeal.

the then-Houston City Council, then-Mayor Fred Hofheinz presiding.

I got one positive response.

Within a week after I sent the letters, I was called on the phone by Councilmember Johnny Goyen.

We were friends from that day forward.

I wept openly when Johnny died.

Goyen recalled to me that he had always been puzzled by Anne Mayes, but was especially upset over the way that she'd been mistreated under the ordinance. When he read my letter and reviewed my education and short list of life experiences, he called me.

We met in his office.

Within a few weeks he had me meet Councilmembers Judson Robinson, Jr., and Jim Westmoreland. (Jim thought I was a joke and tried to persuade me not to have any ties with the lesbian/gay community.)

(Continued on Page 3)

## EQUALITY RALLY PUTS DR. LAURA ON HOTSEAT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Another month, another Equality Rally protest - this time the Dr. Laura radio show, and its carriers, KSEV. For those unfamiliar, Dr. Laura Schlesinger is a conservative, talk-show guru cum psychologist. She dispenses her brand of advice under the guise of inferred psychotherapy. One thing she neglects to publicize is the fact that she's not a scholar of psychology - her doctorate is in philosophy!

And that's exactly what her show is - her personal philosophy beefed up with arch-conservo attitude. She's managed everything from saying a rapist must marry

(Continued on Page 5)



'Stop Dr. Laura' Protesters (L-R) Amber Sidwell, Harlen Howe-Bennett, Equality Rally's Dan DiDonato, Vanessa Edwards Foster and Stop Dr. Laura.com's John Selig.

### MEETING SCHEDULE

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| August 12    | Feelings Meeting at:<br>Transgender Community Ctr. @ 3 PM    |
| August 26    | Social Meeting at:<br>Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM        |
| September 9  | Nominations Meeting at:<br>Transgender Community Ctr. @ 3 PM |
| September 23 | Elections Meeting at:<br>Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM     |

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**Melanie Black**

**HOW TO REACH US:**

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 780-4282 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.geocities.com/tatspage>

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**W**hither now? It's hard to believe, but this year is more than half over. We're quickly approaching election months, and all the activity that involves; and we're also searching for our own sense of direction – or in some cases maybe finding our direction. For TATS, our group elections are upon us already – nominations this month, and elections on Sept. 23. Thus, to restate the opening question, where do we as a group go from here?

We've had some successes over the year, but we've also shown our failures. For the most part, the failures have been due to being overly (and perhaps unrealistically) ambitious, and subsequently not affording attention to the fundamentals – the group itself. Which leaves me wondering whether the direction I've been wanting to push us in – attaining a 501(c)3 designation for TATS – is also unrealistic. While it may be a worthy idea, it also may be saddling the board with many new and unwelcome responsibilities that must be done to keep the designation. Is this a wise idea?

On one hand, we as a group are bleeding red ink. The newsletters have increased in size – and postage cost! What we bring in from membership fees and advertising doesn't cover the cost of the newsletter postage. We could cut back on our newsletter exchanges with other groups, but that also limits the feedback and information we get from their publications. We could start passing the hat (a tradition abandoned a couple years ago). And that doesn't even consider the cost of any refreshments (mostly covered by the hostess.) A non-taxable charity designation would open us to seeking grant monies from foundations and corporations. That would immediately alleviate any crunch from newsletter costs, and allow us to do so much more than we currently are able. The local Tri-Ess chapter is an example of that. But to do that, you need the people willing to take on those duties.

On the other hand, people have personal lives. You can't just impose a sense of community responsibility on someone when they don't want it.



Vanessa (R) at radio station KPFT with co-host Jimmy Carper (L) and our guest, Pride 2000 honorary Grand Marshal, Don Sinclair immediately before taping the July show of After Hours.

When you consider how busy our lives have gotten over the past couple years, and the fact that Houston is fairly wide open for trans-folks and has many diversions to keep our interest aside from the groups, it's appearing not to be a realistic goal.

I'm personally reluctant to cut ties with the groups around the country. Again, this goes back to the ambition-thing (starting to sound like George Bush Sr.) Our newsletter is our communication with the rest of the world. Through this, we've actually built a bit of a national name, believe it or not. It wasn't until I started hearing it from others in far-flung T groups, or folks like Kerry Lobel of NGLTF, or getting letters from states where we have no members, or even an inexplicable mention in the Las Vegas newspaper, that it really sunk in. We're one of a handful of transsexual-specific groups in the nation, and one of the precious few (maybe the only) transsexual groups that gets any notice.

Being ambitious is not all bad. Being unrealistically so, is another matter. We've accomplished forging strong ties with the community over the past year, begun with winning inclusion in the missions of groups like the Caucus, the Chamber of Commerce and PFLAG Houston. We've turned some former detractors into allies, and done a ton of educational outreach as well. We've gotten a number of our members involved in, members of, or on the boards of numerous organizations in the community over the past couple years. The downside of that means less time we spend on TATS. While I know which direction I'd like for us to go in, I can't make that decision unilaterally. We have to be realistic, and study the question carefully. So... which direction will we go?

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

**Claire McNab, London, U.K.**

**Chelsea J. Carter, New York NY**

**Marissa J. Carter, Little Rock AR**

**Bonnie Hibschan, Little Rock AR**

**Katrina C. Rose, Albert Lea MN**

**Phyllis Randolph Frye, founder, ICTLEP**

**Lilly Roddy**

**Brenda Thomas**

*for submitting humor*

**Kimberly Burnham**

**Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV**

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**20 YEARS AFTER: REPEAL....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

For the next several years I went downtown several days each week. I also wrote a myriad of letters and made numerous phone calls. I lobbied the Municipal Judges, the Councilmembers and anyone who would listen. As I've mentioned I became active in the feminist movement. I joined the League of Women Voters (I still believe that the then-LWVH President, Lynne Johnson, was influential enough to convince many people to the fact that I was serious and deserved their attention.) I lectured all over Houston for Jerome Sherman and JoAnn Small at the University of Houston-Downtown, for Vicki Hammett and the late Jim McCary at UH's Central Campus, and for Chad Gordon and Bill Martin at Rice University.

I even went into the police station and had it out with Deputy Chief of Vice, Fred Bankston - at the invitation of then-Chief, B.G. "Pappy" Bond. God was watching because I left via my own steam.

I was never arrested. But, each and ever day for four years I left the house in the morning not knowing if I'd be back that night or in jail. And each and every day for four years my spouse left the house to go to her work not knowing whether I'd be back at night or in jail. I have always felt as though that was very cruel.

In 1979, the city held council elections for single-member districts. I invited many of the candidates to the UH Law School. That was when

Ernest McGowen and I became friends. He invited me to do volunteer work in his office after he was elected. It gave me the opportunity to lobby on the ordinance repeal and he got the benefit of running ideas and projects by me with my engineering and law backgrounds. It was very equitable.

In the spring of 1980, though, Councilmember John Goodner popped off about me in a City Council session. It caused quite a stir.

I believe that it was Councilmember Dale Gorzinski who sug-

gested that I confront Goodner directly. I did and, with tears in my eyes, I explained that this was neither a game nor a stunt but was a real life situation. Many other council members talked to Goodner privately. He and Ernest were not on friendly terms (because of the pop-off as well as other things.) Dale kept them at arms' length. In the afternoon, Goodner was

gested that I talking to Councilmember Lance Lalor about the fact that John may have "shot himself in the foot" this time. Lalor suggested that Goodner move to repeal the ordinance and, after doing so, Lalor would second. John did and then Lance did.

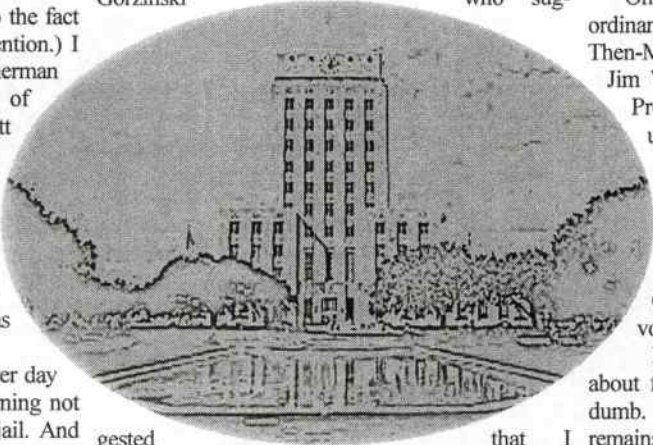
Lance told me to leave City Hall and not to come back until the repeal went through. He told me to trust his skills now that the repeal ordinance was in motion. He called me whenever anything was relevant.

On August 12, 1980, after several "tags," the ordinance to repeal was again before Council. Then-Mayor Jim McConn was out of town (as was Jim Westmoreland). Johnny Goyen was Mayor Pro-tem. City Secretary Anna Russell waited until Councilmembers Homer Ford and Larry McKaskle were on the phone. She then gave the repeal to Johnny. He asked for a vote.

Homer and Larry were not even aware it was up for a vote. Councilmember Christin Hartung was the sole and only no vote.

Homer and Larry went to Johnny Goyen about five minutes later. In short, Johnny played dumb. The ordinance was repealed and has remains off the books.

Once again, however repetitious it may seem, I say this to you, my sisters and brothers: If I could do all of that in the late 70's and early 80's, what is your excuse as the new century begins for staying scared, staying closeted and not being the true person that you are?



gested that I confront Goodner directly. I did and, with tears in my eyes, I explained that this was neither a game nor a stunt but was a real life situation. Many other council members talked to Goodner privately. He and Ernest were not on friendly terms (because of the pop-off as well as other things.) Dale kept them at arms' length. In the afternoon, Goodner was

**TWENTY YEARS IS LIGHT YEARS AWAY FOR TRANSGENDERS**

**By Vanessa Edwards Foster**

Picture yourself going to the store for a few items.

You hop in your car one afternoon and drive towards the nearest market. A couple blocks from your destination, your eye catches a police cruiser heading in the opposite direction. Your eyes dart nervously toward the rear-view mirror and, sure enough, the patrol car begins to make a U-turn to follow you. You've violated no traffic laws, have no outstanding warrants, and yet your heart palpitates with adrenaline as you see the cruiser headed in your direction a mere block from the store!

Finally, a break! You make the traffic light just as it turns yellow, while the patrol car waits for the stoplight. You have just enough time to make it into the store. As you stroll through the store, your nerve betrays you as most of the other shoppers look up and cast you curious stares. You sweat profusely as you walk through the aisles, and your peripheral vision catches conspicuous gawkers muttering - some pointing. Whatever possessed you to go to the store today?!

As you make your way to the checkout, the palpitations begin anew as your eye catches the patrol car passing outside the storefront window. Your checkout clerk now takes notice of you and gives you a scrutinizing once-over with a smirk. Though you've stolen nothing, you feel like a fugi-

tive on the run. Your mouth runs dry, making it difficult to speak. Your nerves cause you to drop your keys on the floor as you fumble to pay for your purchase. You can feel every eye in the supermarket upon you as you make your way to the door to leave.

Finally! A chance to make it home to safety! However...

Out of the corner of your eye, you see a police officer approaching you. You avoid meeting his eye with yours. "Uh, sir!" he calls to you. You're now forced to look him in the eye; hoping upon hope that he's not calling for you. But your heart sinks as you realize he's looking directly at you. It's you he wants!

Now... you're not a fugitive, have no outstanding warrants, obeyed all the traffic laws, and you've not stolen a thing. Yet you now find yourself being handcuffed before a curious throng who stare and snicker. And what reason merits this action by the authorities? "You can't dress like that in public!"

An extreme case of the fashion police? Nope. It was actually the result of what was once known as the Anti-Crossdressing Ordinance, right here in America's fourth largest city. Some far distant past? Actually, as recent as 1980 you could be arrested for it!

So what was the anti-crossdressing ordinance?

It was a law that prevented individuals born of one gender from wearing clothing of the other gender. Anybody who crossdressed out-of-doors on the weekend, any transsexual in transition, anyone who performed in drag in the local gay bars; all were jail fodder. Any otherwise respectable, law-abiding citizens could then be convicted criminals. Everyone in the transgender community was an outlaw.

Such was our reality until August 12, 1980 when the city council repealed the ordinance at the request of local attorney and trans-activist, Phyllis Randolph Frye. For years, the irrepressible Ms. Frye (an engineer who had begun hormone therapy two years prior, and was studying for her law degree after being fired over her transitioning) had spoken with and lobbied local officials on the folly of such an unnecessary ordinance. It literally made it impossible for transitioning transsexuals to successfully complete the criteria necessary to be considered for surgery.

It took awhile, but the city fathers finally saw the light. Thus, thanks to Phyllis Frye, transgenders and drag alike see the light of day; no longer confined to the dark of night in hopes of avoiding legal scrutiny. As for the fashion police, well... there's no accounting for people's tastes!



# LETTER FROM ARKANSAS

By **MARISSA CARTER**

s some of you know, Bonnie and I moved to Little Rock, Arkansas several months ago rather abruptly. The reason was mostly financial—Bonnie (my partner, whom some of you know) has a house here that is paid for, and we are able to cut down our living expenses substantially.

Both of us have been unemployed now for several months, and that can be very depressing at times. We have applied for a zillion jobs, had a few abortive interviews, and the outlook for both of us here isn't the greatest, especially in my line of work. But, hope springs eternal. We take one day at a time, pray, and trust in God. Tamara (my ex) finally learned to deal with my transition, and has been gracious enough to suspend all the alimony I owe her from the divorce. Not so, with Allyn, my second ex, who has custody of my son, Tristan. It's very hard not being able to see him, and dealing with the fact that it might be several years before he comes to terms with the change.

Moving here was quite a challenge and took very hard work. We rented the biggest truck on the market possible without a CDL. Just handling this diesel was quite a deal. It had a tendency with the wind, ruts in the road and heavy load to get blown out of a lane more times than we cared to imagine, and I began to wonder at times if we'd ever make it.

I had the good fortune when I was a college student to gain experience in packing and moving, working for my father's removals company (Brit term for moving) during my vacations. Bonnie is an excellent packer, and has more arm strength than I do, so a few pieces got rubbed, but nothing broke. We probably saved several thousand dollars, and that was a Godsend.

We're several miles south of the city here, way out in the country. There is green in abundance. Bonnie's house is a wonderfully remodeled home. She has managed over several years by herself to turn something plain and ordinary into a palatial palace, replete with mirror collages (one of her hobbies) and all mod cons. We don't have the money to fix the central air, but we did finally break down a month ago and put an air conditioner in the lounge, which does help a lot, although the main bedroom is still uncomfortably hot at night. It is peaceful here, a far different cry from the condo in Houston, where the noise, pollution and traffic dominated our lives.

Publishing a book has always been my dream, and to that end, my book, "The Turning" comes out next week. I have engaged a publicist at great expense (can you say major credit card debt?) to promote it, figuring that ultimately it will be the only way I'll ever pay back all my debts and get

SRS. You can check it out at <http://theturning.com>, if you're interested. Learning HTML programming, how to ride a tractor mower, and write a business plan are a few of the activities that have engaged me in between job searching and writing. At present, I'm hip deep in papers on nuclear reactors, intelligence and the White House, as I start to write my next thriller, which by the way, will have a major lesbian character. I don't know that I can bring myself to have a transgendered person in a book yet, but I'm working on it. My third book will be an autobiography—a no-holds barred description of all the events in my life that have brought me to this point. I have started that project already—no research required, but it will take a lot of time to complete.

I don't know where life will take us at this juncture. Bonnie and I love each other very much, and manage to help each other when each one of us is down. We try to maintain a positive outlook in a financial situation that is scary, yet perhaps holds the promise one day of better things. Bonnie has lead a life that has been as tough, if not tougher than mine, and I thank God each day that she was brought into my life—I don't know what I'd do without her.

Onward!

## Bonnie's Letter To TATS

By **Bonnie Hibschan**

Dear friends:

Some of you know me; many don't. I came to Houston to meet Marissa J. Carter on 10/20/99. I fell in love with her at first sight. Why? Only God knows that. I still believe that it was God's doing that we ever met at all.

I read the TATS newsletter when Marissa receives it, and, I must say, it is enlightening. But, I wonder, "Where is the positivity?"

Every human being on this earth has difficulties. Some more than others. Has anyone looked at the spiritual aspects of it all? Could it be that God chose very special people to live out very special lives to be able to say to the world, "God's Love Encompasses All."

"With God's love ALL things are possible."

I read negativity and horror stories of transgendered, and I know that this happens throughout this world we live in. But, when hatred is combated with hatred, nothing is accomplished. It is, if you will excuse the expression, "My dick is bigger than yours." Nothing is accomplished, other than more animosity and more hatred. To take an excerpt of a poem from a favorite poet, pen name Lindsay Beth. . .

Food of this-earth  
Meets not the hunger of the soul;  
Love surrendered  
Finds no fertile soil to grow;  
Fire on fire

Will not be quenched,  
But will sear the mind  
And scorch the flesh.

When lightning is splitting in your brain,  
And all you can feel is sorrow and pain,  
Can you still hope and in life remain,  
Or, will you quit, and forego the gain?"

© Copyright, Lindsay Beth

I am a writer, and, I hope that someday I will be able to somehow, somehow, be able to HELP in the UNITY of people, rather than in the dissention of people. I hear anger--yes, it is understood anger. Yet, to do the very same thing to others that others do to you only serves to make you as bigoted as they are. There are no winners. Only losers. On both sides.

Want to be a winner? What is the solution? Be bigger, spiritually, than your adversaries. Very simple—"Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

You see, folks, I was treated like an outcast by members—not by all, but by many—of the very same organization that I was supporting because of my love for Marissa. My ideas were insignificant by your organization, because I am not of your "special" group. What troubled me the most is that because I am not transgendered, I was given the impression that many did not believe that I understand the difficulties. That was where my support wavered. ALL people have difficulties. Some have the same difficul-

ties; some, similar; some, different. But, the emotions and feelings are the same. When human beings understand that, they will have progressed to a higher level of understanding. We live out our lives on this earth to, hopefully, work through our difficulties; to become better human beings, and, hopefully, to learn to quit repeating the same mistakes.

Don't Forget  
ELECTIONS  
FOR THE FIRST TATS  
BOARD OF THE YEAR  
2000!  
ARE SEPTEMBER 23 AT  
VANESSA'S HOUSE -  
If you don't PARTICIPATE  
Your group could...  
DISINTEGRATE!

**DR. LAURA ON HOTSEAT....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

his rape victim as punishment (forget the victim's feelings on this!) to calling gays 'biologi-



Standing in protest: (L-R) Jackie Thorne, Harlen Howe-Bennett, Alejandro Morúa, Scott Simpson at KSEV.

cal mistakes' to insinuating that Matthew Shepard was to blame for his vicious beating death. Understanding is not her strong suit!

Of course this goes well with this particular radio station's format, what with syndicated Rush Limbaugh, and locals Jon Matthews and Dan "just men in dresses!" Patrick. What made this particular issue stand out is the recent television deal Ms. Schlesinger worked out, and its impending debut on the local NBC affiliate later this year. In an effort to try and counter her hate-opinions, the Equality team chose to shine a harsh spotlight on it now.

The July 15 Dr. Laura protest at the KSEV studios turned out to be rather successful! We decided as we got there to take advantage of our rather captive audience inching along on the Katy Freeway. We

(At Right) Dan DiDonato does an interview with Channel 2 news crews at the rally site. (Below) How I Spent My Summer Vacation - protesting in the 103° mid-day heat! The TG portion of the Equality / Dr. Laura Protest (L-R) Jackie Thorne, Amber (Houston) Sidwell, and rally co-organizers Harlen Howe-Bennett and Vanessa Edwards Foster (Alex Morúa R).

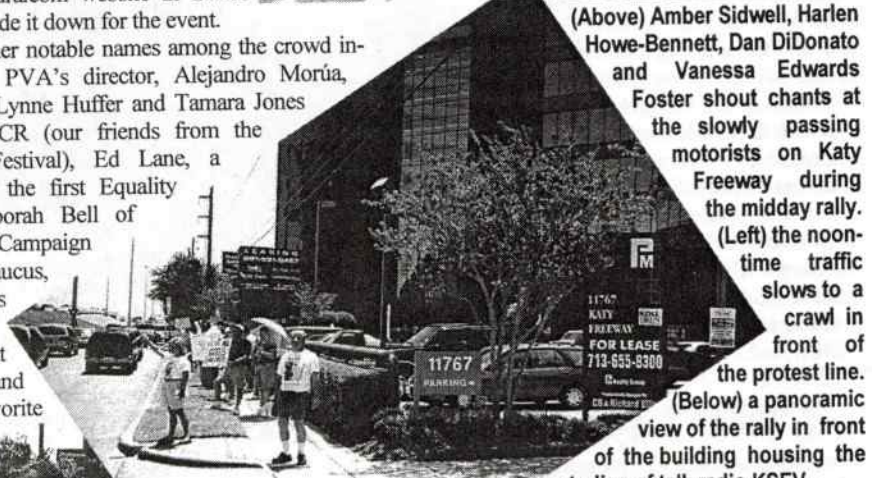
definitely caught the eye of the passers-by. We also had the media - the NBC affiliate, Channel 2 itself - doing an interview with the organizers.

And most importantly, even with it being 103° that day, we had approximately 40 brave souls baking in the sunlight for the effort. Besides yours truly, Equality Rally founder (and Champion Award winner) Dan DiDonato was there, along with the other Champion Award winner, Sue Null from PFLAG. John Selig from the Stop Dr. Laura.com website in Dallas also made it down for the event.

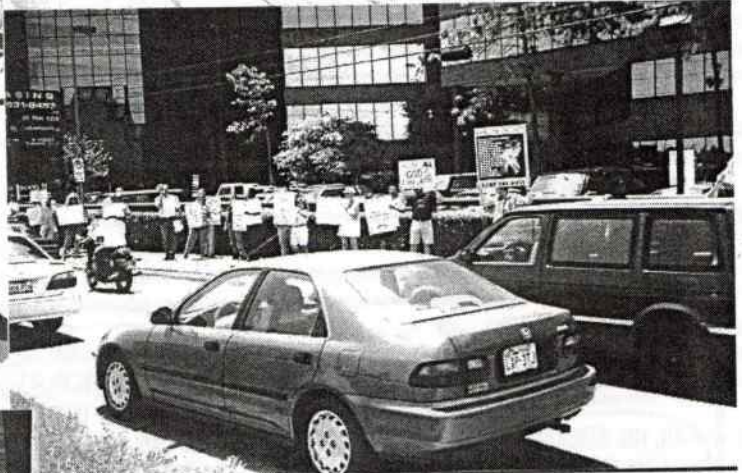
Other notable names among the crowd included PVA's director, Alejandro Morúa, Rice's Lynne Huffer and Tamara Jones of MCCR (our friends from the Film Festival), Ed Lane, a veteran of the first Equality Rally, Deborah Bell of the Parker Campaign and the Caucus, the Caucus Board Chair, Scott Simpson, and our favorite



(Above) Amber Sidwell, Harlen Howe-Bennett, Dan DiDonato and Vanessa Edwards Foster shout chants at the slowly passing motorists on Katy Freeway during the midday rally. (Left) the noon-time traffic slows to a crawl in front of the protest line.



(Below) a panoramic view of the rally in front of the building housing the studios of talk radio KSEV.



protester, the ubiquitous Ricky 'Rainbo' Hurt. make excuses, Harlen (just for the record) is now confined to a wheelchair and still made it out to the rally! Sitting in her wheelchair, perched precariously on the edge of the curb of the freeway's access road, she was the picture of fortitude. In fact, Harlen - along with Dan, myself, Tamara and Lynne - was on the organizing team for this rally as well. That's a spirit we can all admire!

Of course, trans-members were also making a presence at this rally, with TATS' Amber (Houston) Sidwell and Harlen Howe-Bennett, as well as GTC president Jackie Thorne, joining me for the protest. For those who would

Overall, especially considering the weather, we saw great participation from the community and we did a bit of impromptu-educating on those stalled in traffic before us. While we won't censor her, we will get the truth out about Dr. Laura; and hopefully dissuade some viewers and advertisers!

# VIGIL FOR AMANDA MILAN UNIFIES TG, GLB COMMUNITIES IN NEW YORK

## New York Times™ Reports On Memorial For Transgender That Draws 300

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

She very well could have been just another anonymous victim. However, an estimated 300 people gathered at the Metropolitan Community Church on West 36th Street in Manhattan, to call attention to the brutal killing of Amanda Milan, which they said was similar to many such attacks "on those who cannot be easily defined by simple pronouns."

None other than the New York Times™ reported on the vigil held for Ms. Milan, who her family members knew as Damon Lee Dyer – an ebullient aspiring fashion designer. Amanda, who had her throat viciously slashed just over a month earlier, was described in a fairly balanced article in the Times as someone "who, as long as anyone could remember, walked a tightrope of sexual identity."

Described as "a fiery prostitute who dreamed she might some day afford surgery to become a woman" she was found in front of New York's Port Authority Bus Terminal last month. Police simply identified her as 'Damien Dier, a 25-year-old man, wearing a dress, and fatally stabbed once in the neck.'

According to reports, a man identified as Duayne McCuller, 20, confronted Amanda and her friends the early morning of June 20; verbally harassing them with taunts that Amanda's friends were really men, and had "a dick" between their legs. According to her friends, Ms. Milan told the man that she, too, was a man and asked him whether he wanted to fight. Witnesses said he declined, and she walked away.

That is when the second man, who the police have identified as Eugene Celestine, 26, handed Mr. McCuller a knife, which prosecutors said he plunged into Ms. Milan's throat. Both Celestine and McCuller have been charged with

murder, said Barbara Thompson, a spokeswoman for the Manhattan district attorney's office. A third unidentified man has been charged with helping McCuller evade arrest.

The police have ruled Ms. Milan's death a homicide; but Ms. Milan's friends and family say they want it to be considered a bias crime and prosecuted with the stiffer penalties.

"I think it was a hate crime, and anyone who is trying to call it anything else is simply wrong," said Diane Dyer McKee, an aunt who often took care of Ms. Milan as a child. "This guy cowardly came up behind him and slit my nephew's throat. I don't know why he did that. It was just hate."

Detective John Giammarino, a police spokesman, said, "It was from a dispute, not a bias crime." He said he could not comment further on the case.

Earlier this month, Gov. George E. Pataki signed a bill that imposes sterner sentences on bias crimes on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation or age. But because the wording is vague, the law may not apply to transgenders.

"We hope to motivate people to push for an amendment to the Pataki hate crimes law, because it doesn't currently protect transgenders,"



Memorialized murder victim, Amanda Milan

said the Rev. Pat Bumgardner, the pastor at Metropolitan Community Church, who led the memorial service.

"I frankly have doubts about hate crimes legislation as a deterrent," stated NTAC board member, Chelsea Goodwin of New York. "However, I am a member of a community that is frequently assaulted and all too often murdered, and most of us live in fear that very few heterosexual or even non-trans Lesbian and Gay folks can begin to comprehend.

"The point," continued Goodwin, "is to encourage the police, our legislators, and society in general to recognize, that transgendered people are human beings and that our lives have value!"

Members of her church's transgender spiritual group, Gender People, helped organize the memorial with members of about twenty other gay, lesbian and transgender groups. The ceremony was followed by a march to the site of Ms. Milan's death, about 10 blocks away, where mourners created a small shrine of flowers in her honor.

To many of those who attended, the event was a watershed moment for transsexual advocacy in New York. "In her death, Amanda has unified the trans community," said Chelsea Goodwin, also chairwoman for the Metropolitan Gender Network, one of New York's oldest transgender organizations.

One of Amanda Milan's friends, (Continued on Page 14)





**TATS**  
in Action...  
*Meeting goes*  
*On The Road*  
*to the Golden*  
*Triangle*



In a break with tradition, TATS took its act on the road. It was a special occasion (in order to coordinate with the GCTC meeting in Beaumont later that evening), the TATS bunch held a feelings meeting at Mary Michelle Robinson's in Groves (just north of Port Arthur).

It was a bit of a drive (but now we understand a bit more what the girls in the Golden Triangle go through driving in from Beaumont and Groves for the meetings!) Especially considering that more of the transsexual population inside Houston has plenty of diversions, and that more of our members now come from outside the city, this may be something we will try periodically to give us a change of scenery!



Far left, ghostly lights filled the room from the table lamp and behind Chris Duffy (draped across the chair in front of the window for our 'spirited' meeting in Groves. Above, Melanie Black (R) talks with Mary Robinson's sister, while Mary, Robin Babin, Rose Wall and Robin Miller engage in conversations in the background. Below left, GCTC guest Jo Ann Bond (R) chats with Mary (R-L) Dianne Boucher and Dianne's best friend.

## Life And Death On New York City Streets

By Chelsea J. Carter

NEW YORK (AP) – Dion Webster talked loud and laughed louder. He was a prankster, a kid who got things started. But late one cold November night, his laughter ceased. He was found dead on the street, a knife shoved into his head.

Kevin Freeman was a quiet young man, an introvert with bright eyes. Six months after his friend Webster was murdered, Freeman's body turned up in a park not far away with his skull nearly split in half.

Few mourned these two young men: their fellow street people, some social workers.

These were people passersby ignored; the type police rousted and arrested. They were homeless, addicted to crack cocaine, and stuck in a dead end of life before age 30. Besides, they lived in the hidden realm of the "transgendered," men believing they should have been born female. They worked the streets.

In a city that boasts its dropping crime rate and safer streets, their murders barely registered. There were no news conferences, no task forces, no public outcry.

"They were dead already to the world. When they were killed, it just made it official," said Carl Siciliano, a social worker who knew them.

Police will not discuss the cases in depth. The murders remain unsolved.

One man tried hard to find out what happened. He questioned people and fed information to police. He discovered that Freeman had been killed over a drug deal, Webster when a trick went bad.

Ali Forney was a friend of the two, another young man sharing their netherworld. "The three musketeers," a friend affectionately called them.

A few months after Freeman's killing and just blocks away from both murder scenes, Forney's body was found, a single gunshot wound to the head.

This is his story.

Ali He'shun Forney was born in Charlotte, N.C., on April 12, 1975, his name reflecting his family's Muslim faith. As a child, he moved with his single mother to a housing project in Brooklyn.

His mother, Treaver Forney, and her children don't want to talk about Ali's life or his death.

But dozens of friends, social workers and street outreach workers speak of him, and hospital and court records and even personal writings and recorded interviews paint a vivid portrait: A boy who longed for a family, a singer who relished the spotlight, a young man with hard-earned street smarts who struggled with life, gave up, then struggled again.

Ali's boyhood neighborhood of East New York is a world of poverty-blighted high-rises, beat-up cars, stark store fronts and warehouses.

It's not an easy place to be a child. The area ranks near the top of the charts every year when it comes to violent crime.

From an early age, Ali knew he was different from other boys, preferring to play with dolls and dress up in his mother's clothes.

"It is frustrating trying to hide something you have to let out. I tried for years. But my mother knew something was there ...," he wrote in 1993 in an essay for the Streetwork Project, a drop-in center for homeless teens run by the private, nonprofit Victim Services agency.

As he grew, he became a gangly thing, all arms and legs - a favorite target of the neighborhood's teen-age toughs and an awkward presence for his brothers. Once, preparing to pummel a young man in drag, they stopped short. "Oh (expletive), Ali, that's you!" he recalled one brother saying.

By then, Ali was acting up in school, getting into fights and stealing. He was 13 when he was sent to live in a group home for troubled youths, but ran away within months.

That began a four-year cycle of bouncing between the streets and foster care. He lived in at least four homes, including a state mental institution because of "volatile behavior"; he had barricaded himself in a room after being belittled by other teens.

He turned his first trick at 13.

After pocketing \$40, he recalled feeling wealthy - "like Donald Trump." But he was "throwing shade," covering the pain, says Trevor Brown, who recorded Ali's story for the New York Peer AIDS Education Coalition.

In those years, Ali spent his days hanging out on street corners or at Coney Island, hustling or stealing.

The nights he was on the lam from foster

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## LIFE, DEATH ON STREETS....

*(Continued from Page 7)*

care, he rode the last car of the E train, a subway line known among New York's 15,000 to 20,000 homeless teens as a hotel on wheels. It's a long ride, and at the last station you can get on the train going the other way without paying an extra fare.

Sitting in a cramped office on the 22nd floor of a Manhattan high-rise, Inez Robledo stared across the Hudson River, tears welling up.

It wasn't the first time that kids who showed up at Streetwork later turned up dead. She had most of them committed to memory - names, ages and faces.

Especially their faces.

"They are all such babies, you know," she said. "They grow up fast on the street, learning how to get-over on people, stay alive - things that nobody should have to learn. But in the end, you know, they are still babies, children."

Ali was 17 when he walked through the door at Streetwork, a haven for homeless teens a stone's throw from the West Village's meat-packing district - a haunt of desperate kids used to making a few, quick bucks selling their bodies.

At Streetwork, counselors helped Ali apply for a Social Security number and a medical card. He completed his high school equivalency exam.

Video footage of a show at the drop-in center taken in 1993 shows a shy Ali peeking over the shoulder of another teen, his hand cupped over his mouth. He stared wide-eyed at the cross-dressing man in the sequined black gown belting out Chaka Khan's "I'm Every Woman."

"I saw myself," he later told Ms. Robledo. Soon the pants he wore turned into shorts, and the shorts into skirts.

He found a more comfortable place to live, a group home for gay youths. He found some peace.

His 18th birthday brought him a \$10,000 settlement from a childhood traffic accident. Waiting for it, he talked of little except using the money to reunite with his family.

"He'd say, 'I'm gonna get that money and go home, and everything's going to be good again,'" Ms. Robledo said.

When he received the check, he bought gifts for his younger brothers. He also took out a life insurance policy, naming his mother as beneficiary.

He left Streetwork full of hope.

But days later he was back, despondent, Ms. Robledo recalled. It hadn't worked out was all he would say.

Ali met Dion Webster and Kevin Freeman at Streetwork.

Webster was tough, smart-mouthed, quick to anger and wise beyond his years. He had been on the streets more than half of his life, he told people. He was 18.

Freeman was the reserved one, distant, sharing little with people. He was 19.

Together, they formed a family of outcasts.

"They didn't have a family of their own, so

they created one for themselves," said Siciliano, director of Safe Space, another drop-in center.

And together the three worked the streets.

By day, East Harlem's Marcus Garvey Park is a breath of fresh air in a concrete jungle of housing projects; by night, it is a blanket of darkness with pools of hard light from street lamps.

But it was convenient to their new part-time home - a shack built out of discarded aluminum siding, rubber tires and bricks.

It became a home of last resort after their eligibility for New York's youth shelters ended at age 19.

It was then Ali's drug use escalated, his drug of choice crack cocaine, \$5 to \$10 a vial. The drug eased the degradation and fear of selling himself, he said in the AIDS coalition interviews.

Life was closing in: In 2 1/2 years, Ali was arrested 42 times. Jumping subway turnstiles. Possession of drugs. Prostitution. He went to jail at least seven times.

His appearance became outlandish - a wig, skirt, combat boots and a two-day stubble. With an exaggerated walk, small steps and arms bouncing, the once shy boy now called himself Luscious.

Despite the drugs and the prostitution, Ali attended counseling sessions at outreach programs. The meetings were an outlet. He developed an aptitude for peer counseling and became an advocate for street safety, preaching commandments for self-preservation. One of them: Always make sure somebody sees you go with a trick.

He wore a black vest jacket with a back pocket filled with condoms that people could take as he passed by. He bragged about being HIV negative.

With outreach workers, Ali pounded the pavement. "I approach the drug dealers and (say), 'I'm buying some drugs, you want some condoms?'" he said in the AIDS coalition interviews.

His work brought attention and he was invited to San Francisco in 1996 to tell social workers about the needs of homeless transgendered kids.

"If he saw a future for himself, this was it," Ms. Robledo said.

He stood before a crowd, recounting his story. Afterward, many congratulated him. But no one offered him a job.

The corner of East Harlem's Third Avenue and 122nd Street is quiet, except for the sound of high heels striking concrete.

The garages and stores are shuttered. Christina Devoe steps out from behind a tree, wearing a red minidress, walks toward a car and leans in.

"Forty dollars."

The man behind the wheel shakes his head and drives off.

Devoe, a 35-year-old transgender whose real name is Christopher, has worked these streets for more than a decade. This is someone who does not cry easily.

But the voice softens, recollecting the three boys. Devoe was the one who called them the Three Musketeers.

"They were sweet kids. It shouldn't have hap-

pened like that," Devoe said, recalling one cold night: Nov. 4, 1996.

Ali stood on the street corner shivering, pleading with Webster to call it a night. Freeman had already left.

"I promise we'll leave after this one," Webster said. "This is one of my regulars."

It was the last time they ever spoke.

When Webster didn't return, Ali headed home - a spot on the floor of Devoe's apartment that he shared with Webster.

When he awoke hours later, word was already out among the transgendered prostitutes that one of their own was dead - knifed in the head.

At the police precinct, Ali identified his friend. "He cried and cried and cried. It's like his whole world sort of caved in," Ms. Robledo said.

Then, according to Ms. Robledo, Devoe and others, he told the police everything he saw: the make and model of the car, the description of the john and how he was one of Webster's regulars.

Police turned down repeated requests by The Associated Press to discuss the allegations, the murder or the suspected murderer.

Ali hit the streets nightly for weeks after the murder, working the same area, hoping to glimpse the killer. Weeks turned into months. Nothing.

"After that, Ali just went downhill," said Ms. Robledo. "In his eyes, he had lost the only family he had ever had."

Ali cursed the police. Once, in a meeting at the AIDS coalition, he wondered aloud when he would join Webster. He attempted suicide twice, with overdoses.

His drug use increased. He dropped weight. He got into fights. He was kicked out of outreach programs.

Although Ali and Freeman still hung out sometimes, Webster's death, for whatever reason, had driven a wedge between them.

By spring 1997, shortly before his 21st birthday, Ali was trying to put the death behind him. He moved in with a friend who gave him money, lessening the lure of prostitution.

But soon, he was lying to sneak out. "I would tell him I was doing outreach. I would get high."

Meanwhile, Freeman was getting into trouble. He was making deals with drug dealers, promising to pay later - with interest - but failing to pay.

Freeman's body was found by a passerby - face down in the dirt at Marcus Garvey Park on June 20, 1997. His skull was nearly split in half.

Word on the street was that Freeman was killed in a drug deal gone bad. Ali reportedly knew the dealer; they had done business.

The Safe Space Talent Show is a favorite among street kids. It's one night when they can dress up and show off for an approving audience.

It was Ali's favorite night of the year. Here, he was the star.

From its beginning in 1995, Ali sang in the show. By 1996, he was closing the show with a preacher-style oratory put to music, known as "hymning." It was a talent he picked up as a child

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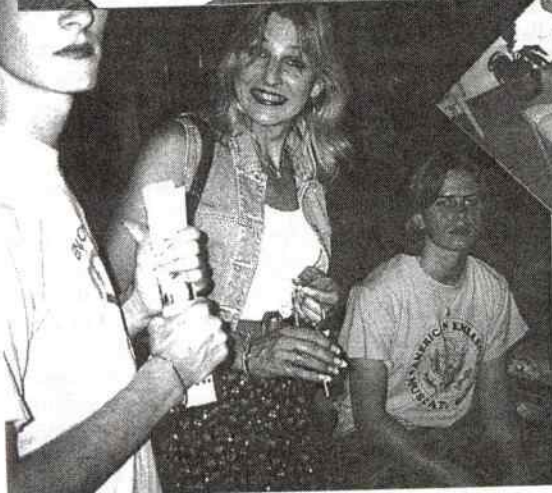


Jenifer René Pool (2nd from Right) holds Court with the GLBTA Aggies, Jordan Davis (L-R), Jason and Megan Wright (R)

TATS Celebrates July's Birthday Parties!!!



Above, a crowd gives the eye to the birthday cake Desirée Walton (R) is carrying. Clockwise from Desirée is Troy Ham, Frances Pham (front), Robin Miller, Alicia Beckman, Jordan Davis, Cairistona Douglas and Natalie Wilson. At Left, new member, Frances Pham (C - on floor) gets advice from Chris Duffy & Melanie Black (on floor - R) As Natalie Wilson, Troy Ham and Robin Miller listen intently to the conversation.



At Left, 'Was it something I said?!?' Among the straight faces, Desirée Walton is the life of the party!

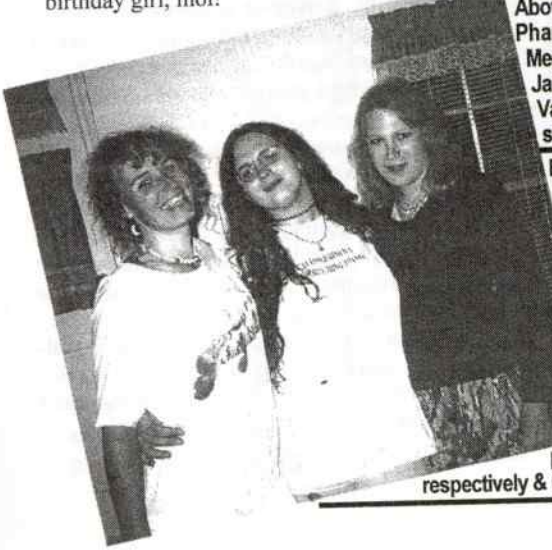


The late July meeting was TATS' birthday meeting. No, not just because it was my birthday the day before! Other July birthdays include Jessica Redman, Melanie Black, Michelle Gregory, Robin Miller, Sheila Appleton, Sarah DePalma, Lilly Roddy and Brandi Welch Williams!

We had a great turnout for the social meeting. The GLBTA Aggies had a contingent attend for the first time: Jordan Davis, Megan Wright, Natalie Wilson and Jason. We also had two new prospects attend their first meeting: Julie Buddecke and Frances Pham. Other members attending included birthday girls, Melanie Black, Sheila Appleton and Robin Miller, as well as Cairistona Douglas, Chris Duffy, Desirée Walton, Troy Ham, Jenifer Pool, Alicia Beckman, as well as my mom Dovie and, of course, hostess and birthday girl, moi!



Above Right, newbie Frances Pham (L-R) the GLBTA Aggies, Megan Wright, Natalie Wilson Jason, Jordan Davis and Vanessa Edwards Foster sneak a quick picture.



At left, TATS meets CATS, with (L-R) presidents Vanessa & Chris, respectively & CATS boardmbr, Cairistona.

Below Right, breakaway Discussions continue in the living room with (clockwise from left) Frances Pham, Jason, Megan Wright, Natalie Wilson, Chris Duffy, Julie Buddecke, Troy Ham and Melanie Black.





By Claire McNab

It doesn't take a huge leap of empathy to guess that Kathy Jager, a mother of two, may not be best pleased at being referred to in the news article below as a "gender bender", merely for taking medication frequently prescribed for women after the menopause. It adds another insult to the injury of the loss of the medals she won at last year's Veteran World Championships for her athletic performance.

The cruel irony of her situation will, of course, not be lost on trans people. Here's a woman leading an ordinary life, who achieves something, which many others aspire to: proving her abilities in open competition. And because someone has decided to use medical technology to apply a few tests without thinking through the consequences of such a broad application of narrow physiological criteria, she finds that the wholly private matter of her medical treatment becomes not just a public issue ... but an excuse for denying recognition of her achievements, and subjecting her to the sort of mockery to which the Newcastle Evening Chronicle's report has descended in the article below.

The truth, of course, is that if Kathy Jager is a "gender bender", so are tens of thousands of other grandmothers around the world who would never have questioned their status as women. The presence in her body of small levels of testosterone is not at all unusual for a woman receiving HRT after the menopause (I know several women whose doctors have recommended similar treatment): what marked her

out was simply that she found her biochemistry being scrutinized -- and then problematical -- by people who had adopted a narrow definition of what is appropriate and "normal".

Suddenly, she found her status shifting from that of being another athlete to being not just a possible cheat but an oddity ... a person who now finds herself labeled and stigmatized not just as someone who might have obtained unfair advantage in competition, but as someone whose gender is remains fair game for public comment, even a year after the full details were revealed. The initial coverage went straight into alleging that she "could be male" ... but when that particular charge clearly didn't fit at all in her case, we find that instead of the issue being reassessed, the press has shifted back to the much vaguer label of "gender-bender". In her situation, I'm not sure which I would find less offensive.

The many trans people who have been the subject of press exposure will instantly recognize the formula: making a public controversy out of a private matter, using terminology clearly intended to label the person as a freak, and justifying it all in the name of biology.

"You're not natural, so you're a fair target" is sadly an ancient logic of intolerance, and only the reliance on science distinguishes this very 20th-century form of exclusion from its historical antecedents.

But aside from sympathy with Ms Jager, what I find particularly interesting about this case is that it takes us a step further than the problems thrown up by previous use of chromo-

somal testing in sports, or by the cases where athletes have apparently been taking testosterone supplements for non-medical reasons such as performance-enhancement.

My understanding of previous cases has been that trans and intersex people have been the prime victims of medicals "sex-testing"; yet here we find a victim of these techniques who we have no reason to suppose is either trans or intersex. Instead, she is one of the many women who use the same medical technologies as trans people use, albeit for different reasons ... and as a result, finds herself subject to the same consequences of discrimination, loss of privacy, and public ridicule.

It seems to me that this case marks a major blow to the notion that sport, or indeed any other area of human activity, can continue to rely on notions of what is "natural" or inherent in determining sex.

The Olympics has already abandoned chromosomal testing; but here we find clear evidence of the need for a much wider shift in how physical sex is understood. The medical technologies previously frowned upon as the preserve of those odd transsexual people, or those bad cheats, are of course widely used. It not for the benefit of its miniscule transsexual population that my village pharmacy stocks plentiful supplies of hormone supplements and hormone-suppressants: they are there for the many other people who use them for all sorts of routine medical purposes, including the millions of women who use hormonal contraception.

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## LIFE, DEATH ON STREETS....

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singing in the church choir.

In 1997, Ali took to the stage one last time. His song prophetic:

"Though the storms keep on raging in my life,

"and sometimes its hard to tell the night from day.

"Still that hope that I pray for is reassured,

"as I keep my eyes upon the distant shore.

"I know he'll lead me safely to that pleasant place he has for me."

The telephone call came the morning of Dec. 5, 1997. The police officer said he had a John Doe at Harlem Hospital.

Ali, Siciliano thought.

Just four days earlier, he had talked with him. Ali was sitting in the 49th Street subway station.

"I haven't seen you in a while," Siciliano said.

"I've been away," Ali told him, explaining he'd been in jail for drugs.

Siciliano remembered asking him what he

was doing. Ali told him he had a date, meaning prostitution.

"Be careful," he said.

Later that night, Devoe saw Ali and remembered him saying he had something he had to take care of: He had taken drugs from a dealer and had promised to pay the next day. But before he could, Ali had gone to jail.

At 4 a.m., police responded to a 911 call: Shots fired; a man down on the sidewalk in front of a housing project on East 131st Street. No I.D.

Yola Norville stood in the hospital room staring at the body swaddled in white, life support machines attached.

"Yes," she said. "That's Ali Forney."

Siciliano had sent Ms. Norville, a coworker, to identify the body. "He looked like he was sleeping," she said. The bedding was tucked around his body with only his shoulders, arms and head protruding from the white cocoon.

A woman stood at the bedside, crying. She introduced herself as Ali's mother.

"Mother?" Ms. Norville thought. She couldn't bring herself to tell the woman that Ali

told everybody she was dead.

Then Ms. Robledo arrived. "He looked like that boy who I had first met," she said. "It's like all those years and experiences were washed away from his face."

When homeless teens die in New York City, a memorial service is held at a Times Square church.

Ordinarily, it is in a small sanctuary. But when 75 people - street kids, outreach workers and the Forney family - showed up, Ali's memorial was moved into the church's main sanctuary.

One by one, people paid tribute to Ali. Some called him Luscius.

Ms. Robledo, who still keeps Ali's lapsed life insurance policy in her desk, said some words. So did friends from Safe Space, which recently announced it will open a special home for transgendered youths, the Ali Forney House.

The year of his death, Ali had closed the talent show singing, "God loves everybody for who they are." At the service, Siciliano closed the book on his life saying the same words.



## ASTRO FORECAST FOR AUGUST 2000

By Lilly Roddy

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**T**his is a busy month with the planets lining up with each other. When this occurs, we usually have times when people are directed to make decisions or confront problems that we would prefer to ignore. And we will surely find our patience with others running low in the week of the 6th through the 12th. Pluto goes direct this month on August 20th. This planet of purging and revealer of psychological secrets will have the most impact on the mutable signs, Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius and Pisces. Days to stay in bed are the 6th, 8th, 9th, 14th, 23rd, 27th, and the 28th. Days to live life to the fullest are the 2nd, 10th, 11th, 12th, 16th, 21st, 29th and the 31st.

The Sun is in Leo as the month opens and enters the sign of Virgo on the 22nd. Mercury is back up to speed beginning the month in Cancer, then quickly into Leo on the 7th and finally into Virgo on the 22nd. Venus spreads her love on the Leo and then on the Virgo's after the 7th. Mars is in Leo the entire month. Jupiter is in Gemini and Saturn joins Jupiter on the 9th.

**ARIES** - You are in your natural element this month. Most of the planets are in fire signs and this just stokes your own firebox. Make sure that you do fun, exciting and different things this month. At work, you could be remarkably creative and brilliant. Only take on task that need your impetus for getting started, not the ones that need all of your energy to maintain. Remember, you are the coach, the cheerleader, the pep squad and the mascot. By the end of the month, you will have to be more grounded and realistic with your ideas. So brainstorm all this month.

**TAURUS** - Fixing up your home, remodeling your family or moving to a new place are all parts of the fun and excitement for this month. You are looking for some inspiration for your continued commitment to your current career path and other undertakings. You are finding that the old motivations that fueled your drives are sorely lacking. This could show up as depression and discouragements. Take this as a sign to find a new road to travel down. Really this is your chance at freedom and renewal of your spirit. Don't wait for critical mass to occur before you choose to make a decision.

**GEMINI** - This is an exciting time in your life. Two outer planets, Jupiter and Saturn, have entered your sign. Jupiter was there 12 years ago and Saturn visited here about 30 years ago. This is a time of new beginning full of hope and optimism. You are looking at what is working and what is not. You are more decisive than usual. Others may not recognize this part of you. But they will get use to it over the

next year or so. This is the month to begin new projects, initiate new endeavors, renew relationships and get rid of what is not working in your life. By the end of the month, you will be feeling more grounded. And your new proposals will have to show some growth.

**CANCER** - Your money and financial drives are running on full blast this month. You will seem more directed and focused that you normally appear to others. You may even be accused of inconsiderate or not paying attention to others. You are ready to get your money problems behind you. Clear up old debts and balance those check books. And you will expect your lovers to help in this process of improved fiduciary forecast. And an added bonus, your sex drives will be stronger too. In this kind of investment, everybody wins. Be careful of early withdrawal, you may lose some potential interest and there could be penalties.

**LEO** - Expect a very active month. Since this is a time to make sure that someone is planning a surprise party for you, you will want to make sure that you are getting the love and attention that you need. Any loss of this attention can be very bad for existing relationships. And you will be very moody and those pouty lips will be especially prominent this month. You are expecting a return on the love that you invested in others. Those offering no return will not find their name in your portfolio. By the end of the month, you are back to being your loveable self once again.

**VIRGO** - Rest and relaxation are the new items that you should include in your routines for this month. You are unusually reflective and creative preferring to come up with your own ideas and not just improve on others. Career activity is picking up and will be very busy by the end of the month. You are interested in being in charge or leading your company. This is just the beginning. Relationships are doing well as long as they don't get in the way of your climb to the top.

**LIBRA** - Your friendships and groups associations can really pay off this month. All the time and effort that you have put into those relationships will finally have the return that you have been seeking. And don't worry about the hidden agendas. They are there. Just get them out in the open. This is a good month to take some risk and market yourself or your ideas to new people. By the end of the month you are so sensitive, you will need a trip out of town, just to rest...call it a spiritual retreat if you like. And you are that delicate flower. Let others nurture you in their hot houses (or hot something).

**SCORPIO** - Imagine you are at a rodeo and you are about to come out of shoot number 5 riding a bull named Take Control. Your feel daring, excited and really alive. So, your career is the rodeo and you can take the bull by the horns. Do you have enough skill to hang in

there and be flexible and adapt to all the turns? Don't settle for less or underestimate your self. If you find yourself angry, you are mad because you are not rising to the occasion. You can make the necessary adjustments after the 22nd. Right now, just ride em' Cow/girl/boy/transgender person.

**SAGITTARIUS** - Wow, partnerships are rearing their heads for the first time in a long time. You are finally feeling like you are ready to participate in being with others. This is definitely the time to get out there and mingle and merge. Even some travel this month would be especially good for you. Relationships that have seen their better days are headed for dumpster. They can be recycled but both of your will have to work on it. By the end of the month, you are focusing on your career and you seem so much more practical. Life is an illusion. Make it a good one.

**CAPRICORN** - Exploring the greater depths of your emotional connections to others is not your favorite place to be. But, that is the journey you are on this month. If you find yourself surrounded by drama queens, then you are not expressing your own feelings. And you have to have someone else do it for you. This is not markedly negative but you can do it consciously, you can get more from the experience. Later on you can move their stuff outside on the sidewalk. Some of this may disguise itself as money differences but it is really variances in core values. You will feel more sane by the end of the month.

**AQUARIUS** - With all the fireworks going off between you and your romantic partner, you would think this was the 4th of July. Let that unique eclectic inspirational out of that closet and run to the front of the herd and lead the way. Either you get some excitement in your relationship, or you are looking for fresh experiences. Relationships with problems will be solved or ended. And this is not just a mental agreement. This is an agreement with your physical being. And by the end of the month, you move to the deep end of the pool. Swimming lessons would be good...butterfly, breast stroke, back stroke...pick your favorite.

**PISCES** - This month you will know if you have taken on too much responsibility because you will feel the stresses more than usual. Keep a close eye on your health and make sure that you have plenty of time for yourself and rest. You may need to let some of the battles at work just fight themselves out. I know you usually find an amenable solution for all but not this month. You will need more attention and recognition from everyone around you. By the end of the month, you will want more consideration from your lover. Big changes are brewing there but the soups not ready till next month.

You can visit Lilly Roddy's website at -  
<http://www.cybersim.com/hermes>

# Your Tax Dollars at Work Yet Again

By Katrina C. Rose

If you run a search in the major online legal databases you won't likely find the name Nancy Poehlman.

Poehlman is a pre-operative transsexual who has had several years of her life stolen as a result of actions by phobic police agencies - and there's no reason to believe that the same scam used to entrap her is not still being used to target non-heterosexuals on the Net.

The horror of Poehlman's ordeal came to an end on June 28 when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals declared what should have been obvious - that Poehlman was entrapped into conduct that resulted in both state and federal kiddie sex solicitation convictions.

The reason that you won't find anything if you run a search on "Nancy Poehlman" is that this horror story began with Poehlman doing what so many male-to-female transsexuals are buffaloes into doing by a society full of Laura Schlessingers (aided and abetted by Norah Vincents): trying in vain to be male.

In this case, though acknowledging the desire to crossdress, "Mark" Poehlman, as summarized Judge Alex Kozinski, "sought the company of like-minded adults on the internet. What he found, instead, were federal agents looking to catch child molesters." Poehlman claimed entrapment. Kozinski and Judge Betty Fletcher agreed. Judge David Thompson disagreed.

Poehlman's crossdressing resulted in a

divorce and a discharge from the Air Force (oh, but 'gays in the military' is just a gay issue, not a TG issue; yeh, right) after a 16+ year career.

Poehlman later began cruising internet chat rooms looking for, in Kozinski's words, "a suitable companion." And, it is quite obvious from the Court's opinion that pedophilia was not intended as part of the equation.

Eventually, Poehlman answered an ad from a woman named Sharon. The ad read: "Divorced mother of 3 looking for someone who understands my family's unique needs."

Kozinski rightly stated that Sharon's ad did "not clearly suggest that sex with children was to be the object of the relationship," adding that "while one might presume that one or more of the children are minors, the phrase 'unique needs' could, just as easily, connote children with physical disabilities, or merely the plight of a single mother of three."

Of course, ultimately, there were some rather graphic e-mails detailing pedophilic acts - e-mails that occurred prior to Poehlman's arrest (in California, following Poehlman's flying there from Florida.) However, Kozinski noted that practically no evidence suggested any inclination toward pedophilia prior to Sharon getting more and more explicit about what she meant by "unique needs" (What did it mean? She was looking for an adult male to be a sexual mentor/teacher for her children) and threatening to end the relationship unless Poehlman agreed to fulfill those needs. In fact, those pedophilic

e-mails only showed "what Poehlman's disposition was once the government had implanted in [Poehlman's] mind the idea of sex with Sharon's children."

(And, if you haven't figured out by now, "Sharon" was a cop and there were no children.)

Additionally, Kozinski stated that it is "entirely plausible to infer" that "it was the government's graduated response" which included, among many other things, the aforementioned e-mails and "Sharon's willingness to help Poehlman look for a job in Southern California" that brought a non-pedophile to the desperation point of being willing to cross state lines to engage in sex with Sharon's daughters.

Now, I rarely use AOL chatrooms anymore. Maybe I'm just getting too old for it (I'm confident that my life partner, Tanith Rattazzi, a.k.a. Vampi, will laugh at that considering that, despite having a few years on me and having a bum ankle, she had an easier time climbing the hill to Coit Tower than I did on our recent trip to San Francisco.) But, when I did frequent AOL's TG room, The Gazebo (prior to it moving over to gay.com), I recall numerous instances of people popping in claiming to be 12 year-olds looking for sex.

Every real transsexual, crossdresser and tranny-chaser in the room instantly recognized that these alleged adolescents were pathetically undercover cops looking for the most stupid fish

(Continued on Page 14)

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# My Life *By Brenda Thomas*

I feel a need to share this with all of you, (feel free to reprint or use this where ever you deem fit)

As many of you know I am very active in the HIV arena in Houston and sit on three different boards for HIV services (as Brenda) plus volunteer at Bering Spiritual Support Group as a facilitator. About three weeks ago there was an announcement that Bering United Methodist Church as looking for a part time person to do data-entry. Well having been unemployed since March, I decided I would let them know that I was interested in the position. Well when the phone call came to come for an interview it happened to be a day when Brenda was attending a meeting – so I went to Bering and made my application. Two days later I was called to come in and take a computer test (so to speak), again I went as Brenda due to my meeting schedule. The next day the call came wanting to know if I was interested in the position, because if I was, they were interested in my and the job was mine.

So, since the last couple of weeks of May, I have been working for Bering Memorial United Methodist Church as the Business Assistant as Brenda. I can tell you this, it is like no place I have ever worked before. Quiet, peaceful, everyone gets along and everyone is extremely helpful to each other. People actually say good morning to you and show appreciation for the work that you do. Last Friday they asked my to come in for a few minutes on my day off and I said OK, it was for a birthday celebration for Marilyn (the pastor) and myself – what a treat. Today, when Les came in he brought me my desk name plate (another surprise).

So what am I trying to say. Working as a female is a totally new experience to dressing on occasion. There is the wardrobe thing (can't wear the same things to work that I wear to the Palm Beach Club), so it was some minor expense to acquire some new clothes (appropriate to wear to work in a church on a daily basis) like I really needed an excuse to buy more clothes – RIGHT. It also take a little longer getting ready to go to work each day, what with hair and make up on a daily basis. Would I change it – *never*.

The love, acceptance and encouragement that I have received at Bering has been unparalleled. I am proud to say that I work there and proud to count the people there as my friends. Being the business assistant I have to deal with many people on a daily basis – from church members, to suppliers, to contractors, volunteers, etc. I have not yet had a negative experience with anyone whom I have dealt with – another delight.

A few days ago Troy forwarded me an e-mail from Lynn Johnson who was coordinating the Pride Service at Bering and he was wondering if Troy new of a transgendered person who could participate in the service. So naturally I volunteered. The service was Sunday night the 11th. It was one of the most moving experiences in my life. The love, compassion and acceptance that was felt in the church Sunday was unbelievable. Total strangers walked up to say thank you and introduce them selves. All during the ceremony there was reference to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered and *never once* was transgendered or bisexual left out. Every speaker, every minister stated gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered. I was just disappointed that more people from out community could not have been there.

Living mostly full time has some great rewards – do I recommend it for every one – *no*. I am sure that others will agree with me that there needs to be a soul searching prior to this lifestyle. Each person has to be ready to make the transition and must be willing and able to deal with the negatives (if and when they come). Am I happy that I made the decision – *yes* – would I do it again – *yes* – Do I enjoy it – *yes*. I am waiting for another job to come available, I will probably be working at least part time in that position also as Brenda. For me this is the culmination of a lot of things that I have worked for over the years, and I intend to enjoy it, savor it, and live it for as long as I can.

P.S. – *yes*, there is a *large* part of the community that does care!

# Daily Confrontations

*By Kimberly Bushman*

*Armed with swords dripping with blood, Rome will have a new consul or another civil war. — Cornelius Sula 138 – 78 B.C.*

Shame is learned at an early age. It is something that a mature mind must not realize. Whether or not we fully understand our differences, we should sense the threat it poses on us by others. I try to be a good woman. I don't have to fit in to earn the approval of family, friends, tutors, and even the gods themselves. I abhor loneliness, yet I am not willing to allow the pretenses of what others want me to be. Some of you turn to addictive substances (such as sex or cough syrup) to free yourself from an existence that has crapped your soul: the price of temporary release from shape and separation – not just from others, but from spirit and character. Therefore I propose shame is an enemy: it must not be allowed to go unpunished. It must pay the punitive damages it imposed on us. It must be rooted out and aborted.

We have found a path that not only offers freedom, but the chance to live without shame or denial. The chance to become the character we always wanted to be, no matter how much shame must be killed. Discovery allows us into brightness, and letting go of such dotish things, our higher self works to help us in our miserable lives – not to punish us. Shame will be defeated. And shame has much to answer for. It has much to worry about. I feel downright sorry for shame – another thing for me to feel guilty about.

Today, I am going to bury shame in the backyard of John Wayne Gacy's house.

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**VIGIL FOR AMANDA MILAN....**

*(Continued from Page 6)*

Octavia St. Laurent, who was featured in "Paris Is Burning," a 1991 documentary about New York City drag queens, said it was Ms. Milan's bold spirit and sense of pride that encouraged many to attend. "I've been in this community for 30 years and this is the first time I've seen any gathering of this sort for a transgender or a third sexual," she said in a eulogy that received a standing ovation. "Death will not be the last word for Amanda Milan."

Amanda's cousin, Tammika L. Clark, 25, reached at home in Chicago, said her family was very grateful for the support that Amanda has received in New York. "It's a lot of comfort for us to know that this is not going unnoticed," she said.

**YOUR TAX DOLLARS....**

*(Continued from Page 12)*

in the transgendered sea.

Judging from the Pohlman case it looks as though the cops are getting a bit craftier in the ways that they ignore the Constitution to destroy the lives of sexual minorities.

Pedophiles exist, of course. And, make no mistake about it, there are plenty of them on the Net. I am curious, though. Have any cops - the ones who entrapped Nancy Pohlman or any others for that matter - ever bothered to run a sting on the priesthood with the same zeal that they run such stings on 'alternate lifestyle' chat rooms?

I guess that would make too much sense.



**WHO'S UNNATURAL NOW?**

*(Continued from Page 10)*

This evening, the radio news carried a report that a male contraceptive pill had proven successful in tests. I don't know its composition or how it works, but I guess that it too may have an effect on the user's hormone levels. If widely used, such a pill could lead to a large proportion of the male population also having "unnatural" hormone levels. It is probably little comfort to Kathy Jager, but she may be the first of many people to fall foul of this sort of test. In the course of the next century, an "unnatural" hormonal balance looks set to become a much more widespread human phenomenon.

That can only further dent the credibility of biological fundamentalism in determining sex ... and further strain the creaky edifice of a binary model of sex imposed on the reality of a species now recognized to include a rapidly growing spectrum of conditions such as "intersex".

This issue is not going to go away. Instead, an increasing proportion of the human population is going to find itself faced with exactly the same problem as that endured by trans people: that biological tests are a poor determinant of social questions.

How many more Kathy Jagers will endure the consequences of such misused science?

*"Congratulations my boy!" said the groom's uncle. "I'm sure you'll look back and remember today as the happiest day of your life."*

*"But I'm not getting married until tomorrow." Protested his nephew.*

*"I know," replied the uncle, "that's exactly what I mean."*

**TATS ELECTIONS NEXT MONTH  
NOMINATIONS NOW TAKING PLACE**

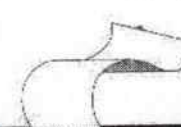
It's late summer; which means election time is around the corner. It's time again for TATS to elect its officers and board for the next year.

Nominations for the next year's slate of officers and board members - seven positions in all - will be taking place all throughout the month of August. There should be quite a bit of turnover in the board and officers' positions this election, so take a chance and get involved. This is a chance for you to step up and support the group that supported you in your first steps into transition, and beyond.

But please, don't take this job lightly. It is an important function, and will be much more so in the years to come. We've been remiss over the past year; partly due to logistics, and partly due to involvement in other functions in the greater queer community and beyond. However, consider your next set of officers and board carefully. One of the directions we are pushing in is getting TATS designated as a 501(c)3 charitable organization, which would open ourselves to organizational contributions.

This, of course, will increase the responsibilities of certain positions rather exponentially - especially those of president and secretary/treasurer. In fact, the entire board will be subject to fiduciary responsibilities incumbent upon any charitable group. This requires hands-on, active participation from our board and officers. So, if you're pro-active, and truly want to help push TATS to the its ultimate goal, we need you! Elections are Sept. 23.

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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support ●

Volume 8, Issue 9

Houston, Texas

September, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## TATS MEMBERS TO TEST LITTLETON 'SAME SEX MARRIAGE' RULING

By David McLemore, Dallas Morning News

Next month, two Houston women will arrive in San Antonio seeking a marriage license at the county clerk's office. They fully expect to get one, their attorney said. The law is on their side.

They may be right.

Texas law does not permit same-sex marriages. A recent opinion by the state 4th Court of Appeals, which negated the marriage of a San Antonio woman who was surgically changed from a man, however, may just open the door for Jessica Wicks and Robin Wicks' wedding day, says their attorney, Phyllis Randolph Frye of Houston.

While Robin has always been a woman, Jessica's Texas birth certificate shows she was born a male, named Grady Roland Wicks. Thus, using the recent court ruling, Robin and Jessica



Former TATS Editor, Jessica Wicks (L) and her mate Robin plan on testing the limits of Littleton v. Prange.

are of different genders under the law.

If everything goes as the couple plans, the courts and the Legislature will have to revise the

laws governing how people are identified sexually, Ms. Frye said. "Two women will show up to get a marriage license Sept. 6. Thanks to the 4th Court's recent opinion, legally it will be a male and a female," Ms. Frye said.

"The court said chromosomes matter, not genitals. It's a legal opinion built on a lot of false assumptions. If that's how they want it, fine. We want the county clerk in Bexar County to know that we're coming and we're going to obey the law."

Obedying the law is precisely what Bexar County Clerk Gerry Rickhoff plans to do as well.

"I do what is authorized by state law, and the law states that you are what the Creator made you at birth, not what you hold yourself out to be," Mr. Rickhoff said. "We ask anyone who shows up for a marriage license to provide identification that proves age and other qualifiers. If the parties then swear that all is true and correct, we issue a license."

In October, the 4th Court upheld a lower court gender ruling. It found invalid a wrongful-death suit filed by Christie Lee Cavazos Littleton, now 48, following the death of her

(Continued on Page 4)

## TRANSGENDERED CHILD TAKEN FROM PARENTS

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

WESTERVILLE, OH — In a rather ominous event, Franklin County Children's Services in Columbus, Ohio, have seized a six-year old child from the parents for the sole crime of being transgendered. According to authorities with Children's Services, they sought an emergency order from the court because of concerns for the child's welfare. Meanwhile, the child's parents are filing suit against the agency claiming violation of their civil rights for not being allowed to do what's best for their child.

Phil and Sherry Lipscomb's child, Zachary, had been diagnosed as having Gender Identity Disorder (GID) last November. According to a family friend, the child — who now identifies herself as Aurora — has insisted upon identifying as female from the age of three.

During the course

of numerous visits to counselors, Aurora was eventually diagnosed with GID last November after a visit to the Cincinnati Children's Medical Center after trying to hurt herself and others during an emotional outburst. According to the attorney for the Lipscombs, Randi Barnabee, Aurora has been in and out of hospitals since the age of three for behavioral problems which, she added, are linked to the child's gender identity disorder.

"The more pressure brought onto the child to conform to acceptable social gender standards, the more she acted out," said Barnabee, a transsexual attorney from the Cleveland, Ohio area.

Franklin County's Children's Services agency sought the removal of the child after receiving a tip from callers the agency refused to disclose. Court documents in the case, however, listed the tipsters as the Westerville School that Aurora attended.

Within two weeks of the parents enrolling Aurora in first grade of a local elementary in this Columbus suburb, school officials had

(Continued on Page 4)

### MEETING SCHEDULE

September 9 Galveston Beach Party at:  
Magnolia St / Bolivar Peninsula. @ noon

September 23 Social Meeting at:  
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM

October 14 Feelings Meeting at:  
Transgender Community Ctr. @ 3 PM

October 28 Social Meeting at:  
(To Be Announced) @ 7 PM

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Have you seen this man?  
Police Need Your Help  
See details, Page 7

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**HOW TO REACH US:**

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 780-4282 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.geocities.com/tatspage>

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**O**h, those summer days, those summer daze.... And, yeah, I suppose I am in a daze – probably from the heat! As I sit here on Labor Day, typing away in an air conditioned, yet sweltering bedroom, I note it's the hottest day ever in Houston. So far.... My mom called me down to come look at the thermometer ... okay, 111° ... thanks mom, that'll really take my mind off of it. Back to the sweatbox.

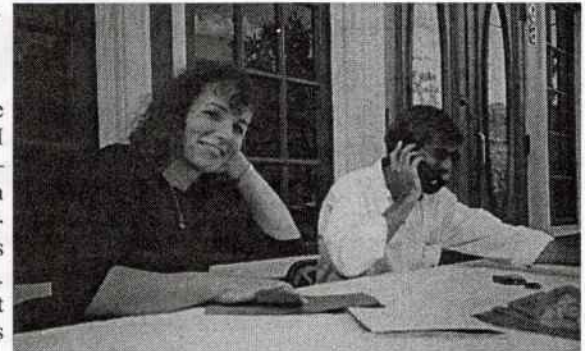
We've in the middle of a massive heatwave and drought, we've got forest fires and tire dump fires and apartment fires all around us. We've got the worst air in the nation, not being helped by the aforementioned fires. We've got Gub' Shrub running for the White House, and state democrats running scared because of the "republican mandate" bearing down on the state – and maybe the nation.

For Texas T-folks, we've got transsexual male/female marriages declared same-sex and void, and we've got an appeal on it going to the Supreme Court, and we've got transgenders who still can't buy a job, and we've got transgenders being assaulted and murdered yet again, and we've even got transsexual female/female marriages about to be consummated as valid.

And we've got the press breathing down our backs. And we've got the Unity Committee trying to breathe life into our lethargic community. And we've got local law enforcement breathing venom and epithets at them "men in dresses." And we've got the religious right and arch-conservatives breathing fire over the mess we transgenders have exposed due to their own not-so-well-thought-out decisions which could likely turn their own DOMA, no-same-sex-marriage laws into swiss cheese. And we've got air so hot, hazy and humid, we can barely breathe at all.

The world's going crazy – crazy from the heat. And perhaps some in our group are wondering if I'm similarly crazy for the same reasons. For those who've not been to the meetings lately, I've come to the conclusion that it was time for me to step down as president of TATS.

It's been a very busy summer, and I've been getting a little toasty (heatwave notwithstanding). It gave me reason to do some re-examination. With all of the items crowding my plate, some things eventually get pushed to the side and are ignored.



**Vanessa (L) and Montrose Counseling Center Operations Board President, Andy Eversole, spend a warm evening recruiting volunteers for the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard**

Personally, I've reached that saturation point. My duties with the Caucus are intensely demanding, with no room for error. The Counseling Center duties have also increased to-date this year, and will be more so as we've just absorbed the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard and they need someone for training Hotline volunteers. Guess who? I've neglected my PFLAG duties so far, and need to nurture that relationship since we worked so hard to create it.

Legislatively, we have the most intense year ever for transgenders – especially in Texas. And it won't be pretty. We will sincerely be in defense mode in Texas this coming session, and it will take everything we've got not to lose what little ground we have. Additionally, I also need to strategize what to do on the national scene; but our TGAIn fight will be priority one. This will require a lot of my attention.

And this doesn't even take into account other time consuming pursuits like the newsletter and panel discussions (both of which I will continue.)

As I've been advertising over the past year, there's a sincere need and desire to successfully push through a 501(c)3 designation for TATS. This will require a larger commitment from our board. Meanwhile, I've been painfully aware of not being able to afford the attention our group needs due to all the aforementioned side projects. That simply won't do.

*(Continued on Page 13)*

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

**David McLemore, Dallas Morning News AP**

**Nick Coleman, Minneapolis MN**

**Paul Lipscomb, Westerville OH**

**Monica Helms, Atlanta GA**

**Katrina Rose, Albert Lea MN**

**Vikki Lynn Skelton**

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# LOCAL TRANSGENDER MURDERED

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**A** transgendered woman, reported to be from South Houston, was strangled to death, stabbed and her body later dumped in a field in Webster, according to police. Augustin Aguilar Carrizales, 25, who went by the name Julia, was strangled July 21 at a South Houston residence. Her body was then dumped in a wooded area behind a business park off of Old Galveston Rd. near NASA Rd. One, according to Webster police.

According to Police Chief Mike Keller, authorities are still searching for Kelvin Antonio Navarro, 18, also of South Houston. Navarro is to be charged with the murder. Early reports noted police investigations found a substantial amount of blood at the crime scene.

Police have also charged a 15 year old with tampering with evidence for helping Navarro load the body into a car so it could be moved to the field, according to police. Other witnesses saw Carrizales being loaded into the car, but the witnesses at the time thought the victim was unconscious or drunk, according to investigators.

Police say they are not sure what events led to the killing, but they are working on two theories: either drug-related or the result of jealousy involving a male friend, according to Webster Police Det. Ron Bellnoski. "The adult that's at large pretty much holds the key to this case," he said.

Heroine and cocaine were allegedly involved in the incident, according to police. The victim is believed to have attempted to attack Navarro with a screwdriver.



The victim Julia (fka: Augustin) Aguilar Carrizales

(Continued on Page 7)

# PHYLLIS FRYE RECEIVES MAYORAL PROCLAMATION

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**I**t was twenty years ago to the day, and Houston's most ballyhooed trans-activist, Phyllis Frye, stood on stage talking about the most important day in Houston Transgender history – the day the city council overturned the law that outlawed crossdressing in the city. On stage with her was one of her earliest supporters, Councilmember Annise Parker, presenting Phyllis with a proclamation from the mayor. August 12, 2000 was thereby declared 'Phyllis Frye Day' in Houston.

Approximately 45 people attended the Gulf Coast Transgender Community's special meeting honoring Phyllis. Numerous other notables attended; including former Pride grand marshal, Jimmy Carper, HAN-Net founder Brandon Wolf, GLBT community's photographer-emeritus Dalton DeHart, and Annise's spouse Kathy Hubbard. The meeting even drew three of the four past GCTC presidents, including yours truly, Jackie Thorne and the longtime woodworker, JoAnne Roberts.

During her speech, Annise took great care to point out Phyllis' push for the repeal of the ordinance wasn't strictly for transgenders. At the time, lesbians were also being rousted from bars and arrested for wearing button-fly or front-zip pants or slacks under the same laws. It was truly a push for women's rights as well.

Under the old law, women could only wear side-zipped or rear-zipped pants or slacks. However, the city's law enforcement at that time was selectively enforced. For the vast majority of those arrested for the offense (which in reality was only a finable infraction – something

lost on the arresting officers), it was a way for the city to pressure the gay,

lesbian and gender non-conforming communities. It was obviously effective.

One particular transgender woman, Ann Mayes, was the victim of dozens of arrests for the ordinance. Ann was the unsung hero during the 'bad old days.' She was arrested for breaking the ordinance more times than Phyllis could count, would spend several hours in jail, receive her fine, then leave the jail only to be re-arrested upon leaving the building.

Phyllis detailed how Ann took the initiative of addressing city council on her plight on numerous occasions. Each time she left City Hall, she was arrested yet again. But her situation



Photos of the dinner at Biba's, Aug. 12, honoring Phyllis Frye (clockwise from left): Councilmbr. Annise Parker (L) reads the mayoral proclamation announcing Phyllis Frye Day as Phyllis (R) listens. Above, a shot of the dinner crowd: in the foreground Kathy Hubbard

(L-R), Annise Parker, Jimmy Carper, Brandon Wolf and (back to camera) Jenifer René Pool enjoy the dinner conversation. Above right, Phyllis (with the ordinance repeal framed on the floor in front of her) gives a re-telling of the history of the 1980 anti-crossdressing ordinance repeal to the crowd. Below Right, Jackie Thorne (L) applauds as Annise Parker (C) announces the guest of honor for the evening, Phyllis Frye (doing her best to remain humble!)



aroused the attention of then city-councilman Johnny Goyen. He was sensitive to her situation, but was (at the time) powerless to do anything for her.

As Phyllis pointed out, Johnny Goyen was the mayor pro-tem presiding over the council when the fated vote came up. The rest, as they say, is history....

**TEST SAME SEX MARRIAGE....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

husband because Ms. Littleton was actually a man.

In the majority opinion, 4th Court Chief Justice Phil Hardberger wrote, "Male chromosomes do not change with either hormonal treatment or sex reassignment surgery. Biologically, a post-operative female transsexual is still a male." Justice Karen Angelini concurred.

In a dissenting opinion, Justice Alma Lopez wrote that the state courts had already accepted Ms. Littleton's sex change when it amended her birth certificate to indicate she was a woman.

"Notably, neither federal nor state law defines how a person's gender is to be determined," Justice Lopez wrote. "Our state Legislature has not determined the guidelines that should govern the recognition of marriages involving transsexuals."

There is very little case law to use as guidelines in the matter of defining sexual identity, said Victoria Mather, a professor of family law at St. Mary's University Law School in San Antonio. And laws governing transgender issues are particularly incoherent, Dr. Mather said.

"The law is always better when it goes with the intent of the people when it comes to interpersonal relationships," Dr. Mather said. "The 4th Court has said that genetics is the determinant factor in sexual identity. If these folks don't get a license, it only adds to the incoherence of the law."

In the case of Jessica Wicks and Robin Wicks, "Jessica was born a male but had always known she was a female," Ms. Frye said. "She underwent surgery and treatment to become a woman and has been a woman legally for more than a year."

"The main objective is to get Jessica and Robin married. She and Robin are very much in love, which is why they share the same last name," Ms. Frye said. "They sought a marriage in Harris County earlier this year and were turned down by the clerk, who cited the Texas Family Code barring same-sex marriages."

"But we're also trying to get the Legislature's attention. Justice Hardberger's opinion says the Wickses should be able to get that license," Ms. Frye said. "Nobody has to have a drop-drawer examination to get a wedding license. No one wants that. But there is a legal point to be made. We're talking about changing how people identify their own sexuality."

"We've seen a complete revolution in the laws governing child support, adoption and what constitutes a family. We once had laws that barred marriage between races. But human beings tend to fall in love with whomever we want," St. Mary's Dr. Mather said. "Texas has made it very clear it doesn't want to recognize same-sex marriages. But now, the state is struggling to define what same-sex means."

"As a matter of long-term coherence, it's a mistake to say, 'This is the rule, and the state will say what you'll be.' The people will decide. The law has to then catch up."

**TRANSGENDERED CHILD....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

contacted the agency, citing numerous behavioral problems, fighting, and questioning the child's gender disorder.

According to a family friend, Aurora had been suicidal after a difficult year in kindergarten, where she was beaten up regularly with little or no intervention by the teachers or school officials. The parents recently had returned her to the Children's Hospital, whereupon the GID was undiagnosed, and the parents were considered incompetent.

Making their case, Children's Services officials had discovered that the Aurora's mother Sherry, was bipolar, questioned whether the father Paul "may also have mental health issues," and noted the couple was separated last February.

However, attorney Barnabee dismissed their claims; stating her clients have reconciled and that their marital problems stemmed from not knowing how best to deal with Aurora. "They've been at their wits' end for years, moving from one crisis to another - all the while just trying to do what's best for their child," she said.

"She's your typical little girl who likes dressing up in frilly gowns, earrings and pretty shoes and playing with Barbie dolls," said her mother, Sherry Lipscomb. "She's always gravitated to all things girls and, until recently, we had no idea why."

Even though the parents now identify and understand her condition, and wish to do what's best for their child, they've suddenly found their child wrested from them strictly for not conforming to societal gender norms. The agency has never proven any mental, physical or sexual abuse occurred. According to the agency's notes, the parents failed to recognize that Aurora's behavior "may be attributed to the home environment."

In a preliminary hearing before the local magistrate assigned to the case, the judge awarded temporary custody to the Franklin County Children's Services. The judge also refused to require Children's Services to allow Aurora to choose female specific toys, clothing or use of her chosen name. The judges appeared indifferent to the child's emotional distress during this forced removal. Meanwhile, the parents are very concerned for the child's current welfare.

"We have no idea what they are doing to her," said her mother. She's not getting her medication. She's very, very fragile," the mother said.

Her father is worried that the foster family will force his child conform to "being a boy."

"It will depress her, and who knows what will happen," he said.

"No one wants this child to be who she is - a girl." Added the Lipscombs' attorney, Barnabee, "it's too much of a political hot potato."

The couple, who is Jewish, has now filed a federal lawsuit against the school district and FCCS, stating (among other things) that Children Services has refused to allow their child to wear dresses and jewelry while in foster care or to maintain a kosher diet. They also alleged that the agency would not let the child observe the Sabbath with the family at

home.

After the preliminary decision to place Aurora in foster care, attorneys Randi Barnabee and Debbie Smith immediately filed an objection, which will be heard Sept. 12. Barnabee predicted a "protracted and bitter" fight.

**A Letter from Aurora's Dad**

**By Paul Lipscomb**

*My wife Sherry and I noticed our son Zachary at the age of two years old preferring all feminine toys, clothes, shoes, and activities. We first thought it as nothing to be concerned about. As Zach progressed in age to kindergarten, there was always the preoccupation to be a girl. Zach would emphatically state the she was a girl,*

*and announced that her name was Aurora. After several years of therapy, which we found out that behavior modification was being used, we finally came upon a physician who diagnosed our child with Gender Identity Dysphoria. There have been four inpatient stays, the third one last fall was when Aurora was diagnosed as GID. On the fourth inpatient stay the physicians totally flipped the diagnosis as strictly being psychological. We had to make a child conform to the male gender. Prior to this stay we had informed them and the school that we were going to have her ears pierced for her birthday, and support her in her female gender, by doing home schooling, until she was able to mainstream.*



*She took an immense amount of harassment, behavior modification, and bullying. Over all we need help and support. They want us to change Aurora to be male. We are having conflict with physicians, Children's Services in both Franklin and Hamilton counties in Ohio. They are talking about residential care, which removes us as the parents to having custody, because we are to be firm that our child has to live in a male gender. They are beginning to say we are unfit parents, because we allow Aurora to exist. We are definitely afraid that they may take our Aurora away from us at any given moment without notice. If anyone can give us support it is: NOW!!!*

*We Love our beautiful and creative Daughter. Please let us know how you feel about our circumstances.*

# ELECTIONS FOR TATS OFFICERS, BOARD THIS MONTH

**T**ime has come, yet again, for the next slate of board members and officers to be elected to TATS. There will be a bit of shuffling and turnover among officers and the board, which will require hands-on attention to whom we elect for the upcoming year. This will also be a critical year for the group, as we officially decide whether we will proceed with plans to take the group to a 501(c)3 designated tax-exempt organization.

As we work with a seven member board, we have at least three board positions to be determined, as well as someone to staff the officers' positions of secretary/treasurer, editor, vice-president and president. The nominees announced so far are as



**PRESIDENT:**  
Jessica Redman

**VICE PRESIDENT:**  
Melanie Black  
Vanessa Edwards Foster

**SECRETARY / TREASURER:**  
Sarah Jane Connell (incumbent)

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:**  
Vanessa Edwards Foster (incumbent)

**BOARD MEMBERS:**  
Monica Roberts (incumbent)  
Robin Babin  
Alicia Nicole Beckman  
Vikki Lynn Skelton

Nominee for President

Jessica Redman (above left) with Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt at the PHYSF Fundraiser, Melanie Black working on the float from Pride 2000 (above, CL) and Vanessa Edwards Foster from the Dr. Laura protest (above CR) nominees for Vice President and Newsletter Editor, Sec./Treas. Nominee Sarah Jane Connell (above R) at KPFT's After Hours. The Board nominees (below, L-R) are Monica Roberts, Robin Babin, Alicia Nicole Beckman and Vikki Lynn Skelton.



Nominations for the positions will cease after the next meeting on Sept. 9. The only stipulations for running for office are that the nominee be a member in good standing (i.e. subscriber to the newsletter.) Elections are Sept. 23.

## A&M APPROVES NON-DISCRIMINATION, RESCINDS POLICY A DAY. LATER

**A**fter an 11-year push, sexual orientation has been added to the Texas A&M "University Statement on Harassment and Discrimination." At 5pm on Tuesday, August 15, Texas A&M University President Dr. Ray Bowen enacted the new student rules for the 2000-2001 school year." So read the press release on August 16.

Students had planned on then working for the inclusion of gender identity in the nondiscrimination policy at the urging of Jordan Davis, this year's president of the GLBTA (Gay Lesbian Bisexual & Transgendered Aggies.) While considering the first inclusion a victory, Jordan and a number of others in GLBTA knew they had to continue the fight for gender inclusion. Little did

they realize how much of a fight they had left. Less than 24 hours later, the non-

discrimination clause was suddenly rescinded. It turns out election year politics got in the way.



The Aggie GLBTA movers and shakers at a recent TATS meeting: (2nd from left, L-R) former president, Megan Wright, Treasurer Natalie Wilson, Jason (attending with) current president Jordan Davis; with TATS' Frances Pham (L) and Vanessa Edwards Foster (R) flanking the outside.

The official explanation was that they didn't fully understand the wording of what they were enacting, and asked for a re-working of it. However, GLBTA's Jordan Davis understood it to be something else. Apparently word was passed down, via the university's regents, that this order would not take place. Not this year. It was election year. According to sources, it originated in the Lt. Governor's office.

Of course, both the Lt. Governor, conservative Rick Perry, and Gov. George W. Bush are very well-known and active Aggie alumni. Even former U. S. President George Bush has a

(Continued on Page 9)

# Thoughts of an (E)X-Man on the X-Men Movie

By Katrina C. Rose

**O**kay, former man would be more proper – lest ye think I went through an Exodus program to transition (as some transphobes would willingly believe.) And, I'm definitely not the first to use that pun in reference to the new X-Men flick, though I believe that I might be the first transsexual to do so in print.

Even though the super-power premises behind almost all of the characters were a bit of a stretch, the Marvel characters of the 60's were viewed as being more like real people (the great O'Neil & Adams Green Lantern-Green Arrow series notwithstanding.) "Super heroes with super problems" they were called. Think about it in comparison to the most prominent DC characters.

A man from Krypton, sent to the earth as a baby? A millionaire and his "ward" (does the 'M' in NAMBLA stand for 'millionaire'?) who wear tights and run around at night in a suped-up car?

But the Marvel characters? The Fantastic Four may have had super powers but their lair wasn't 'Stately Richards Manor.' It was several floors of a high-rise that they didn't own – and they were constantly being hassled by the landlord. Spider-Man? A geeky grad student with a guilt trip about being indirectly responsible for his uncle getting killed. The Hulk? It isn't easy being green – especially when you have no idea when you might suddenly turn green. Iron Man? A millionaire, yes – but with a bad heart and a drinking problem.

And then there were the X-Men.

Not 'normal' people who had super powers thrust upon them but different from day one.

You know – kinda like homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals.

And, if you can come away from the X-Men movie without seeing the parallel between what real-life radical right-wing legislators want to do to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people and what the fictional Senator Kelly – along with an apparent gaggle of supporters – wants to do to the mutants, you're....

Forget it – personally, I think that not seeing the parallel is impossible.

I haven't checked up on the usual gang of right-wing anti-constitutionist suspects (the Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, the Bush Presidential Campaign, etc.) to see if they're decrying the X-Men as a propaganda assault on the alleged right of alleged Christians to control the government and our lives, but I'm sure its coming.

"America is built on the strength of its fami-

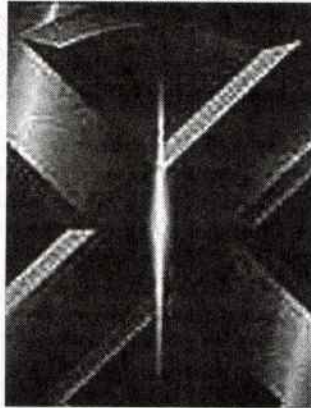
lies. The question is, what are families built on. The answer is people. Ordinary people. Lawyers and doctors, steel workers and schoolteachers. People like you. People like me."

"As I speak, there is a new and ominous danger facing our families. It is a danger facing every man, woman and child. And only a handful of Americans even know its out there."

Gay marriages? Transsexuals? Transsexual marriages? ENDA? Transsexuals in ENDA?

"My friends, I'm talking about mutants."

Those quotes are from an official X-Men movie promotional web site: [www.mutantwatch.com](http://www.mutantwatch.com).



My politics aside, the site gives you an idea of the specific plot of the movie.

Senator Kelly is in the process of ramrodding a 'Mutant Registration Act' through Congress. The two most powerful mutants, Charles Xavier (Patrick Stewart – perfect

for the role) and Magneto have decidedly different ideas about how to deal with Senator McCarthy, er..., Helms, er..., Kelly (sorry – its hard to tell the difference) and his followers. Magneto's plan is analogous to the 'AIDS virus in the water supply' strategy that was mentioned a few times by ultra-radical activists over a decade ago but is still used against all of us. Xavier's is not – and, of course, he and his mutants are the good guys (not that there shouldn't be a bit of cheering from queers over what Magneto does to one particular non-mutant – but I won't give that away), and that conflict fuels the movie well.

Even if you detest comic-book-related movies or if you like some superheroes but have never been into the X-Men, the movie will still be worthwhile. Of course, if you never read the 1960's X-Men comics, there's one joke regarding "yellow spandex" that you might not appreciate, but don't let that stop you. The 'school' operated by Xavier is adequately explained and the existence of the other characters is explained sufficiently, though without the formality of a theatrical equivalent of an 'origin issue.' Overall, the story line seems to be as faithful as possible to the X-Men's history considering that it is a 2000 movie about a group of characters that first appeared in 1963 and that has been in almost constant flux since the introduction of new characters into the mix began in 1975.

'Tis worth paying full price to see.

# JANE FEE BECOMES FIRST TG NATIONAL DELEGATE

By Nick Coleman

LOS ANGELES, CA — Jane Fee was fighting mad: On the TV, a gay member of Congress, Rep. Jim Kolbe of Arizona, was speaking to the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia while members of the Texas delegation – George W. Bush's friends and neighbors – were bowing their heads in prayer, asking the Lord to show Kolbe the error of his orientation.

"That was deplorable," Fee said. "Here's a bunch of people bowing their heads and praying for that 'poor, sick individual.' That really shows the difference between the Republicans and the Democrats. The Republicans may talk nice, but they still don't want people like me around."

Jane Fee no longer is in hiding.

She is 73 years old, a World War II-era vet and long-serving military officer who lives in Woodbury, loves to travel, still flies airplanes, and has friends all over the world from her days as marketing vice president of an international business. For the first 62 years of her life, however, Jane Fee was James Fee. This week, in Los Angeles, she will make history when she takes her seat at the Democratic National Convention, becoming the first known transgender person to be a delegate to a national political convention.

Fee was elected to be one of Minnesota's 91 national delegates at the state Democratic-Farmer-Labor convention in Rochester, being selected from almost 100 candidates for one of 16 coveted at-large positions. She is going to Los Angeles (after a stop in Palm Springs, Calif., to attend a meeting of gay and lesbian Democratic delegates) hoping to be a role model for other people like her.

"I want to show other transgender people that you can be out in the public eye and do all of the normal things," she said over coffee in a Woodbury restaurant recently. "Our interests, our knowledge, our experiences are just like every other delegate and we have just as much to contribute and just as much right to be heard. By hiding our identity, we're hurting ourselves because it indicates shame. I want people to recognize who we are and what we are capable of doing. We're basically as normal as anyone else."

Fee has struggled for all of her life against society's limited concept of "normal."

James Fee's parents died when he was young and he was raised in Washington, D.C., by an aunt who was generally kind and caring but who threatened to punish him in front of his friends when she caught him wearing women's clothing. When he grew up and married, his first wife left him, took their two children and forced

(Continued on Page 10)



# DAY OF REMEMBRANCE PLANNED FOR NOVEMBER

By Monica Helms

November 28th is the second anniversary of the death of Rita Hester, a Transgender woman who was stabbed to death in Boston, MA. Her death sparked Gwen Smith to create a web page on the GEA site called, "Remembering Our Dead." As of July 15, 2000, there were 203 names on that list from all over the world, and when you realize the small size of the population they came from, that is a big number. Keep in mind, those are only the names we know of. Also, this does not include all the violent assaults toward Transgender people that did NOT end in death. We are targets in the most brutal way human nature can dream up.

On November 28, 2000 will be the second annual "Day of Remembrance." Last year, a lot of Transgender web sites were blacked out. This year, Gwen is asking if we could do something more a bit public. In San Francisco, she is organizing a candlelight vigil, and getting people to speak on this epidemic that faces us. We are



Those for whom the bell tolls – some of the victims of violence this past year: Déja Johnson (left), Stephanie Yazum (below) and Christine Chappel (right). The Day of Remembrance is Nov. 28.



Those of us who have committed to do this are asking our friends in other cities to organize something for that evening as well. It doesn't have to be public, but the

also planning to do the same thing here in Atlanta, as is Santa Cruz, Phoenix, Tucson, Houston, New York City, Boston and possibly Austin. Here in Atlanta, we will read the names of the people who have died in the year prior to November 28, ringing a bell each time a name is read. It is our hope that one day, we will have a year where we do not ring the bell.



whole point is to poignantly demonstrate to the whole world the scope of this problem. I, personally, encourage people to put together something in your city to remember our dead. They are our brothers and sisters, and if we do not remember them, who will? As of this moment, the bell will ring 12 times, going back to Tacy Ranta on November 22. I pray the number will not increase, but horribly, that may not be the case. Help us show the world that we will never forget. Help us remember our dead.

## TRANSGENDER MURDERED....

(Continued from Page 3)

Navarro and his brother are both believed to have lived in the same house with Carrizales and others. All are legal immigrants from Mexico.

Police originally thought they had found a female body upon first arriving at the scene. Carrizales was found face down, dressed in a denim skirt and a woman's striped blouse. Her bra strap was exposed. "Everything we had there, we visualized a woman," Bellnoski said.

Police found a driver's license of a male on the body and when body was moved by the medical examiner, he discovered the victim was genetically male.

This, of course, prompted the usual tabloid-style reporting on some of the local television news reports. According to Det. Bellnoski during his interview July 27 on Channel 2, "the victim was a male dressed in women's clothing – a transvestite. You know, one of them drag queen type things."

While it's reputed that Carrizales was a sex-worker, and involved in drugs, it also hasn't been proven. Yet because of the lifestyle of the victim, the detectives in the case are less than sensitive in their approach to the case, and apparently much less knowledgeable on the subject of transgenderism. According to reports from both CATS' Cristan Williams and TGAIN's Sarah DePalma, the detectives working the case are rather dismissive when discussing the case – worrisome when considering the alleged killer is still at large.

On the plus side, Police Chief Keller is both knowledgeable and more conscientious

about the crime. As stated earlier, Navarro is wanted at his time for questioning pending an arrest warrant that is expected to be issued later. Navarro is believed to be on the run, most likely in Mexico, and border officials have been notified.

As a result of evidence gathered, police are not considering this a hate crime. Texas has no hate crime statutes.

THE WEBSTER POLICE DEPT.  
NEEDS YOUR HELP....

Kelvin Antonio Navarro  
**WANTED** for questioning regarding the death of Julia Carrizales



Navarro is believed to have fled the country, and may be in Mexico.

As always, CRIMESTOPPERS will pay up to \$1000 for tips leading to the arrest and conviction of any felony criminal.



Call 281-480-TIPS (480-8477), or Chief Mike Keller at 281-316-4160 if you have information about this, or any other unsolved felony crime or fugitive.

## RAPPER EMINEM HEATING UP CHARTS AND CONTROVERSY

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The latest and greatest in the wave of 'gangsta' rappers is racking up sales, and living at the top of the charts. Rapper Eminem's latest release, The Marshall Mathers LP (Marshall Mathers being his birth name) is winning praise from fans and critics alike; supplanting the Beastie Boys as the pre-eminent white rap act.

However, his lyrics are winning him another kind of attention – major criticism from GLBT rights groups, among others. In a genre of music where the word "faggot" is used commonly; Eminem's music is distinctive for the graphic content of his songs. To defend himself, Eminem says he's blowing off steam when he raps about raping his mother, murdering his wife, receiving oral sex from another man and stabbing gays in the head.

In his short career, he's already rated one of the top ten sleaziest moments in rock history for recording his daughter's voice on the song about killing his ex-wife (which won her a \$10 million judgment against him, recently.)

But with lyric content like those from the song 'Criminal' from his latest album, it's clear he's blowing more than steam. The word 'smoke' comes to mind. (Continued on Page 10)



Little Big Mouth: Rapper, Eminem

# To Benjamin or Not to Benjamin? That is the Question!

By Vikki Lynn Skelton

A Review:

In the last article, I discussed the idea that each of us takes a different transition path based on our particular life circumstances. Therefore, since we all tend to experience different circumstances within our lives, have varying emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual issues going on within us, we should be accommodating enough to allow everyone the right to choose their own transition path and not try to fit everyone into the same pigeon hole that we have decided to place ourselves into.

So, where do we stand?

I believe we stand at the brink of...

Still being required, "forced" if you will, to follow an outdated set of regulations in order to transition fully and change the sex of our body or

Seeing those same standards being updated and or

Another set of standards of care being adopted by the mental, medical and transsexual/intersexed community.

It is my understanding that the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care (H.B.S.C.) is being reviewed this year. I have already seen another set of standards of care that is being promoted and that allows us, as adult individuals, more freedom to choose our own paths of transition. Hopefully we will see some good things come out of this review that will allow us more freedom to choose our own paths of transition.

Remember that the H.B.S.C. was developed at a time when no one really knew much about this phenomenon called transsexualism and how to really treat those dealing with it. Everything was more in the experimental treatment stage than it is today. Even though there has been more research and we have learned much more about gender versus sex and why sometimes they do not match, experimental techniques will still be used in treating those dealing with this phenomenon we called transsexualism and intersex. Much more information has come to light since the beginning days and we are continually discovering more about this phenomenon and hopefully we will continue to learn and research it.

We stand at an exciting time. Ideologies are beginning to change in the "treatment" of transsexuals and intersex. Transsexuals and Intersex individuals are becoming more politically active, socially active, and taking a stand for their own rights in greater participation within the decisions made concerning their therapies. Some doctors are realizing that the H.B.S.C. is simply a set of guidelines and not a set of laws that we are bound to. They are beginning to see that each of us is different and therefore require our own particular transition path. But don't get your hopes too high; we still have a long way to go before we are truly allowed to make our own

choices on the matter. In the meantime, we will have to do as our "gatekeepers" say, if we expect to achieve the right to change our bodies to the sex we desire. Otherwise, we will have to find other means of doing the same. If you do, please make sure you take extreme caution in whom you choose for medical, legal, mental, and surgical assistance and the means by which you go about changing your body.

Adults or Children?

I agree that many of us develop a lot of emotional baggage over our transsexualism or intersexness. Much of this baggage can be dumped by allowing us to choose a path that best fits our own personal lifestyle and needs. Therefore, one question that should be asked is, "Should we be required, "forced," as adults, to follow the Benjamin Standards of Care before we are given the approval to obtain hormone therapy and or the sex correction surgery?" In my opinion, though we may need help in sorting out some of our baggage, as adults, we should NOT be required to follow the H.B.S.C. If we are children then we are bound by the directions & supervision of our parents and our "gatekeepers." But as adults, I feel that we should have the right to choose the path we feel that will fit our particular life circumstances and ideologies.

So, do we have a choice? Not really. Almost every "gatekeeper," dealing with transsexuals seems to believe that we should be "controlled" through the process of transitioning. Most of the sex correction surgeons seem to not be willing to do the surgery without one or two release letters from our "gatekeepers" that follow the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care (H.B.S.C.). The only other choice one has is to find doctors that do not require you to follow the H.B.S.C. But, that can be dangerous if they do not really know what they are doing and you have not done your research on them and their methods.

It is my belief that, if we are adults, we should have the right to make decisions about our own bodies without someone else jumping in to make it harder for us to accomplish what we desire. After all, without the permission of a "gatekeeper" or the law itself...

We can have breast implants,

We can have breasts removed,

We can have our facial features reconstructed,

We can have liposuction performed on ourselves,

We can get tattoos,

We can have hair transplants,

We can donate a kidney to another person,

We can pierce our ears and any other part of our body,

And we can do many more things to our body,

...all without the express written permission of a psychologist or psychiatrist. Yet, we seemingly do not have the right to put ourselves on

hormone therapy or have sex correction surgery without the written consent of our "gatekeepers." Why?

Why Do We Need Our Gatekeepers Permission?

In the beginning, I believe that the H.B.S.C. was developed to make sure that a person transitioned in the most healthy way possible, to lessen the risk of any complications during the transition process, and to give other physicians and therapists GUIDELINES in treating transsexuals. However, over time I believe that things changed. Now I believe that most doctors follow the H.B.S.C. for a primary reason that comprises one word...MONEY!

The "gatekeepers" do not want to lose the income of this captive market. Thus, the high fees and the lack of a sliding scale fee for a market that has very little money in general. The surgeons do not want to be sued for malpractice because the patient changed their mind afterward. Thus, the letters to help release them of any responsibility. Most "gatekeepers" know the expense one has to go through to make the transition and the lack of income most tend to have. Yet, they pretend to care so much about us and make all sorts of rules and regulations for us to follow and still charge fees that most can not afford or only barely afford. Why not charge sliding scale fees based on one's financial situation? Would they not gain more patients and thus make up the difference? In the mean time, we are "forced" by the "gatekeepers" to follow the H.B.S.C. and pay their fees if we want to walk down a healthy transition path with their help.

Is there another way?

There is always another way. The problem lies in the fact that it may not be the best way and or the healthiest way, mentally or physically. You can go to an open & liberal minded physician that does not follow the H.B.S.C. for hormones and take the chance on getting someone whom may or may not know how to treat transsexuals properly. You can take the chance on going to a surgeon that does not follow the H.B.S.C. and take the chance on getting a surgeon that may or may not really know what they are doing. If they don't know what they are really doing, it will cost you even more money to have corrections made to what he or she botched up.

Until the mental and medical community accepts a more reasonable standard of care, we will be bound to follow the H.B.S.C. in order to acquire our dreams. Until the "gatekeepers" realize that most of us are forced to go through alternative routes along our transition path, some of them not so healthy, because of their high fees, we will be forced to acquire our dreams the best way we can by the safest means we can afford. That is not always the best choice.

So, what am I to do?

(Continued on Page 10)

# Unity Committee Begins Picking Up The Pace

The Unity Committee has been busy lately. Meetings at Lobo Bookstore and at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center have been productive. Some of the proposals made by the Unity Committee have been: to set up liaisons with various GLB organizations around town, and T organizations statewide and nationally; and to have semi-annual meetings of the leaders of the local TG community. There will be a 50/50 raffle to take place in the next few days, in an effort to support the Unity Banquet.

Finally, the question of the hour: the Unity Banquet itself. Because of the cost involved, the 2001 banquet at NASA's Johnson Space Center have been scratched, and alternate venues are being sought. According to Brenda Thomas, who contacted the Westchase



The Unity Committee at Lobo Bookstore, Aug. 25: Cristan Williams (R) chairs the meeting as Sheila Appleton (front, clockwise), Sarah Jane Connell, Lilly Roddy, Stacey Fisher and Monica Roberts discuss the upcoming Unity Banquet.



Unity Committee Facilitator, Cristan Williams (R) states her case as Sheila Appleton (bottom, clockwise), Monica Roberts, and Robin Babin consider her point.

this year's banquet - with deals on the hotel rooms, a hospitality suite, and "several rooms for the Committee's use" will run around \$5,100. And the search for next year's venue

worthwhile causes by actively pulling together needed resources from both inside and outside these communities without infringing upon the individuals' or organization's agenda or vision for themselves. Great work, folks!

## A&M NON-DISCRIMINATION....

(Continued from Page 5)

residence on the huge, sprawling campus - home to the George Bush Presidential Library. According to Jordan, the ex-president himself was at his home on campus the entire week. With such heavy hitters afoot, it's easy to see how the order was quashed so quickly.

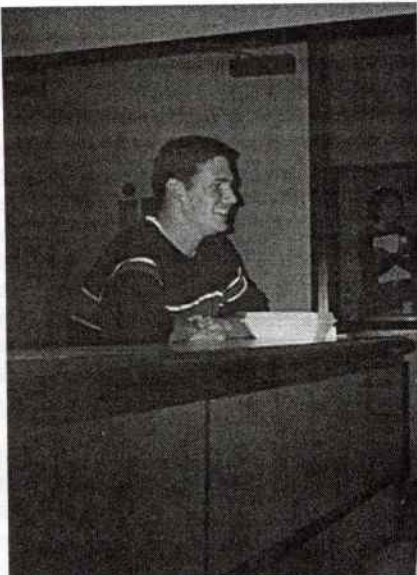
Texas A&M, the 4th largest university in the nation, was ranked by the 1999 "Princeton Review Guide" as the third least gay-friendly campus nationwide. A&M was the target of controversy in 1998 when football player Dan Campbell proclaimed he was proud to go to a school where "Women like men, and men like women!"

It's had a tradition of being a difficult campus for those who didn't fit in. Ask TATS founding member, April Lauper, Phyllis Frye, Sarah DePalma or Katrina Rose - all Aggie grads. Life at A&M can be brutal for those who are different.

TATS held its first panel discussion at A&M this year; and not without a small amount of trepidation. But, we couldn't pass up the opportunity: the current GLBTA is the most trans-supportive ever in College Station.

While the proposal passed and rescinded did not include transgenders, TATS officially

stands fully behind the GLBTA and its push for inclusion. Both TATS' current president, yours truly, and president-nominee, Jessica Redman, have been in contact and are working with the GLBTA on strategies for inclusive language. Additionally the transgender HIV liaison for the City of Houston, Brenda Thomas, has also been in contact with the originator of the non-discrimination effort. And the effort continues.



A&M's GLBTA President, Jordan Davis, during the Transgender Panel last spring.

TATS goes on record as strongly supporting the student body involved in the fight for a non-discrimination policy at Texas A&M. Election year politics should not stand in the way of trying to create a safe and equally fair environment for all its students in one of the largest and most trans- and homophobic campuses in the nation. TATS urges the A&M administration and board of regents to immediately reconsider and institute a fully inclusive non-discrimination policy.

Two music lovers were being held hostage and both were going to be shot. One of them was a country music lover and the other enjoyed all kinds of music. Before they were shot they were asked for one last request before they died.

The country music lover said, "I would like to listen to 'Achy Breaky Heart' fifty times in a row."

The other music lover says, "Please, shoot me first!!!"



**BENJAMIN OR NOT...?**

*(Continued from Page 8)*

That is the question you must ask yourself. Do a lot of research on the matter and the particular issues you are dealing with. Seriously think about the transition path you think will best fit where you are in life at this time. Write down the path you would like to take based on your research and where you are at in life. Then take that information to your therapist and medical doctors and talk with them. Be prepared to give them good thoughtful reasons for why you have chosen that particular path (i.e. hormones before the real life test, getting a mastectomy before starting hormones, emotional help before doing anything else, sex correction surgery before going full-time, and so forth). The key is to communicate with your doctors during the whole process of transition. Do not lie to them. Be totally up front with them.

For instance, if you are having medical problems while taking the hormones then let them know so that they can head off any further complications and possibly save your life at the same time. If you are wavering back and forth between transitioning and not transitioning then let them know. By honest communication with your attending physicians, you will tend to experience a safer, healthier, and easier transition. However, during the whole process, don't be afraid to question their methods of treatment, their suggestions for the direction you should take, and anything else you don't feel comfortable about. Don't be afraid to suggest alternative ways that you think you should follow.

Remember that they are not God. Though they know a great deal of information about transsexualism and intersexness, they do not know everything and everyone is different. Therefore, what may work for one person may not work for you. Remember that it is your body and you should be aware of what is best for you. Sometimes that may mean following your physician's or therapist's directions, finding another physician or therapist that thinks more like you and will work with you better, and or finding alternative routes of transition.

The Last Word:

So, to Benjamin or not to Benjamin? That is the question only you

can answer for yourself. Just make sure that you look at all possible sides before deciding on a course of action. Become willing to adjust your path as needed based on your physical, mental and spiritual health. Your physical, mental, and spiritual health are of more value than how quick you transition. Without those three areas in good health, transitioning will not be of any true value to you. It will more than likely become something you regret or a quick trip to the hospital (not for sex correction surgery either) or to the grave.

So...

Research your issues and the various paths, Have honest communication with your physicians, Honestly consider all possible paths, Be flexible enough to change your path in need be, Work on having a healthy body, mind and spirit, and Take sensible control of your own transition process. These are some keys to a successful and healthy transition. May your transition path be one full of love, joy, health, knowledge, and wisdom.

**RAPPER EMINEM...**

*(Continued from Page 7)*

Though he tends to downplay the sinister nature of his raps, Eminem's lyrics reveal deep-seated hatred, whether consciously or not.

Take an example from the song 'Criminal':

"My words are like a dagger with a jagged edge"  
That'll stab you in the head whether you're a fag or a les  
Or the homosex, hermaph or trans-a-ves, pants or dress  
Hate fags? The answer's yes!"

Although the song ends with Eminem laughing "Relax, guy, I like gay men," it doesn't excuse the graphic level of his lyric content.

To voice your opinions, write:

**Interscope Records**  
10900 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1230  
Los Angeles, CA 90024  
Fax: 310-865-7906

Or Eminem's Manager:

**Paul Rosenberg**  
270 Lafayette, Suite 805  
New York, NY 10012  
Fax: 212-324-2415

**1ST TG DELEGATE...**

*(Continued from Page 6)*

him to go to a psychiatrist to deal with his "problems." After years of therapy, James declared himself "cured" in order to be reunited with his children. The marriage eventually ended, as did a second, but Fee never was able to set aside his desire to be a woman.

"I went to see the best psychiatrist I could find and I went through a battery of tests and he proclaimed that there was nothing wrong with me - he was pretty enlightened for those days - and so I declared myself cured. If you're interested in having your children again, you do what you need to do to make that happen.

"But I probably tried to stop 50 times...I can't tell you how many times I purged my clothing. Every new promotion, every new move, every new child, I said this is the time to stop. I'd stop for six months or something, but then I would start again. I was being dishonest with people about who I was.

"When you feel as if - in order to survive - you have to hide, well, it's not a very comfortable way to live, especially when you feel you really haven't done anything wrong. I don't know if anyone really has the answers as to how these things happen. It was scary and there was no one to talk to. I just always felt since I was little that I should be a woman and I was sure I was the only person in the world who ever felt that way, because in those days, there wasn't the public knowledge there is today."

Tall, with shoulder-length platinum hair, aquiline features and a husky voice, Fee is not likely to be mistaken for anyone's grandmother. In fact, she is a great-grandparent - she has four children, 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, and she doesn't really care what anyone thinks about her. She is comfortable with herself, and with her somewhat ambiguous identity.

"I don't know whether I'm a woman who loves women, or a man who loves women," says Fee, who has taken the female hormone estrogen for 25 years (she has not had sex-change surgery). "I don't know how I fit...it's all in the mind. I used to think we needed understanding, but since I don't really understand my-

self, all I can look forward to is acceptance."

Although the gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender community has met with some acceptance in the Republican Party, gay activists still criticize the GOP for its campaign platform, which opposes gay marriages and legal protections based on sexual preference and also says homosexuality is incompatible with military service. For Fee, who took a leadership role in the successful 1993 effort to pass a Minnesota law extending hu-



**Democratic national delegate, Jane Fee**

man rights protections to gays, lesbians and transgender people - and who also is a life member of the Woodbury VFW post as well as a member of the National Rifle Association - the distinction between parties is clear.

"I believe the Democrat Party is more compassionate than the Republican Party. I'm not a single-issue person. I'm interested in child poverty and education and health care and the economy. But the attitude that these people - gays - are sick and can be cured, it makes me mad."

So don't adjust your set if you watch the Democratic National Convention and see Jane Fee being interviewed. It's not your signal that's bending; it could be your preconceptions.

"I did a radio interview and they just started talking about crotches," Fee says with disgust. "All they wanted to talk about what was between my legs and not between my ears. I've sort of picked my battles along the way. One of the things you take an oath to do in the military is to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign or domestic. Well, over the years, I've found most of my enemies were domestic."

# WAL-MART FACES TWO DISCRIMINATION CASES

## New Jersey TS Wins Lawsuit

A cashier at a Wal-Mart in Piscataway NJ, who said she was fired in January after her boss learned she had medical procedures to become a woman, was awarded \$2 million yesterday in a sex discrimination lawsuit in state Superior Court in New Brunswick.

Superior Court Judge Douglas Hague awarded the judgment after Wal-Mart failed to respond to the civil lawsuit Ricky Bourdouvales, 27, filed against the national chain.

Bourdouvales, who dresses and lives as a woman, was a cashier at the chain's Piscataway store in Piscataway from October until she was fired in January after her manager learned Bourdouvales was undergoing planning on sexual reassignment.

"There is no question she (Ricky) was terminated because of her sexual orientation," Bourdouvales' attorney Mark Stanton told the judge. The judge called the treatment "unfair," and issued a default judgment against Wal-Mart. Hague awarded \$2 million in punitive damages and \$100,000 in compensatory damages and legal fees.

Bourdouvales said she has undergone hormone treatment and received several implant procedures to acquire breasts at doctors' offices in New York and Jersey City during the last six to seven years.

A store manager questioned Bourdouvales after he reviewed Bourdouvales' job application and saw that "male" was marked. Bourdouvales said she then told the manager about the procedures she was undergoing.

Bourdouvales said her work at the store

had not been called into question and that she was even asked to train other employees. "Everyone had treated me like a woman until then," said Bourdouvales. Later, she said she was subjected to sexually offensive remarks, including being called a "he / she" and "it" in front of customers, and forced to use the men's bathroom.



A spokesman for Wal-Mart said the company had no record of Bourdouvales' lawsuit.

The corporation now has a New Jersey-based company attorney working on the complaint, which had been served to a manager at the Piscataway store in May. A letter stating that a default judgment was being sought in court was sent to the store in June, according to Bourdouvales' lawyer.

"It's safe to say he was terminated for cause," said Williams, referring to Bourdouvales.

Bourdouvales said she was told she was fired because of discrepancies in her cash register and was accused of stealing. "I was a good worker. I never had any complaints and for them to pull this sham is terrible," she said.

*(Editor's note: the judge has since revised his previous ruling, and is allowing Wal-Mart a second chance to defend themselves in the suit. The judge's award is now held pending outcome of the appeal.)*

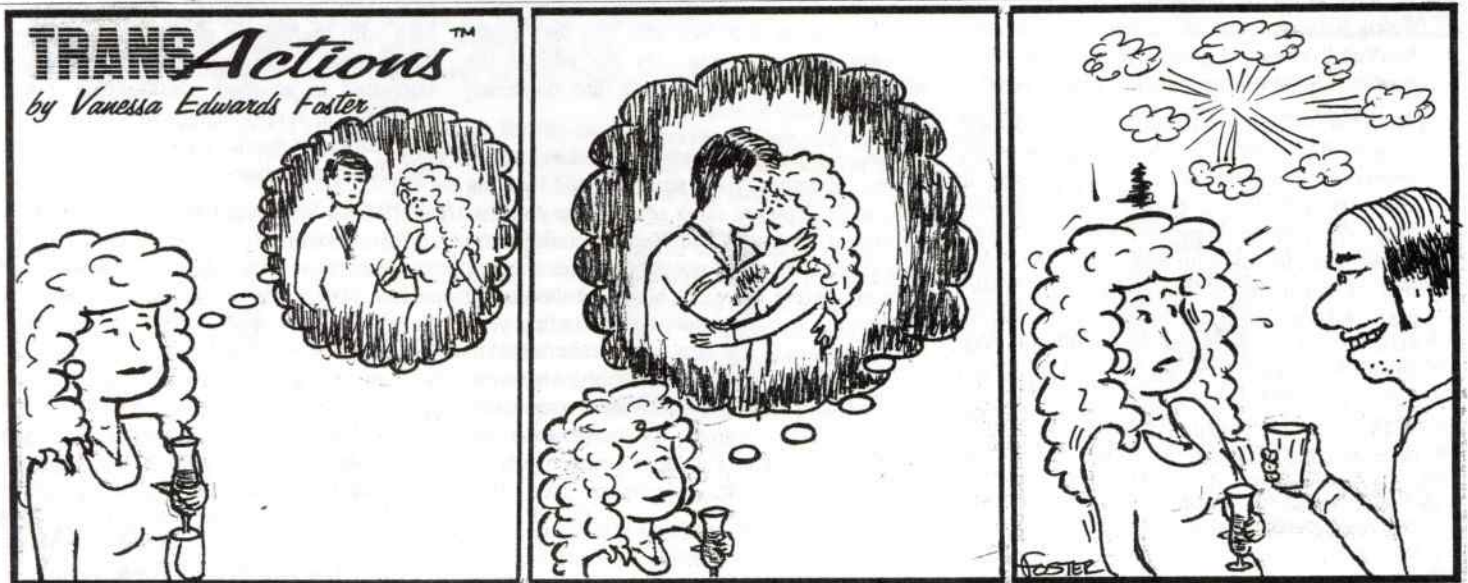
## Georgian TS Settles Via Arbitration

A Wal-Mart store near Marietta, GA recently agreed to a compromise which allows Melissa White, a male-to-female Transsexual, the right to transition on the job, without fear of being fired. This follows on the heels of the recent \$2.1 million-dollar discrimination suit settlement in New Brunswick, NJ. There, Ricky Bourdouvales sued Wal-Mart, alleging it violated New Jersey's anti-discrimination laws. There are no such laws protecting Transgender individuals in Georgia at this time.

In May, 2000, the original store manager hired White and agreed to allow her to transition on the job, She would also be addressed by her chosen name by the other employees. White felt it was proper to be honest with her potential employer up front. In the original agreement, she would abide by the female dress code and be allowed to use the single-occupancy, women's restroom in the employee's lounge.

Near the end of June, the store manager received a transfer, and the new manager did not feel obligated to uphold the original agreement with White. Problems escalated, and in July, White contacted Georgia Gender Education and Advocacy (GGEA) for help in her struggle. Karen Collins, Executive Director of GGEA, discussed White's situation with people she felt could help, while Monica Helms talked with White on the various courses of action that may need to be brought into play.

It turned out that GGEA's assistance was not needed after all, since Ms. White and Wal-Mart came to an agreement on their own, satisfying both parties. White discovered after the meeting with her bosses that the majority of her fellow co-workers supported her in this struggle. Wal-Mart may later agree to a little diversity training with members of GGEA, but for now, Melissa White will continue with her transition, with only minor changes in the original agreement.



## ASTRO FORECAST FOR SEPTEMBER 2000

By Lilly Roddy  
GENERAL INFORMATION

**M**ost of the tense times occur this month as the month begins. So, we can get all of the bad stuff out of the way quickly. September is a lot calmer month than we have had in about 2 months. We should all take the time to enjoy it. This is the Harvest time of the year and traditionally a festive and active time in all communities. Many older cultures considered this the new year. So, get out there and have a good time this month. There are a lot of good days to over indulge yourself this month and especially the week of the 10th through the 16th.

As the month opens, the Sun is in Virgo and enters Libra, the first day of Fall or the Autumnal Equinox on September 22nd. Mercury is really moving this month starting in Virgo, quickly moving into Libra on the 7th and at months end, into Scorpio on the 28th. Venus is in her own sign of Libra for most of the month but slides into that sensual Scorpio on the 24th. Mars is still showing off in Leo but get more grounded after the 16th when he moves into Virgo. Both Jupiter and Saturn go retrograde this month in Gemini. And the rest of the planets remain in the signs they started in.

Famous Virgo's are Ann Richards, Greta Garbo, Lily Tomlin, and Margaret Sanger.

**ARIES** — This is clean up your act month. The planets are moving through you health, work and fitness area of your horoscope. You will want all things in your life to run better and operate more smoothly. Try to keep a big picture view so you don't get lost in all the detail of what you are trying to get more organized. Be careful in your relationships that your overly helpful nature is not taken as criticism. Start an exercise program after the 17th. Your relationships are more active by month's end.

**TAURUS** — You are feeling lighter and more creative this month. You have been so overly concerned about where you were heading in your life, you almost forgot to have a good time. The planets this month are in you play house. Time to take your inner child on a vacation or a trip to an amusement park. Dress crazy, take an art class, do impersonations for your lover. Let your humor shine through. Oh, some of you are still in that serious mode and you are thinking about your money, 401K's and retirement. At least you will be more creative with your solutions.

**GEMINI** — You are being visited by your parents this month, actually or psychologically, they are in the house, baby. A quick call to your therapist might be just the salve for this

family carbuncle. The real question is who is in charge of your life. Is it you or is it them? Can you be yourself and get the love from mommy and daddy that you need. Have a party at your house and invite your friends and lovers and your parents. And have an application for PFLAG just in case you are ready to ask them to join.

**CANCER** — Normally a rather quiet and reserved sign, you are especially chatty this month. You have a lot to say about everything. People will find out that you are an expert on almost everything. You are also more inclined toward doing things that are project oriented rather than long hours of patience. Great time for writing or taking classes to improve the way you do things. Toward the end of the month, you are interested in making your crab shell a prettier place to live. Expect some serious efforts directed towards cleaning, painting or even moving.

**LEO** — You will have to have a strong hold on your money this month. You will want to spend it faster than usual. And your "impulse buy" gene is really activated after the 16th. I know you have been good and deserve it. This is a good month to meet new friends or get involved in community activities. You were feeling really disconnected last month and this could help you to feel loved again. By the end of the month, you are ready to snuggle up with your blanket and watch your favorite old movies.

**Virgo** — Birthday time again. Time to get out that calculator and see if your current age and your past accomplishments are in perfect balance. Have you been naughty or nice? You are particularly driven this month by the desire to have a more secure future in your career and in your relationship. It will seem like you have no time to waste. And you will have no time for those that can't make a decision. You are more impetuous than usual and your true feels could fall out of your mouth. By the end of the month, you will be walking the balancing beam.

**LIBRA** — You are gathering your internal forces, planning your strategy, and cooling your tools. You are more sensitive to your environment than usual and stress could really take it toll. This is a good month for a quick vacation before the party begins at the end of the month. You are interested in finding your spiritual oneness and how you are connected to the Universe. You are questioning what your spiritual path really is. Did your karma really run over your dogma? By the end of the month, all becomes known to you and you return from your spiritual pilgrimage.

**SCORPIO** — The planets are visiting the friends, community, group association sector of your horoscope. Don't be surprised that you

are being contacted by people that you have not heard from in a while to lead a project or a gang. And the proper gang colors are so important!!! If work is your driver, this is a great time to market yourself or your services. If relationships are a little empty, you are ready to meet new people and they are ready to meet you. Your charm factor goes up considerably after the 24th. So, asking for a raise at work, seeking a new person to date, or intellectual justification for what ever you want to do functions with a great level of success than before.

**SAGITTARIUS** — Life is serious for you this month. You are really looking into your future. All choices seems to carry an extra burden of having to work out. You may get the sensation of wearing cement overshoes. And you may even fear making a choice, because it may be the wrong one. Frozen in your own mind. You may want to take a Prozac and get a clearer perspective on what is going on. And this only last for this month. By the end of the month, you are better able to see what is really good for your future life.

**CAPRICORN** — On the horizon, a ship comes ever closer to you and your island. As it finally docks, new people glide down the gangplank bringing you new friends and fresh conversation. They share their stories of far away lands and exciting cultures. Your mind is open and expansive. And you know you made the right decision to get away from it all this month. Metaphysics and philosophy embrace your contemplation's. Future paths are revealed to you. By the end of the month, you will be ready to use what you know.

**AQUARIUS** — Your relationships are going to be taken to the next level. Truth in advertising. Is what you saw advertised what you got? The universe rips off those pretty party dresses and crisp jeans and we share our warts and bunions. This is where love get real. Nothing to help with the fantasy of avoidance. And what can emerge is the real thing. You are just not interested in anything else or less. You are interested in simply being real. Be careful with this attitude at work. You do have to pay the bills for those dresses and jeans.

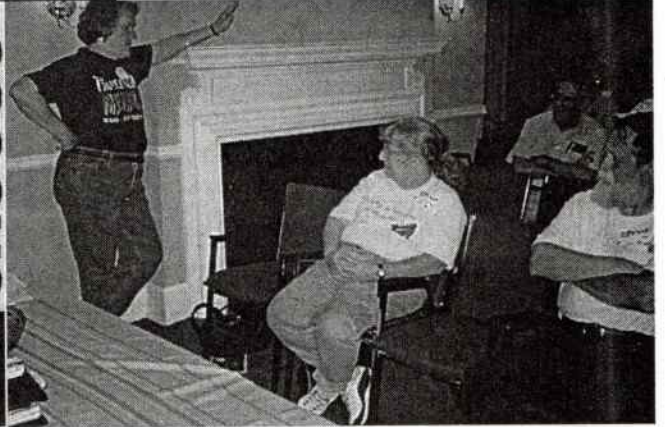
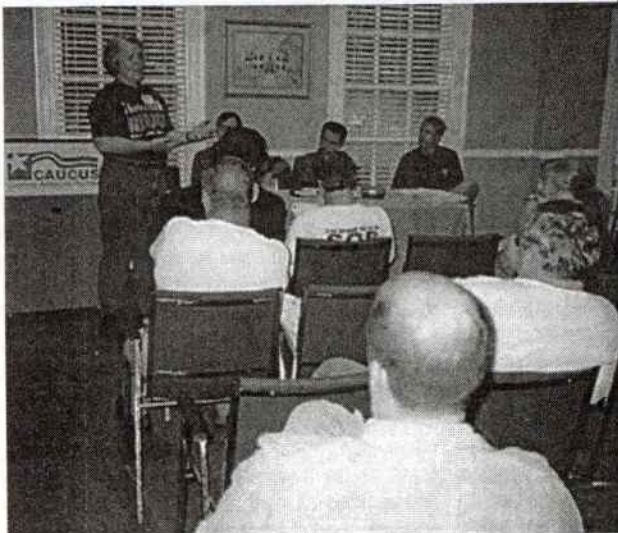
**PISCES** — Your relationship magnet is turned on this month. You will be attracting many new potential relationships and friendships this month. There is just something about you. People may not be able to put their finger on it but they may try. And maybe with more than just one finger. If you are not involved with someone special, this could bring that extraordinary person to you. If you are dissatisfied with what you have, It will have to improve or someone will be there to take their place. Best not to be alone this month. It is not best for your psychic health.

Visit Lilly Roddy's website at:  
<http://www.cybersim.com/hermes>

# TATS in Action: TATS' Eye on Phyllis Frye



At left (upper and lower) Phyllis Frye is invited to speak before the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus at August's General meeting. Pictured in Back of Phyllis are (L-R) Vice President Mike Bodin, President Sean Carter and Board Chair Scott Simpson. Below, Phyllis (L) entertains questions from the crowd as Sarah DePalma (L-R), Bill Agosto and Scott Tillinghast listen. Right, Annise Parker (C) gets a laugh from the crowd and Jackie Thorne (L) at Phyllis' (R) expense.



## EDITOR'S RANT

(Continued from Page 2)

I can still remember the sleepy little group we used to be; one that used to have attendance you could count on one or two hands. While we've made some great strides over the last two terms, I realize we need more energy to push us over the top. With so few of us who are active, and so many things that need that energy, that labor, those bodies; it behooves us to work on projects where we can maximize our efforts.

At the point I'm at now, I can do much more for the community outside of TATS rather than leading it. We got many more GLB and straight community bridges yet to build. We've got many current ones that need bolstering. And that won't be served by my being TATS' 'leader-for-life.' At some point, you have to fell the mighty tree in order for the seedlings to take root and grow tall. If there's no nurturing and replenishment of our leaders, the community dies.

One thing I did not want was for a vacuum to exist when I stepped out of my position. Rest assured, we have new leaders who are primed to step into those leadership shoes! Jessica will ably fill the position, and then some! And, with any luck, those coming on the board for the first time this year will stick around a few years and become the leaders we'll look to during the next wave for inspiration and education. And, of course, I'll still be around as the clichéd 'voice of experience'.

Thus, a new era begins.  And so it goes....

## Daily Confrontations

By Kimberly Burnham

*I think "going in" is a life-long procedure.*

The phrase "going in," though we sometimes use it to refer simply to our first experience of sexual intimacy with someone of our own gender, is a brave new world. You know when you're really in when you get your feet wet and your hands rub the inside of the pit. You will notice a strange sense of smell, and darkness. You will notice that your stuck, then come to the conclusion that the pit is a very tight womb.

We "go in" ourselves when we choose to be alone with our passions in the shower, or in the bedroom, or our own tender womb. We "go in" each time we do gay things, lesbian slurping, transgender pervertedness, or bi-sexual dicks and pits - or whatever terms we choose in creating the definitions of ourselves.

"Going in" is not something we do just once in our miserable life. Some people do it every chance we get. Discovery is not something we accomplish and complete on the first day. "Going in" is a journey over time. Our experience of it evolves and changes. It is the process of getting to know ourselves; our character. Our perceptions of assholes in our workplace is more harsh and cruel than the assholes that appear in our circle of friends. Families could be a pain in the ass, but not the loving, butt-hurting that we receive from our partners. Whatever our external circumstance, each miserable day affords us opportunities to understand, accept, and love the people we have become by "going in."

Tonight, I am going into my girlfriend's pit to understand her, and know her better. Hell, maybe I will even lick her.

**TATS Tidbits**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- TATS will have two mandatory board meetings for all officers and board members in the upcoming months. The first meeting will be Friday, Sept. 15, at 7PM at Vanessa's house. The second meeting, for all newly-elected board and officers is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 15, at 3PM.
- Dana Rivers movie in the works.... Tri-Star Telefilms will do a made for TV (no pun) movie for the Lifetime Channel examining the case of the Antelope CA teacher who tried to transition at her job and was subsequently released from her job. The show's producers are apparently serious about doing an accurate and sensitive portrayal of events. Sounds like at least cable TV is starting to 'get it.'
- Perhaps a cover up? In late July, an African American male, "about 19", was found hanging from a tree wearing women's clothing. Police stated it was definitely not a lynching, and was accidental - perhaps autoerotic in nature. However, police refused to comment on the fact the victim was gagged and handcuffed when he was found.
- Miami-Dade police have identified a man killed in southwest Dade over the weekend. The victim was Keith E. Jackson, 32, police said. Jackson was found dead in a vacant lot in southwest Miami. According to police, Jackson was a transvestite prostitute who frequented the area. The cause of death has been determined to be blunt trauma, police said. The arrest or motive have been announced. This marks the second Miami TG murder in less than three months.
- Up until now, Mayor Giuliani has dodged taking a stand on two pieces of unfinished city business concerning the LGBT community. But asked by

LGNY just after the Gay Pride March if he would support the amending the human rights law to cover transgendered people and another bill to require contractors with the city to provide domestic partner benefits, if they provide spousal benefits. The Mayor said, "I am favorably disposed" toward those bills, but said that he was looking at them and "there's not a decision yet." One would surmise, with his crossdressing past, he'd be transgender inclusive.



- **Hateful Quote of the month:** "Why, as adults, do transsexuals mutilate their bodies in order to make them conform to the fashionable version of the opposite sex and gender? That only reinforces oppressive stereotypes every bit as much as liposuction or a bimbo's boob job. If you're a man in a woman's body, then live androgynously if you're such a revolutionary. Don't conform." — *Norah Vincent in a column in 'The Advocate,' June 20.*
- **CHICAGO, Ill.** — It was in many ways a typical custody case, but there's a twist that could lead to changes in Illinois law: The boy's mother claims it is a same-sex union and the marriage is therefore not legally binding. Both members of the couple were born female, but one has been living as a man since before the marriage. The child was conceived through artificial insemination involving a donor. Illinois does not recognize same-sex marriages, so the boy's mother claims that the marriage is invalid and her partner has no legal standing in the custody case. Under the law, if two women have a child by impregnating one through artificial insemination, a court cannot grant custody or visitation to the woman who didn't carry the baby, regardless of the child's best interest. "For children of opposite-sex couples, it

is the court's duty to safeguard the best interests of their children," said attorney, Heather Sawyer. "It's absolutely appalling when the courts are unwilling to do the same for children who fall outside of that."

- **DES MOINES, Iowa** — The taunting of two "men dressed as women" in downtown Des Moines this week preceded a crash that injured five people, witnesses say. Local residents Joshua Farrell, 19, and Casey Forrester, 23, said a crowd of people were yelling threats and throwing cans at them August 22. One man hit their car with a bat. "It started out as gay bashing or transsexual bashing, whatever you want to call it," Forrester said.
- Police arrived and Farrell and Forrester pointed to a Jeep which carried the bat-wielding man, police reports said. The officer started chasing the Jeep, but it disappeared in busy downtown traffic. Minutes later, the Jeep crashed into a van, police said. Two of the injured in the van were reported in critical condition. "People think they can abuse you, and you have no recourse. In a way, they are right," said Forrester. "These people brought this on themselves when they decided to hate. And it came back on them."
- **Frasier met the President wearing Pink Panties.** So went the headlines of a recent UK article detailed by Frasier star Kelsey Grammer's ex-fiancee Tammi Alexander. According to her account, his fetish went beyond merely wearing women's underwear to include the full range of femme attire. After their breakup, and his subsequent marriage to model Camille Donatucci: Alexander referred to him as "a troubled, tortured individual." However, Alexander added, "He is not gay. He made love in the normal way. He just needed to dress up as a woman." Gee, sounds real troubled and tortured all right. Something about stereotypes and lack of acceptance comes to mind....

*(Continued on Page 15)*

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**TATS Tidbits**

(Continued from Page 14)

• PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — A physician and former Navy pilot who has served as part of the ground medical crew for NASA missions has revealed that she is a transgender lesbian preparing to undergo gender-reassignment surgery, the Dallas Voice reported. Dr. Christine McGinn, 31, has served twice as part of the team that would go into space in case of a medical emergency during a space mission. McGinn's process of coming out began in her home town of Philadelphia, where her therapy group was approached by MSNBC to create a documentary on transsexuals. Now *that's* the right stuff!

• The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) recently approved new policy statements — among them transgender issues and genetics. "NASW stands for a nonjudgmental attitude toward gender diversity and maximum support and services to those whose gender departs from the expected norm," said the new policy statement on transgender issues. "The association also encourages the repeal of laws and discriminatory practices that impede expression of gender of choice, especially in employment."

The new **NASW** policy statement on genetics "strongly encourages social workers to educate themselves any way possible about using genetics information to help clients, opposing discrimination based on genetic testing and imploring social workers to advocate for genetic testing so all clients can be tested." The policy statements are

used to guide NASW in taking stands on issues and for practitioners to use in making decisions.

• WASHINGTON DC — A neat little article spotlighted the Samaritan House homeless shelter on Capitol Hill. The shelter, part of a nationwide organization sponsored by the Catholic Charities, has always made a point of housing the homeless transgender population. It got a bit of press because unfortunately its far too uncommon to find. One of the nagging issues that has never truly been addressed is the widespread unemployment and accompanying homelessness among the TG community nationwide. Bravo to the Catholic Charities for having the foresight and courage to tackle the issue head on!

• SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Puerto Rico's Supreme Court has ruled to allow a man who had a sex change operation to change the gender on his birth certificate to female. A dissenting judge warned that it could set a precedent for same-sex marriages in the U.S. Caribbean territory.

Alexandra (formerly Andres) Andino Torres filed with the courts beginning in 1995, nearly 20 years after the sexual reassignment surgery, to change the

name and gender on her birth certificate. The lower courts approved legally changing the name, but had denied changing the gender on the record.

• LONDON, UK — Helicopter pilot, Lt. Eric Cookson, has become the first transsexual in the Royal Air Force, a defense ministry spokesman announced late Sunday. The 39-year-old pilot now known as Caroline 'Caz' Paige, is on sick leave after undergoing SRS that she paid for herself, the spokesman said.

Asked how his peers in the RAF were handling the transition, the former fighter pilot stated that "they have been very supportive and loyal." Contrast that to the U.S., where Air Force is currently ready to go to court to keep longtime vet, Jeri Mangers, from simply transitioning on the job. So vast a difference....

• Transsexuals may soon be allowed to marry and adopt children... in Great Britain, that is. Home Secretary Jack Straw aims to change the law so the 5,000 people in Britain who have undergone sex-change operations can have their new gender legally recognized. The plans would allow transsexuals to inherit family titles and property. The Government decided to back the move after surveys found many people supported transsexuals who wish to marry.

• Is that a kilt or a dress?! Scottish authorities are up in arms over what they term a 'sex change website.' The West Lothian Transgender Support Group recently put up a simple website to announce their group meetings — simple text, no photos, maybe a chat room. However, members of parliament and church leaders condemned the site, fretting that the group will publish "indecent material online." Jeez, take a tranquilizer, guys!

(Continued on Page 16)



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**TATS Tidbits**

(Continued from Page 15)

- Saudi Arabia publicly beheaded three Yemenis convicted of sodomy and transvestism. They were also found guilty of same-sex marriage and luring young boys into performing sexual acts with them, the Saudi Interior Ministry said.
- According to information received by Amnesty International, Jose Luis Nieves, a transgendered person known as "Dayana," was killed July 29 by two men in her room in Valencia in the Venezuelan coastal state of Carabobo. At the time, she was still suffering from pellet wounds sustained during an earlier shooting by a state police officer.
- BRETORTON UK — Drinkers flocking to a beer festival expecting a massive party were confronted by five cross-dressers who sparked a brawl. Fists flew as one of the five - all wearing frocks and wigs - was accused of stealing a wallet in the crush for the bar. He insisted he had nowhere to hide it, then lifted his dress leaving little to the imagination. "When the man lifted his skirt it was not a sight for the squeamish," said witness Paul Rencher. "The blokes in women's clothes were not real transvestites - just a group of lads who were doing it as a dare." Must've been the Jerry Springer Show's traveling troupe visiting England.... [insert male 'barking' here]
- Grandmother Kathy Jager will not get back the medals she won at Gateshead, it was revealed. The 56-year-old was at the center of a sex change scandal during the Veteran World Championships when rivals accused her of being a man. She passed a sex test but was later suspended for two years for taking an artificial hormone.

USA Track and Field has since accepted that the methyl testosterone found in a blood test taken was in medicine she takes to help her cope with the menopause. However, the gold medals and world records in the 100 and 200 meters and the three other medals she won at the event will not be returned. "In the U.S., they felt they had some responsibility for the lack of education," Ms. Jager said. "The rules were there and I was a victim of circumstance." Go, granny. Go.

- MELBOURNE, Australia — Trans rights are being attacked in the Australian state of Victoria. Transgenders were delighted last year at state Attorney General Rob Hulls' introduction of a bill protecting their civil rights. However, a Christian fundamentalist group called the Salt Shakers has begun a scare campaign, writing to all the state legislators with a warning the bill would protect pedophiles who could disguise themselves as women in order to attack girls in public bathrooms.
- New Zealand's Transsexual Parliament Member, Georgina Beyer, was brought to tears when named "Supreme Queen of the Year" at the Queen of the Year Awards 2000. Awards organizer Marc van Moorsel said Ms Beyer was a deserving and gracious winner of one of the top awards.
- Can you live on £21 a week? That's what Britain's most widely known transsexual is up against. April Ashley, is the transsexual pioneer who, after having SRS in 1960, at one time was wedded to Arthur Corbett - heir to Lord Rowallan. Sadly, her marriage lasted only twelve days before her hubby then sued her for not being a woman. Now 65 and living in San Diego CA, Ashley was recently in the U.K. to address lawmakers and hopefully amend her paltry government pension to a more livable amount.

**DIRECTIONS TO THE SEPT. 9 MEETING:**

**GALVESTON BEACH PARTY!**

Follow I-45 into Galveston and stay on that road - which becomes Broadway once the freeway ends. Follow Broadway until it ends at the far side of Galveston at the ferry to Bolivar Point. Take the ferry across Galveston Bay. When offloading from the ferry, check your odometer. The house will be almost exactly 6 miles from the ferry landing. Turn right on Magnolia Street. (they will have a sign saying "GCTC" on the gulf side of the road at Magnolia.) Go about 1/2 mile: The house is on the left - a yellow house between a blue house and a green house. (Note: it's the second yellow house on the left.) A sign that says "Gulf Coast Transgender Community" is posted at the driveway.

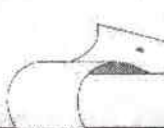
**Bert met Chet at the diner, and told him, "Would you believe I just burned a thousand-dollar bill?"**

**"Gee whiz," said Chet, "I envy your success."**

**"What success? It was easier to burn it than to pay it!"**



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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support ●

Volume 8, Issue 10

Houston, Texas

October, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## DR. LAURA VIGIL DRAWS 82 PARTICIPANTS

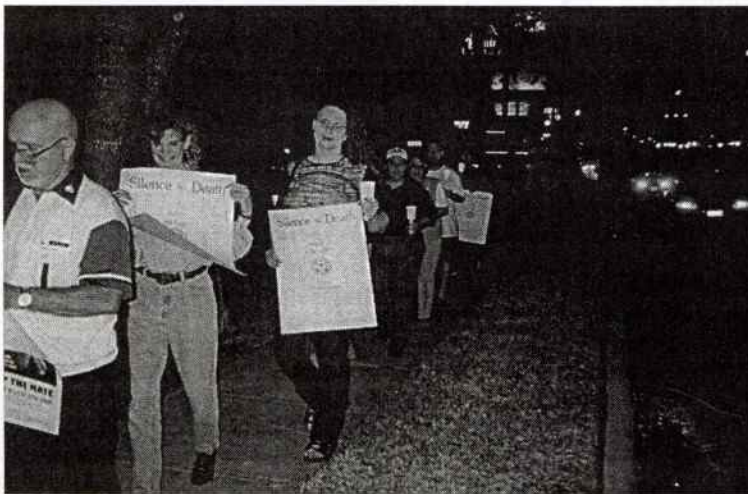
By Vanessa Edwards Foster

For the second time in two months, the GLBT community responded in pro-active fashion to the ever-controversial Dr. Laura Show. The newest show, airing on NBC's local affiliate KPRC-Channel 2, is the latest of the politically incorrect, conservative-speak talk shows in the vein of Rush Limbaugh, et al.

Organized by the Equality Rally Team, and its organizer Dan DiDonato (in concert with John Selig's Stop Dr. Laura.com), the rally was definitely a success.

"This is wonderful," a proud Dan DiDonato gushed as he looked out over the participants. "I'm really happy with the turnout tonight!" With good reason: This, the fifth installment of the Equality Rally's protests and vigils, is one of the more successful ones yet. Overall, 82 participants showed up for the vigil.

Some of the GLB notables included pioneer activist, Ray Hill, and the newest activist stalwarts, Tamara Jones of MCCR and her spouse Lynne



Walking the line: picketers line up and march in front of the KPRC studios the evening of Sept. 2, as Kimberly Burnham (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) and Cristan Williams bear signs of "Silence = Death", and a list of TG victims of violence.

Huffer of Rice University, Jim Duke, Dr. Tony Carroll and Dr. Bruce Smith, Caucus Board Chair, Scott Simpson, Roger Donley and Blake Weisser of PFLAG Houston, Ed Lane, Tom Wilson and René Rodriguez, Ricky 'Rainbo DeKlown' Hurt and photographer Dalton DeHart. Transgenders showed up in numbers as well, with CATS'

Cristan Williams, Melanie Black, Kimberly Burnham and Sheila Appleton all joining this author at the event. Of course, rally organizer Dan DiDonato was there as well.

One of the most striking distinctions about this rally was the participation by those outside of the GLBT community! This is where Tamara Jones came through in a big way: MCCR sent a large contingent from its Social Justice Ministry. It was wonderful to see such a cross-section that cut across all ethnic, gender and sexual orientation lines. Even numerous kids participated!

Although KPRC had hired security to ensure we did not step on station property (and perhaps intimidate the ralliers), the crowd was undeterred.

At one point, press photographer Dalton DeHart was given a threat of a trespassing charge by the security officers when he stepped a few feet into the parking lot in order to get a better angle for a new photo. This evoked a bit of grumbling from the crowd, including a rather vocal

(Continued on Page 5)



### TATS AT THE BEACH!

Amber 'Pat' Sidwell (L) and Jessica Redman stroll into the cool waters of the gulf on a weekend getaway to Point Bolivar for the annual TG Beach Party, Sept. 9. Temps in the low 90's made for a nice cool day at the beach!

See Details, Page 7

### MEETING SCHEDULE

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| October 14  | Feelings Meeting at:<br>Transgender Community Ctr. @ 3 PM |
| October 28  | Social Meeting at:<br>Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM     |
| November 11 | Feelings Meeting at:<br>To be Announced @ 3 PM            |
| November 25 | Social Meeting at:<br>Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM     |

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*Newsletter Editor*

**TATS Board Members**

Monica Roberts

Vikki Lynn Skelton

Alicia Beckman



**HOW TO REACH US:**

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (832) 483-9901 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.geocities.com/tatspage>

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**D**o you ever get to where you can't even think of anything to write? Well, I'm kinda sorta there. This month I really haven't had time to sit down and really write anything – at least not beyond the regular 'news' type articles. What's that old saying, "the faster I go, the behinder I get?" Somehow that fits.

Anyway, the one thing I really had in mind for the editorial had to do with activism and voting, however, it wouldn't fit into this small a space, and I didn't feel like expanding the newsletter two full pages in order to accommodate my rant. We have plenty of editorials on a regular basis, and mine can surely wait. Besides, next month it'll be a bit more appropriate.

As for the subject of voting, I do hope every one of our members is registered to vote, and takes advantage of it! I can't stress how important this is. One reason I implore you to vote is that I would like to take an exit poll after the elections have finished. I'm not going to do it by standing outside of the polling places (far too spotty and unlikely to garner more than one or two TG opinions.) What I'm going to do is pass out a survey to fill out afterwards. One of the problems the national TG community has always faced is that we have no defined numbers: no surveys, no polls, no research... nada when it comes to defining our population. We're going to have to take this into our own hands and do our own surveys. I'm currently working on a confidential survey to do just that.

An additional reason I wanted to cover the subject of voting was the natural segue into our own TATS elections, just recently passed. We have new officers and board who will need all of our help. Judging from the vote turnout, we're in not in good shape. (See accompanying article next column.) Let's hope we get our collective act in gear!

**Up to her butt in more than just salt water, your editor... stranded in a sea of writer's block!**



**TATS ELECTIONS USHERS IN NEW OFFICERS, BOARD**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

TATS held its annual elections for the board term 2000 – 2001 on September 23 at Vanessa's. Turnout was surprisingly light with only seven eligible voters casting ballots in this election.

There were only two contested races when the ballots were closed for entrants, however one candidate for vice president – yours truly – declined to seek a dual seat of both editor and vice-president, and conceded the vice-presidential race to Melanie Black.

None of the remaining officers' positions were contested, and thus all were elected to office. Jessica Redman, former board member of both GCTC and TATS was elected to take over the reigns as president. As mentioned earlier, former TATS board member Melanie Black was elected as vice president, and incumbent secretary / treasurer Sarah Jane Connell was re-elected for her second term. As noted earlier, yours truly will be continuing editorial duties for a fourth term.

The only contested race of the evening was for the three vacant board seats – of which four were seeking office. Of those four, only one – Monica Roberts – was an incumbent board member seeking re-election to that position.

With only seven votes cast, two of the nominees received unanimous votes: Vikki Lynn Skelton (who has really put a lot of effort into community events this year with her work on the Pride Parade, the Unity Banquet and the Unity Committee, etc.); and Alicia Nicole Beckman (who has really worked her heart out pushing the newsletter and seeking out new advertisers for /TATS' newsletter.) The last position was decided by a 4 – 3 vote, with incumbent board member (and member of the NTAC board as well) Monica Roberts eking out Robin Lynn Babin. Congratulations to all those who ran for positions on the TATS board – we appreciate all your efforts over the year(s).

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

Anne Casebeer, Louisville KY  
Sharon Marie, New York NY  
Katrina C. Rose, Albert Lea MN

Lilly Roddy

Cristan Williams  
Vikki Lynn Skelton  
Cairistona Douglas

*for submitting humor*

Kimberly Burnham  
Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV

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# SUPREME COURT REFUSES TO HEAR LITTLETON CASE

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Shock blanketed the nation's transgender community at the news that the United States Supreme Court had refused to hear the case of Littleton v. Prange. The appeal to the highest court in the nation of the case of a 20-year post-operative transsexual suing her husband's treating physician for malpractice, has come to its terminus. Unfortunately for transgenders in the state of Texas and elsewhere, it was not a favorable outcome.

In a rather terse Email, TATS member Phyllis Frye – one of the attorneys of note on the Littleton case – vented a bit of anger. "Everyone in the U.S. who is transsexual or who is intersexed plus all of our spouses, future spouses, children and future children have an attackable legal sex, an attackable marital status, and an attackable parental status!"

What does this mean for the transgender community? "The conservative legal gatekeepers now have the Supreme Court's pass to allow them to try to export the published Littleton decision to every state and country that they wish." So claimed a rather pained Phyllis, who admitted to feeling like "an old horse who has been ridden into the ground, put up wet and left unfed."

Response to the Supreme Court's October 2 decision ranged from loudly indignant to subdued.



Christi Lee Littleton and her husband Jonathan Littleton in much happier times: At left, at their wedding reception, Jonathan cuts the first piece of cake for the newly wedded couple. At right, horsing around in a San Antonio park, in the days of wedded bliss.



"We must not consider giving up!!!" screamed Melanie Black. "We didn't say a word for, like, an hour. We were just in shock."

TATS' Katrina Rose. "We must keep after cases such as Gardiner and others to come to make sure that they have competent representation (unlike Ms. Littleton's pre-Phyllis Frye, pre-Alyson Meiselman counsel.)"

According to Phyllis' post, civil rights attorney of note on the case, Alyson Meiselman of suburban DC, cried for hours before calling Phyllis here in Houston. Both attorneys had spent considerable time working on the case, at an average of "\$3 an hour."

"When Chris and I heard about it, we just sat around staring at the walls," stated TATS Vice President,



Again, this is yet another period of mourning for Christi Lee Littleton; the almost-forgotten protagonist in this situation. Obviously, the disinterest shown by the nation's highest court leaves her bereft of spirit. It's just a final reminder of the final nail driven in the coffin that was once her marriage – a perfectly legal marriage at the time, or so it seemed.

It's also yet another knife in the heart of transgenders throughout this country; whom the government, the legal system, and those complicit in desiring to keep us "not human" are hoping will be the wound that finally kills us. The new millennium is just beginning, and our futures are looking bleak.

# LOCAL YOUTH BOOTED OUT OF COVENANT HOUSE

By Cristan Williams

I want to thank everyone for their concern about the 19 year old female Trans youth (male to female) that was forceably ejected out of Covenant House because she was Transgendered. Here is an update:

State Representative Deborah Danburg's office phoned us about this issue. She will contact Covenant House to express her outrage. She has agreed to give our community an open letter to shelters expressing her support for a shelter which will house Transgender individuals.

C.A.T.S. spoke with Covenant House Friday. We spoke with an individual who wanted to remain nameless for fear of losing her job. The individual told us that, "I was glad that this issue was getting this attention." The Covenant House employee went on to say that this issue has been a problem for quite a long time.

We also spoke with their public relations official who said that she would like the Transgender community educate their staff about these issues.

During our conversation with the Public Relations officer, the 19 year old youth was constantly referred to a "he" and "him". We were informed that it is their policy to force their clients to conform to the gender stereotypes that are imposed upon their birth sex. She said that "his manner of dress was an issue... it was disruptive." She also asked us if the 19 year old's breasts were "real."

At this point we inquired about their policy dealing with intersexed individuals. We also confronted her with the fact that it is the policy of all Covenant Houses around the world to find shelter for their ejected clients regardless of offense (theft, fights, drugs, etc.) In this case, the youth was transgendered, ejected and Covenant House made no effort to find other shelter.

We let her know that Annise Parker, Deborah Danburg, the City of Houston and the Covenant House headquarters in New York had been made aware of their actions. We also told her that the Houston Voice and the Texas Triangle were doing a piece on the youth and that OutSmart magazine as well as the Houston Press had expressed interest.

We were told that the technical reason for her ejection was that the individual had avoided getting a physical examination. She said that it is the policy of Covenant House to have every client submit to the exams. "Apparently 'he' [she] was uncomfortable with our staff, all 'he' [she] had to do was see someone at the Montrose Clinic..."

We informed her that the youth was told that she would be ejected if her breasts were not "real". We asked her to respond to the accusation of coercive tactics that were allegedly used to keep this issue from coming to light. "After Brenda Thomas contacted your organization about your policies concerning Transgenders, the youth in question

was told that if anyone else contacted Covenant House about their policies concerning Transgenders, 'he' would be ejected." The Public Relations individual expressed surprise and said that she could not imagine who would have said that.

C.A.T.S. learned from Houston Area Teenagers Coalition of Homosexuals (HATCH) that they had a member that was staying at this Covenant House not too long ago. This youth was a female to male (FTM) transsexual whose manner completely masculine. This point was made when one board member said, "I couldn't imagine him being a girl."

Covenant House forced this youth to wear a dress. The youth lasted about a week, disappeared and has not been heard from.

The 19 year old youth is doing well, safe and temporarily supported at Judy Reeves' sister's home. She went on a job interview Friday and has a follow-up Monday. She is eager to get her GED and get on with her life, though we have yet to find a shelter anywhere in Houston that will take a Transgendered youth regardless of monetary resources.

Please contact Covenant House and let them know how you feel about this!

Covenant House Texas, 1111 Lovett Blvd., Houston, TX 77006-3898. Ronda Robinson is the Director and Douglas E. Swanson is the Chairman.

# IN PRAISE OF HRC – SORT OF...

By Katrina C. Rose

A few weeks back, I ended a column with several examples of seeming impossibilities that not only are possible, but also did, in fact, happen.

To refresh your memory, I hypothesized that if ABC could hire Dennis Miller as a Monday Night Football commentator or if Bush could do something as stupid as call a reporter a "major league asshole" in front of an open microphone and then only apologize for getting caught, then anything – including Doktor Laura being an alien cyborg – is possible.

Here's another: If Katrina Rose can write a column in praise of the Human Rights Campaign....

First, a caveat: until that organization not only admits its true role in the anti-transgender wing of the civil rights movement but also unequivocally repudiates its ENDA anti-inclusion stance and begins to support TG inclusion in ENDA will I ever speak positively of the organization. In fact, I will continue to stand by my characterization of it as a cesspool of transphobia.

Of course, that doesn't mean that no HRC-oid has ever done anything worthwhile.

If you haven't heard by now, several HRC employees – Wayne Besen, Daryl Herschaft and Ryan Obermiller – are responsible for exposing John Paulk, the well-known Focus on the Family –ite who claims to be an ex-gay, as being what all human beings with even one functioning brain cell have always been able to tell that he is simply by looking at him: not an ex-gay.

By now you've seen reports concerning Paulk's admitting to being in Mr. P's, a D.C. gay bar on Tuesday, Sept. 19. That night, Herschaft spotted Paulk in the bar about 10 PM and chatted

him up long enough for Besen – camera in hand – and Obermiller to arrive.

Paulk claims that he wandered into the gay bar to use the bathroom.

Besen said, "I didn't know that using the bathroom involved 40 minutes of socializing in a bar and offering drinks to strangers." It doesn't. Then again, I guess that does depend on the bathroom – and what you like to do in it. (Perhaps George Michael could offer some insight into that, eh?) But according to the report, it was neither a bad case of 'come on, ice cream' constipation nor a Michael-ean toilet troll but, was, indeed, John socializing and drink buying.

For over half an hour.

John – not his alter ego, Ms. Candi.

"I asked him if he was gay," said Herschaft, "and he said 'yes.'"

Perhaps. But, I've long asserted that John Paulk should not be categorized as an ex-gay but, rather, as a transsexual in denial. A year or so ago I issued a challenge to Paulk: "You're not dead yet. You can stop living your lie – and preaching your lies – and be the real you. According to the pictures I've seen, Ms. Candi is quite beautiful."

Had Ms. Candi, rather than John, been out and about, do you really think that the visit would have been noticed? John's face is well-known, particularly by those who work to combat the fraud that is the ex-gay movement. Candi's, however, arguably is not.

The HRC-ers found 'him' in a gay bar, not 'her.'

Ms. Candi should have listened to Ms. Kat.

Of course, let's not forget another 'her.' Anne Paulk. Yes, aside from the blockbuster political significance of Mr. Exodus's visit to Mr. P's, there's likely a broken-hearted little allegedly-ex-

lesbian wife back at home in Focus on the Family Land.

Or perhaps, there's an allegedly-ex-lesbian back there who is royally pissed over seeing her meal ticket punched.

First it was Ellen and Anne. Then Melissa and Julie.

Now, one can assume that it will be John and Anne.

Can you imagine what their divorce trial might be like? Jeez – I bet I could pay off all of my student loans just from representing either side.

Hmmm... and which side might I want to lie for, er... argue on behalf of: a transsexual in denial whose primary source of income for the last several years has been the hawking of a fraudulent non-cure for homosexuality or a woman who claims to be an ex-lesbian who is still hawking that same fraudulent non-cure?

Yecccc! Gary Gilmore's two choices were more palatable than either of those.

Maybe unemployment wasn't so bad after all. Or maybe not.

In all seriousness, believe it or not I truly do not enjoy repeatedly slamming HRC in this column. But, inclusion in ENDA is as much of a life-or-death proposition for many transgendered people as freedom from enforced reparative therapy is for many GLBT young people. As long as HRC maintains a bigoted, anti-inclusion political stance toward transgendered people, I shall slam them.

However, when folks involved with HRC pull off a coup such as catching John Paulk in a gay bar with his cure down, I am willing to give said HRC-ers a great big 'atta-boy!'

Now guys, about that ENDA thing....

## MADISON, WISCONSIN PASSES GENDER IDENTITY PROTECTIONS

The Madison, Wisconsin Common Council on September 19 agreed by voice vote without opposition to add "gender identity" as a category protected under the city's equal opportunities ordinance, becoming the first municipality in the state to do so. Not only did no one on the Council object, but no one else either testified or registered in opposition, while four activist groups and four high school students spoke in support, one citizen read a letter from a transgendered person afraid to be publicly identified, and forty-six others registered in support. Now transgendered share with lesbians, gays, bisexuals and others legal protection from discrimination in employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and city facilities.

The bill to amend the equal opportunities ordinance was introduced last month by gay Alderman Mike Verwee and seven of the other nine Aldermen had signed on as co-sponsors by the time the bill came to a vote. Groups urging the move included the civil service employee group, Pride in Wisconsin Government, Outreach: Madison's

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Center; the GLBT civil rights group Action Wisconsin; and the transgender group It's Time, Wisconsin! which is in the final stages of preparing a report on gender identity discrimination in the state.

The equal opportunities ordinance will now define gender identity as "the actual or perceived condition, status or acts of 1) identifying emotionally or psychologically with the sex other than one's biological or legal sex at birth, whether or not there has been a physical change of the organs of sex; 2) presenting and/or holding oneself out to the public as a member of the biological sex that was not one's biological or legal sex at birth; 3) lawfully displaying physical characteristics and/or behavioral characteristics and/or expressions which are widely perceived as being more appropriate to the biological or legal sex that was not one's biological or legal sex at birth, as when a male is perceived as feminine or a female is perceived as masculine; and/or 4) being physically and/or behaviorally androgynous."

## TG Police Capt. in NY Transferred

Contributed by Sharon Marie

A Manhattan police captain was quietly transferred to another borough after fellow cops spotted him wearing a woman's wig and a dress, sources said. The "very embarrassed" captain, supervisor of a specialized patrol command, offered to resign – but police brass decided there was no legitimate reason to drop him from the force after nearly 20 years.

The late March incident occurred in an area notorious for its 'transvestite' traffic. Two on-duty cops parked in a squad car noticed another parked vehicle that they suspected was an unmarked police car. Thinking they may have been under surveillance by Internal Affairs, they circled around the block and came up on the other car, got out and asked the driver to produce identification. The driver was dressed as a woman, with wig and dress.

The cops were unsure of what they were dealing with – and suspicious. They thought he might be a man, he might be a woman. After the cops determined he was, in fact, a captain, they left – but reported what they saw to their superiors. An internal investigation determined that the captain was off-duty and using a car assigned to him – and had broken no rules.

**DR. LAURA VIGIL DRAWS 82....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

response from Ray Hill.

"This is the press!!! You have no legal right to do that!!!" spat Hill, the granddaddy of the local queer rights movement. "You punks don't know the law!!! You better learn it before you start making claims like that!!!" Ray barked, as the chastised guards retreated to their original positions. "This is a freedom of the press issue!!!"

This talk show is a bit distinctive in that it styles itself as somewhat of a psychological, self-help type advice show. The main issue, though is that this is filtered through the eyes of Dr. Laura Schlesinger – host of the show bearing her name. The term 'Doctor' Laura is a bit misleading – she is actually a doctorate in philosophy, not in psychology.

"One of the reasons I'm out here is that she does a great disservice to the profession of counseling," stated Tony Carroll, LMSW – himself a licensed therapist. Attending with his spouse, Dr. Bruce Smith, Carroll mused with astonishment how Schlesinger "spreads all this innuendo and crap... and puts it forth as fact. She really has no professional [credentials] to render these opinions."

In contrast to the previous Dr. Laura protest, this edition didn't attract quite the traffic the last one managed. We didn't have quite the same freeway frontage visibility this time out. Another reason was the timing – a Sunday evening at dinner time instead of noon during the work week.

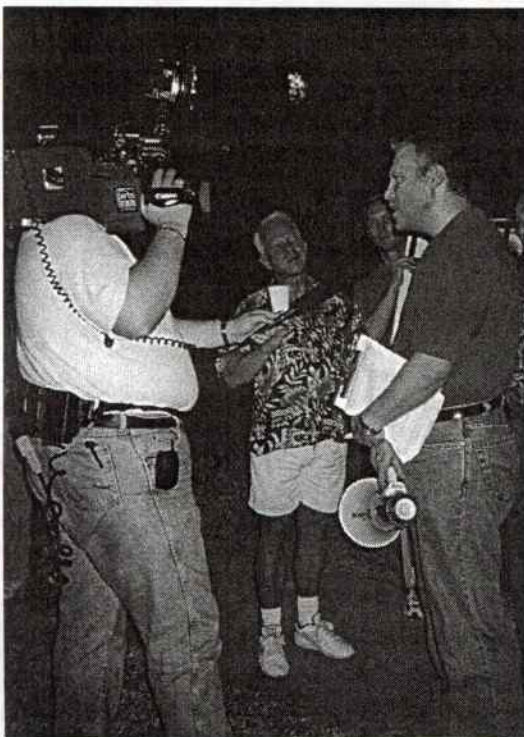


Above, a panoramic view of the line at the candlelight vigil in front of Channel 2. At right, the CATS crew (L-R) Melanie Black, Sheila Appleton, Cristan Williams and Kimberly Burnham stand resolutely against hate.

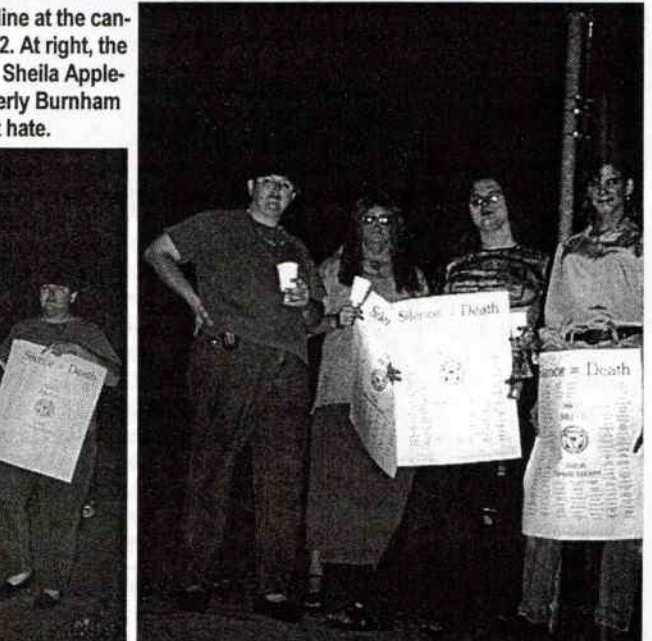


Above, PFLAG's Blake Weiser (L-R) and Roger Donley, and TATS / CATS' Melanie Black march in the evening vigil in front of NBC's KPRC.

At left: Dan DiDonato (R) with bullhorn in hand, is interviewed by TV News crews from NBC's Channel 2, and also ABC's affiliate, KTRK-Channel 11.



At Right: a pleased group of organizers and marchers stop for a photo at the end of the Dr. Laura vigil. (L-R) Sheila Appleton, Equality Team founder Dan DiDonato, Equality boardmember Vanessa Edwards Foster, Jim Duke, Equality organizers Tamara Jones and Lynne Huffer, and CATS president Cristan Williams are all smiles after the candlelight vigil.



However, the cover of darkness lent a more somber feel to this rally. To begin with, it allowed usage of our props – the candles. Watching the protest line march by in solemn determination lent an air of other-worldliness to the event. Protest of the invisible....

However, it was still a protest rally, and it did not lose the original intent for us to be there: the chance to make our voices heard.

Perhaps the best line of the night was when Kimberly Burnham summed up the situation most succinctly, when she grabbed the bullhorn and queried "Do we really need another talk show?!"

Considering all the damage and misrepresentations from some of this ilk of 'entertainment', definitely not!



# A Candid Interview With Karen Kerin

By Anne Casebeer

**K**aren Kerin is a pioneer. She attended the first TG lobbying effort in the early 1990s, is a cancer survivor, and a very out TS. She is also the nominee of the Republican Party for the at-large Congressional seat from Vermont. It is presently held by the Congress' only independent, Bernie Sanders, who is Kerin's main opponent. Sanders, who over the years has made little secret of being an avowed socialist, has been considered a friend of GLB legislation in the past, having been a co-sponsor of ENDA. Should the TG voters of Vermont choose Karen Kerin over Bernie Sanders? Read and consider what she has to say.

AC: Karen, I've spent quite a bit of time studying your web site (<http://www.kerin2000.org>), as well as the web sites for your opponent, incumbent Rep. Bernie Sanders (<http://www.bernie.org>). Commendably, both of you have kept to issues, primarily issues affecting Vermont directly, at least online. On what specific issues of interest to our community do you feel that you and Rep. Sanders differ most?

KK: I favor using existing structures for addressing prescription medicine costs for the elderly and handicapped. Mr. Sanders favors price controls, importation of foreign drugs and socialized medicine. I am willing to include a benefit in medicare, but it must have funding provided from outside the medicare trust funds or the Old Age or Disability trust funds.

I am opposed to gun control. Vermont has few laws concerning firearms, does not have any significant gun violence and Vermonters have been opposed to gun control. I think it is important that a representative reflect the positions of the electorate. From a personal perspective, I am pleased to be able to provide protection for myself and my spouse by having firearms available in our house and vehicles. Far too many victims of hate crimes have been unarmed in their own homes and unable to defend themselves. Self-sufficiency is an important component of self respect. Waiting for help and justice does not sit well with an active person like myself.

The Administrative Procedures Act, both federally and in Vermont, provides a huge grant of power to agencies to create rules and regulations with the full force and effect of law, without legislative review and ratification.

It is via this mechanism that much of the dissatisfaction with government comes. I would insist on amending the act to require review and ratification, and would amend further the standard for legal review from a mere rational basis test to a burden shifting that requires government to prove the law, rule or regulation serves an important government interest. Mr. Sanders is happy to let government bureaucrats make law because that fits the Marxist model.

AC: If you were speaking to a TG audience, asking for votes, what justification other than being TG yourself would you give the audience to vote for

you instead of Sanders?

KK: I do not ordinarily address a TG audience in recent years, but since I have done that on the radio several times recently, the answer is easy. I would tell them the same thing I tell everyone else. I want to represent all the citizens of Vermont, not just special interests. I would remind them that protected classes have not proven to be constructive and that a comprehensive equal rights law/amendment should replace all the protected class legal structure. The thrust of equal rights would be to judge purely on the merits without extrinsic evidence. Lack of work would be the only other justification for lay off. My principle concern must be my constituents in Vermont, but hand in glove with that comes the duty to create good national law, which in the long run benefits my constituents as well.

Being trained as an engineer, I am particularly skilled at problem solving. Having earned law degrees, I know the pitfalls and can more readily construct law that does not violate Constitutional commands. Since fairness is our goal, there is no need to seek interests in excess of equality.

AC: Karen, you are running for a national office, one where national and international policy is debated daily, and taxpayers' money is divided between the government agencies. You've been a trans-activist for many years now, and attended the first Lobby Days in 1995. Do you believe that your experiences as a lobbyist have helped train you for service in the Congress?

KK: To a very limited degree it has been helpful in getting to know many congressmen and state legislators. What has been far more effective in training me for the work is listening and observing all the people who have problems with government or as the result of government policies. Skills I have gained from legal training in dispute resolution and international law give me a clearer set of goals and objectives to enter into discussions. My



Candidate Karen Kerin

environmental law training compliments my technological skills. With respect to the funding of agencies, I would apply the same test as noted for the Administrative Procedures Act and require the agency to show that

each budget item serves an important government purpose. If an item is not up to the test, I would disallow that line item for funding. As for experiences, I have long been a breaker of barriers. That is perhaps the greatest gift I can offer. Breaking the barrier between our government and our community is vital. After me, it will be far easier for others.

AC: Karen, most Congressmen specialize in certain areas of policy; in what areas do you feel you're most expert?

KK: Finance, international relations, judiciary, health and human services, the environment and military affairs come immediately to mind. I would like to see a technology committee, but there is not such a genuine committee.

AC: What committees would you like to be assigned to, and why?

KK: All of those mentioned above have appeal as they are the ones that most bear on the lives of people. They affect taxes, the course of war or peace, the efficacy of law, the well-being of the people, the health of our biosphere, the safety of the nation and the world, and if we had a technology committee, the advancement of society in real terms.

AC: Karen, I must ask a somewhat personal question, one that has become an issue in your campaign. The June 6 Montpelier/Barre Times-Argus ran an article that called into question the circumstances of your transition. In that article, you were quoted as saying that it was as a result of cancer treatments, which was questioned by your ex-wife. You're among friends here, people who are themselves transgendered, and who understand the complicated issues involved. Without getting too personal, how would you describe the circumstances of your transition to those of us who are TG? Why did this confusion develop?

KK: Last question first will help to clarify things. My ex refused to even talk to my doctors and therefore continues to believe as she does that I never even had cancer. The reporter who wrote the original story after talking with her was provided with access to my local doctor who confirmed my cancer predating SRS by nearly three years after he published her story. The reporter never corrected the record, despite repeated attempts to get him to do so. He wanted to talk to the surgeons involved and I refused because that is not desired by the surgeons involved and potentially invites difficulties for those TG's who helped me when I was very ill. I had surgery on June 11, 1992 to remove a tumor in the crux of the bronchi on the left side. The frozen section indicated positive for lymphoma, a cancer that is post-surgically treatable with chemotherapy or

(Continued on Page 8)



A TG Pioneer in Washington: Karen Kerin (L) shakes hands with her congressman, Sen. Jim Jeffords of VT after visiting him with Phyllis Frye (R)

# BEACH BLAST IN GALVESTON!

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

It was another well attended beach party down on the gulf! A sizable portion of TATS members made it to Bolivar Peninsula to partake in another GCTC-sponsored beach blast: Sheila Appleton, Melanie Black, Dianne Boucher, Barbara Ann Gaudet, Terri Lynn Hall, Jenifer Rene Pool, Jessica Redman, Mary Michelle Robinson, Amber Sidwell, Vikki Lynn Skelton, Nicole Sweet, Rose Wall, Cristan Williams and yours truly.

After the summer we had, we needed it! Most of the season, we entertained the blazing heat; hovering around 110° just a week before. However, the rain cooled things down the day before the Sept. 9 party. Even though it was in the low 90's, it actually



Above: group photo time on the deck; kneeling are Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) and Jessica Redman, and (L-R) Nicole Sweet, Jackie Thorne, Barbara Ann Gaudet, Jo Ann Bond, Mary Michelle Robinson, Dianne Boucher, Amber 'Pat' Sidwell, Sarah Jane Connell, Cristan Williams and Melanie Black. Above right, Rose Wall holds onto her hat in the breezy surf, as Vanessa below her does likewise. At left, the beach bunnies (L-R) Jackie, Amber, Vanessa and Jessica take a breather from frolicking in the surf, and below that, Amber and Jessica pose for the camera.

seemed chilly on the beach! The water was even cooler! About the only down side was that the weather turned the sand into a muddy mess, and washed lots of trash onshore.

About the only thing this author would have changed would have been to have had more time out there – a 4:30 meeting back in Houston and a dinner group following the meeting prevented me from spending more than an hour or so at the coast. Still in all, it afforded all a chance



to show off the new bikinis – or display the old ones again. For those who didn't make it this time, perhaps next year... and another chance to get that oh-so-desired 'bikini tan line!' 'Til next year, keep them coconuts, hot dogs and oysters well hidden. Banzai!



Whoops!



At Left: Vikki Lynn Skelton makes like a bathing beauty and catches some sun in her beach chair. Above: Vanessa in a photo that really had no business ever being taken ... seems like someone needs a new bikini top! At right: Vanessa decides it was fun and heads back out to the surf to try it again.



## INTERVIEW WITH KAREN KERIN

(Continued from Page 6)

radiation or a combination of both. Four days later, as I was preparing to be discharged on the following day, the doctors informed me that the final pathology disclosed the cancer was carcinoid. That is a crude cancer that is unresponsive to post surgical treatments and must be excised. They told me they needed to remove my lung. They did so on June 17, 1992.

The upshot of that discovery led to me having a tour of the oncology wards to see the result for men with similar tumors below the diaphragm, involving the reproductive and waste system. I had 34 such tumors of small size due to hormone treatment to suppress potential prostate cancer development. It was determined by the experts that SRS would avoid any need for the radical surgery that most men face. As I was already on massive hormones and had been anticipating a reclusive life, this was very good news. I had proven myself to be adaptable in the real life test, so was able to fulfill the spirit of the Benjamin test. However, I was required to wait six months to recover my strength from the two cardio-thoracic surgeries. In the interim, I attended the RNC in Houston and the following week attended the first international conference on transgender law and employment policy. SRS was performed that December of 1992, but due to extensive damage, I developed a fistula, which after three years was finally closed surgically. I enrolled in law school in August of 1994 and spent the first two and a half years wearing a diaper while attending classes. It was unpleasant and often embarrassing. I had many adhesions that needed repair, a deviated septum from so many surgeries with intubations and in the interests of safety in a rape situation, I needed to have a vaginal passage recreated. That was my final surgery in December of 1996.

All the confusion comes from the vivid imaginations of people who never sought to even talk to my doctors. It is a sad commentary on the fears and myths that plague the species. It was helpful to me that I had been a thespian and could cross dress effectively, but my voice remains rather deep and no amount of electrolysis has eliminated my beard. I have been told that there have been others who elected my path since it has worked so well for me. I am not acquainted with those persons, but am pleased that others have been able to benefit from my pioneering approach. I consider myself transsexual because that is the medical descriptor. I suppose that makes me a lesbian transsexual, but such notions do not particularly bother me as I am who and what I am and very comfortable in my own skin. I think my choices were far better than the alternative, but would never deign to urge it for anyone. I remain persuaded that divine intervention saved my life for a higher purpose.

AC: Karen, one issue that Rep. Sanders has brought to the floor of the House is the high cost of prescription medications. Sanders' legislation, now under consideration in the House, 'legalizes

importation of prescription medications into the US from foreign countries, which often have lower prices than US pharmacies. Many TG people import hormones and other medications over the internet and travel to Canada and Mexico to purchase medications, both to save money and to avoid obtaining prescriptions. How would you vote on this legislation, and why?

KK: Mr. Sanders pursues ideas that put him on the national stage, but his solutions are generally rejected because they are the failed ideas of Marxism which he embraces. I would vote against the bill because the opportunity for counterfeit medications is a threat that cannot be allowed for the most vulnerable members of our society. While it is true that some medications, such as hormones, can be purchased at lower prices, it is equally true that dose response curves are not as critical for hormones as for many other drugs. Legally, recourse is very difficult if drug dosage is not as prescribed. We are fortunate in the US to have the best and most reliable drug industry in the world. Sadly, seconds from that industry are sold abroad. I do not want those drugs returning to the US. Drug dose reliability is not a concern for medical professionals today and with the host of other considerations, I prefer not to hand them yet another variable in the complex process of managing health care. My preference, as noted above, is to work with the industry and put the benefit into the

Medicare program, but with proper outside funding that does not further impair the viability of the trust funds.

AC: Karen, it's been 5 years since TG people first started lobbying in numbers on Capitol Hill, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) has not yet passed, and it does not yet include transgendered people. If elected, would you be willing to sponsor a gender-inclusive ENDA bill in the House? Would you support ENDA in its present non-inclusive form? Would you be willing to file an amendment to ENDA to include transgendered people? How would you address the concerns of Rep. Frank regarding the restroom/shower issue? Would you be willing to include housing and public accommodation discrimination prohibitions in that law?

KK: Actually, it has been seven years since I took Phyllis Frye with me to testify in the Senate labor and human relations committee. That was the first lobbying ever done for our community. I remain unconvinced that special protection will be beneficial to our community. I prefer to seek a comprehensive equal rights law/amendment that will deny extrinsic evidence as determinative. Having been part of the Littleton legal team, it is clear that nothing short of that will work. Courts and judges have human frailties that easily lead them to pursue ways around special interest law. I have seen it with my legal studies applied to every minority group that has a protected class status. I

want better for my community and for all Americans. I think the time is right to get a comprehensive equal rights amendment, or at minimum a law to do that. It is far better than special status. Representative Frank is part of the gay community and has little comprehension of our community. I have always rejected the specious arguments of those who are intolerant, and Barney Frank is very intolerant of our community. Equal rights will eliminate these questions by shifting the basis to the relevant issues instead of the extrinsic issues.

AC: Karen, hate crimes legislation was considered by this Congress, and voted down. Do you feel that hate crimes legislation is needed, and would you sponsor it in its present form? Would you change the legislation in any substantive way? Will it stanch the growing number of violent crimes committed against our community, in your opinion?

KK: No on all counts. Intent is the single most difficult aspect of criminal trials. As a part of the mens rea, it adds another difficult aspect to satisfying the requirements for conviction, unless the perpetrator testifies to the intent. That is most unlikely. I do not think that hate crimes legislation is particularly helpful. Conviction of the overarching crime is far more important. Again, I think that rather than additional law, civil damages are more productive in terms of providing real recovery. It makes more sense to me for the victim to obtain damages, than it does to gloat over revenge from a hospital bed, a wheelchair or the grave.

AC: Karen, you're a long-time Republican, as am I. There was a time in our history when the GOP was the party of Lincoln, and proudly led in the area of civil rights. Those days are over; with few exceptions, Republicans do not normally support GLBT rights issues. Does the Vermont GOP leadership seem supportive of your candidacy? What reaction have you had from the national GOP hierarchy? Do you hope to be able to open the eyes of the national party policy makers if you're elected, and how do you hope to do this? And, do you expect any problems working with conservative GOP congressmen. Have any of the present GOP members of Congress expressed support for your campaign?


KK: Happily, yes, on all counts. I think that the worm has turned and the party is acutely aware of the need to enlarge the tent or become irrelevant. I have friends in the national hierarchy and considering the predicate of the Bush and Cheney speeches at the convention, I believe we will see a receptive administration to good law that treats everyone fairly and equally. I could hardly overlook the fact that Cheney has an openly gay daughter. After the elections, I expect she will be more visible and will serve as a catalyst for improved relations with the party. I have no illusions about opening eyes in Congress. But I do

(Continued on Page 12)



# ASTRO FORECAST OCTOBER 2000

## GENERAL INFORMATION

 ur friend Mercury goes retrograde this month on October 18th. This means that all of you new projects and plans have to be put motion by October 14th. After that, you will be in moving into a time of review. And it will be time to look at what you have been doing for the last 4 months and correct any problems that you find. Mercury will be retrograde or in a time of review until November 7th. You can then start new endeavors after November 11th.

Neptune goes direct this month on October 15th along with Uranus on October 26th. These planets are going to have the most impact on the Leo's, Aquarians, Scorpio's and Taurus's. For you life gets a bit more complicated. Just what you needed!!

The full Moon in on Friday October 13th (cue the spooky music) in the sign of Aries. It will be a Me time for everyone. You will be hard to find during the end of this week. The new Moon will be on Friday October 27th in Scorpio. This should really bring out the dark side during the festive Halloween time. We will all be on a MGM ride at a theme park, Freddie Meets the Creature From the Black Lagoon, II.

**ARIES** – Relationships are really emphasized for you this month. And you will really be wanting to get down and dirty with your lover this month. You can expect electrical currents to charge up your life especially on October 7th, 8th, 18th and 19th. Boredom will have no place in you life. Humdrum relationships will be tested thoroughly. They will be rejuvenated or sent to the scrape heap. Look for hidden emotions to come to the surface that trigger these events. Even financial problems can be a detonator. Take it easy on the 26th through the 28th. You will need it.



**TAURUS** – Mercury is making you review your relationships this month too. You will not be likely to give up on your relationship very easy. You like to drag it through the mud over hill and dell. You like durability in a relationship. You may be drawn to call those old lovers that you have listed in the back of your head. See, I told you that you don't give up. If you are a single cow or bull, you will be very interested in those other green pastures. Your will be sending out "I'm available" signals everywhere you go.



**GEMINI** – You are into a real organizing mood. Get that office and home into shape. You want you life to be effective and efficient. The mood at work can really be erratic this month. You may try to start a lot of things



only to find yourself back at square one. You are more serious than usual and others may wonder where you sense of humor has gone to. Home is a volatile place on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th as well as the 27th, 28th and 29th. You could be remodeling, moving or looking to buy. You will be better by next month.

**CANCER** – You are in the mood to entertain at home and express your creativity. Or to be very creative in an entertaining way at home. You certainly don't want to work as much. You are more likely wanting to be the center of attention. Your sexual energies are stronger and you will want to be creative and playful here too. You have been a very explorative mode this entire year and now you will want to up the ante. Or maybe dress up as your Auntie!!!



**LEO** – The pressure this month will be emanating from the old home place this month. You will be getting thing in order, straightening out the closet and looking for money behind the pillows on the sofa. You will be feeling pressure from your family or the family that lives inside of you, to get some stability in you life. Your relationships are very distracting now. You are being pulled in two different directions. One is what you are suppose to do and the other is what you want to do. This is an easy choice.



**VIRGO** – Your ruling planet, Mercury, goes into review in your house of communications. You are going to be examining everything you ever said as far back as you can remember. And for the things you don't remember, all of your ex-lovers are going to come back and remind you of what you wished your had forgotten. Bury yourself in your work. Take a trip out of town to an herbal spa. Have a big cup of green tea or a margarita, which ever comes first. There is just too much stress for you.



**LIBRA** – This month you are focused on your talents, your personal resources and your money. If you have been avoiding a money problem in the past, this month you will be encountering that quandary. Your vast talents of diplomacy and schmoozing will be put to the test. You will not be taken for granted this month by anyone. You may appear a bit hypersensitive to those around you. Save your energies for next month when you go on a combat mission to retrieve those misplaced emotions.



**SCORPIO** – You are a mixed receptacle of nuts this month. You are sensitive yet active. You are introspective yet vibrant. You are spiritual yet real. More Prozac's won't help. Pay a lot of attention to your intuition this month and then follow that up with some action. Then these



apparently separate pieces will act together as one. You won't feel so confused and the other people you are around will have to be responsible for their mixed messages and you won't have to try to figure out which message is the truth. Be sure and get some rest this month. It will be easy to over do it.

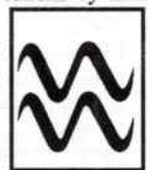
**SAGITTARIUS** – This is a good month to fade into the background. Only spend time with people that you really like and don't draw too much on your energy reserves. You do feel like putting some energy into some new projects at work. Be sure and get those done before October 15th. Watch your conflict with authority figures, especially at work. You may be right in principle but if you aren't the boss, you may want to decide if your position is worth the fight. Consider the question, "Is this the hill you want to die on?". It might be or it might not be.



**CAPRICORN** – This is a good month to visit those friends from your past. You are really ready to renew old contact in both business and social organizations. Take some time this month to do some planning for your next business moves. The time for action in that part of your life is next month. This is a great time to get your office into shape. Some of you are updating the equipment and systems in your office. Get this stuff done before October 15th. And you could do some cleaning as well. You may change locations by next summer.



**AQUARIUS** – The planets are spending a lot of time this month in your career and future planning sector of your horoscope. Some people may confuse you for a Capricorn. With Mercury, planet of review and renew, moving through your career sector, you are in the mood for getting those old projects finished and putting those old boxes out for the trash. You will be more black and white than usual. Time seems shorter now and you feel the urge to push forward. Even the new moon at the end of the month is in your career sector. Time to invest in your future. Borrowing from Oat Willey's... Onward thru the fog!



**PISCES** – Confrontation is your watchword this month. This is usually not your best personality trait except when you are doing it for others. This will probably show up a lot in your relationships. You can go with the flow and put some fireworks into pants or have to duke it out as the Bickersons. You just are not as flexible as you use to be. Your boundaries are more well defined. And your tolerance of other people's SAD STORIES is at an all time low. You have stories of you own. Family continues to pull on you psyche-ly. Make that phone call even if they don't.



Visit Lilly Roddy at [www.cybersim.com/hermes](http://www.cybersim.com/hermes)

# Transgender Termites *The Mini-Series: Part I*

By Vikki Lynn Skelton

**D**eep within the dark recesses of the woodwork of society insidious creatures live in fear and what they think is relative safety. They feed freely off of what others have built and continue to build, seeking to remain hidden, in fear of being "exterminated." When waves of disturbance move through society in regards to the TG issues, threatening their "hiding place" within the woodwork society they rear their ugly heads to attack those who stand on the front lines of the battle. These creatures live in fear and direct their hatred and disrespect toward those who are trying to help rather than the real source of the problems we face as a community. They are so near sighted that they can only focus on themselves most of the time. These creatures fail to see that there are others seeking a place in the woodwork of society just as they have but can not because of the injustice and misunderstandings that exists in their realm of society. These selfish creatures are "Transgender Termites."

The tendency for most transgender individuals is to hide within the woodwork of society. That is fine and we all have the right to do so. Most of us, at least Transsexual and Intersex individuals, have a desire to live "normal" lives in our preferred gender expression (PGE). For myself, I could not think of any better way to live than to live fully in my PGE. Maybe, there is one thing. Living in my PGE without fear of suffering the injustices many now face within our court systems and society as a whole, without fear of loss. But, you know what? I believe that until ALL are able to live in relative safety within their PGE, then no one is safe living in their PGE.

What do I mean by "relative safety?" First of all, laws will never stop or protect us completely from Gender Expression Discrimination (GED) and or Gender Expression Hate Crimes (GEHC). As long as there are humans walking the face of this earth, there will always be those who would do us harm, fire us, treat us as sub-humans and so-forth because of our gender expression. For instance, it still happens today in relation to women, ethnic groups and others who are protected under the various anti-discrimination laws. It happens to American citizens throughout this country even though we have laws against murder, robbery, car theft, abuse, physically harming another, injuring a child, rape, and so-forth. We live in a society full of humans and where there are humans there will always be prejudice hatred, and meanness. However, we can still do a lot to reduce the amount of discrimination and hate crimes committed against us. One way we can do this is by making sure that we do not become a "Transgender Termite" and become more involved in making our worlds a better place for Transgenders to live.

## What is a "Transgender Termite?"

This is where I need to be very careful and specific. There are some toes I do not want to step on and there are others I definitely hope to step on.

"Transgender Termite" is a term that came to mind as I was responding to an individual that was being very disrespectful to a friend of mine that stands together with others within the front lines of the battlefield giving of herself to help the transgender community. Though lengthy, I have given the definition of what I consider to be a "Transgender Termite" below.

### Transgender Termite:

Any individual within the transgender community that...

- ◆ *Hides in the woodwork of society, eating freely from the foundations that others have built before them (i.e. the right to name and or sex designation changes, right to live & work in their preferred gender expression, right to have SRS, right to take hormones to change their outer appearance, and all sorts of other legal rights), without their help or any personal sacrifice in the building of those foundations,*

### AND

- ◆ *Out of fear of being "exterminated," (i.e. suffering loss of career/job, family, friends, anonymity, a "normal" life, legal gender/sex marker designation changes, and or the loss of everything else they have attained, even possibly their own life) they complain & criticize those who are doing whatever they can to help make positive changes in regards to the transgender community.*

The keywords in the above definition of a "Transgender Termite" are "and," along with "complain & criticize."

### "Peaceful Hiders" Amongst Us

There are many TGs that hide in the woodwork of society but they **do not** attack those who are doing their best to make our lives better through the legal and political system and the education of society concerning transgender issues. They live quiet lives to themselves, some of them quietly working in the background to offer support to other TGs in whatever way they can. Yes, it would be a great benefit to have more of the "Peaceful Hiders" helping the TG community, even if they worked in "stealth" mode behind the scenes. But it is not up to me to try and force them out of hiding. That is a decision they must make themselves. I have no right to invade their privacy and reveal who they are. However, I appreciate the fact that though they choose to remain hidden, they **do not** cause demoralization among our troops and disrespectfully lash out at those who have put everything on the line by joining the front line to help the TG community.

If a person wants to remain hidden in the woodwork of society then we should allow them that right. I have been in total hiding in the past and I am still somewhat in hiding to this day. Like many of them, I live in fear, to a degree, of losing my job if my employers found out about my transsexualism and losing my family and friends if they

found out. So, I hide as much as possible within the woodwork of society, my larger "closet of reclusivity" during my transitioning process while at the same time helping the TG community in whatever way that I am able. At the same time, I am glad that others have given me the space and time to take forays out of my "closet of reclusivity" as I saw fit and to encourage me to become more active in helping the TG community. I feel we must do the same for all that choose to remain hidden in their "closets of reclusivity" as well.

### Am I "Transgender Termite?"

No, I am not. As for you, that is for you to determine. Read the definition above again. As I said above, the keywords in the definition are "and" and "complain & criticize." Those I call "Transgender Termites" are those as describe above in the definition. They are those TG individuals that hide in the woodwork of society and happily feast on what others have done before them. Then, when things begin to upset their "safe" little world, they lash out in hatred toward those who are trying to help. When the boards in their "closets of reclusivity" begin to shake, they complain about all of the noise created by those who are trying to help. When waves of disturbances from the actions of those who are putting everything on the line to make this a better world for ALL TG individuals begin to threaten their "safe-house of cards" they lash out at them in disrespect and hatred. "Transgender Termites" are like an injured animal that lashes out at those that only seek to help make things better. It thinks it is in more danger and therefore goes into what it feels is "protect" mode when in reality it is only making things worse for itself and others.

Even though they may have suffered a lot during their transitioning process, "Transgender Termites" still tend to simply enjoy the benefits of the work & sacrifices of others. At the same time, they do nothing at all to help those who are not able to enjoy the same benefits at this time. They then complain about and criticize those who are out there doing what they can to help the TG community. They are demoralizers, spreaders of hateful thoughts and words and fear, and selfish. This waste of energy would better be spent on doing something productive to help the TG community as a whole rather than hurting it. Their anger is directed at the wrong individuals. Instead, this type of anger is out of fear of losing what they have. This anger is usually directed at the ones causing the waves of disturbance through their helping of the TG community instead of at the source of the problems we face...injustice and misunderstanding within the legal, political and societal arenas.

### Don't become a Transgender Termite

You have the choice of becoming a "Transgender Termite," to remain a "Peaceful Hider," or stepping completely out of your "closet of reclusivity"

(Continued on Page 14)

**TATS Tidbits**

(Continued from Page 12)

• Priscilla Queen of the Desert quashed in the Olympics.... Controversy erupted over Australia's decision to include a drag queen in a segment celebrating Australian film during the closing ceremony of the 2000 Olympic Games. Organizers have remained adamant in their defense of the drag show, and have rebuffed overtures by NBC and religious organizations to pull the segment.



"We watch [the Olympics] because of the feelings of national pride and unity that the Olympics evoke," stated Andy Blom, Communications Dir. for Human Life International, the world's largest pro-life, pro-faith apostolate. "For parents, the Olympics present a wonderful opportunity to teach children about the values of hard work, sacrifice, and dedication. I'm not looking forward to adding gender identity, sex changes, and the homosexual lifestyle to those lessons this year. The inclusion of a salute to drag queens in the closing ceremony of the Sydney Olympics is a serious affront to family values." Sure. Let's just have more traditional family TV displays ... like old John Wayne western shoot-em-ups, and WWF wrestling....

• A cross-dressing, gay Mexican man who said he fled his homeland because of persecution is entitled to asylum in the United States, and a federal appeals panel agreed. The decision by three judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco expands the social circumstances of persecution that immigration officials

must consider during asylum hearings.

The case involved Geovanni Hernandez-Montiel, who dresses and behaves as a woman. He testified that he was harassed and persecuted by his family, school officials and police, who he said sexually assaulted him. In '995, he fled to the United States and requested asylum but was denied. Judge A. Wallace Tashima wrote that "gay men with female sexual identities in Mexico constitute a protected 'particular social group' under the asylum statute... and that Geovanni is a member of that group."

• COLUMBIA, Mo. — This city's Human Rights Commission is considering including transsexuals as a protected group under Columbia's anti-discrimination policy. The current policy is worded to protect gays, lesbians and heterosexual, but does not explicitly cover men or women who live or identify themselves as the opposite sex. The ordinance covers discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations, both in the private and public sector. The proposal seeks to amend the ordinance to include those "having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one's gender."

• Sex-change and drugs and rock and roll...? Fans of Radiohead will like the sound of the new release "Stereodreamscene" by the group Deckard. The Scottish group, named for the protagonist in the film Blade Runner, is drawing raves from critics for their indie/pop style and lyrical sensitivity. Transgendered fans also have reason to sit up and take notice.

One of the group's songs on the new CD, "Christine", explores the topic of desiring a sex change from boy to girl. Gordon sings about the shame and sensitivity involved, with powerful and angry lyrics, "It isn't easy being a girl like me / One who's still a boy on the outside, see / It's hard enough to fit into my girlfriend's

clothes / when I'll get my own only heaven knows." Sounds as if this was written by someone who 'knows'....

• CHARLESTON, SC — Novelist Dawn Langley Simmons, whose sex change and marriage to a black man rocked this bastion of Southern culture more than 30 years ago, died Monday. The cause of death was not released. She was 77.

Simmons, author of more than 20 books, including

"The Gypsies of Brightling Down," "Princess Margaret," "Jacqueline Kennedy" and "Lady Bird and Her Daughters," was born in England as Gordon Langley Hall — the illegitimate son of



an aristocratic British household. Hall moved to Charleston in 1962, and after a trip in 1968 to Johns Hopkins Hospital, returned as Dawn Pepita Langley Hall.

• From the "thank-goodness-every-state-is-not-like-Texas" category.... The Pennsylvania Dept. of Public Welfare will no longer enforce its regulations disallowing medical treatment for sex reassignment, and will henceforth consider each case on a "medically necessary" basis. Reportedly, one of Pennsylvania's largest HMOs servicing Medicaid recipients in that state has conceded that the treatments are not experimental. Good news for our brothers and sisters on the east coast — same old bad news here....

(Continued on Page 14)

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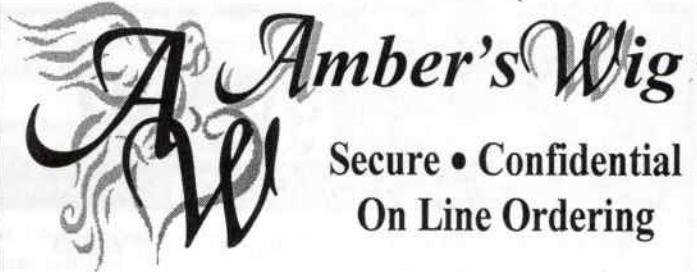
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**TATS Tidbits**

*(Continued from Page 13)*

• Australian Equality.... The upper house of the Australian state of Victoria passed a bill on Sept. 6, adding "gender identity" and "sexual orientation" as protected categories under the state's Equal Opportunity Act. The lower house, the Legislative Assembly, had already approved the same bill a week before. Activists have been lobbying for the law for a quarter-century.

Legislators fought off an attempted amendment that the law only covered those who self-identified gender by "medical intervention," thereby excluding cross-dressers. A statement by TransGender Victoria (TGV) welcomed the new law: "The strong sense of cross-partisanship now shown on transgender issues also offers a springboard to move forward.... Victoria's Parliament demonstrates our state's ability to take a lead on ethical and human issues." Victoria's move leaves only Queensland among Australian states and territories with no civil rights protections for transgendered people.

• Thousands of Chinese transsexuals are being butchered by unqualified surgeons because of a drastic shortage of sex change facilities, say reports. The majority of transsexuals who need an operation are forced to go to unqualified or incompetent doctors - often with horrendous results, the Yangcheng Evening News reported. Dr He Qinglian, a plastic surgeon, says many of the sex-change operations he carries out are to correct the damage done by incompetent doctors.

They include Zhang Feng, a woman who had her breasts and genitalia amputated in a hospital in northern China, who is now genderless. "The doctors were incapable of implanting masculine organs and she is now neither a man nor a woman," said the newspaper. Transsexuals also face deep prejudice in repressive

communist China - where sex, let alone sex changes, is still a taboo subject.

• Brazil seems to 'get it', somewhat .... Roberta Close, the most famous transsexual in Brazil has recently been chosen as the host of a Brazilian TV show. The star of several Brazilian



movies and TV series, and the subject of a Playboy pictorial, Roberta (who had her operation in 1989) is currently married and lives with her husband in Switzerland.

All is not completely rosy in Brazil, however. after eight years of court battles Brazilian authorities won't let her change her ID regardless of her well-known national personality status. Go figure....

• Is it ova? The Senate approved a bill Aug. 2 that would give women a choice about adding the suffix "-ova" to their surnames - as Czech grammar dictates - when taking Czech citizenship. The law would also make it easier for people to change their names, especially in the case of sex changes.



• ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - A Sept. 6 report from The Dawn, a leading Pakistani daily, detailed the story of Mr. Rana Rashid, once a father of nine daughters. Today, this father of 11 has six sons, four of them through dramatic, biological sex change. Their mother, Begum, says it is all the will of Allah. It sounds like a unique case of 4 intersexed children born to the same family.

The dramatic events started unfolding in 1989 when Aisha, then 16, complained of abdominal pain. After consulting the local midwife and confirmation from the town hospital of signs of sex change, she was taken to Mayo hospital where she was transformed into Muhammad Ahmed. Similar instances occurred later with three more of the couple's daughters. Ms Begum says the girls were perfectly normal and not even tomboyish before the changes came at the time of puberty. There were no feminine changes but their voices turned guttural.

**TRANSGENDER TERMITES....**

*(Continued from Page 10)*

" and truly become a part of society as a TG individual. You also have the choice as to the degree of help you will offer. You can not help the TG community at all, or in stealth mode behind the scenes, or join the front lines or acting somewhere in between. What ever you decide, anything is better than becoming a "Transgender Termite" that eats freely from the woodwork of society, offers to give nothing back to the TG community, and criticizes those who are doing whatever they can to help the TG community as a whole. It is your choice.

Look in the next issue for Part II to the "Transgender Termite" mini-series. God be with you and yours until we meet again.

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# DC Settles "Transvestite" Death Suit

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

WASHINGTON — So read the tabloid-style headlines of a recent Associated Press news story regarding the lawsuit brought by the survivors of Tyra Hunter. The mother of a Hunter, who died after firefighter paramedics mocked her instead of rendering aid after a fatal traffic accident, agreed August 10 to settle a lawsuit against the District of Columbia.

"No one should suffer because they are different from other people," said Margie Hunter, who will receive \$1.75 million from the city. The settlement ends an ordeal that began when she learned her son was denied lifesaving treatment as firefighters stood by and laughed.

"This has never been about money, but about finding justice for my son," Hunter said.

In December of 1998, a jury found that Tyrone / Tyra Hunter was a victim of discrimination and

medical malpractice. The panel also held a physician at D.C. General Hospital liable for failing to provide care that might have saved his life. However, the suit was immediately appealed by the District of Columbia's city attorney; requiring the trial and graphic evidence to again be revisited.

Hunter, 24, a hairstylist, was living en femme full-time when the vehicle she was riding in crashed Aug. 7, 1995. When firefighter Adrian Williams slit open Hunter's pants to begin rendering medical aid, he discovered Hunter was genetically male.

Hunter's mother said Williams, who has since been promoted to the rank of sergeant, should have been fired for his insensitivity. She was also disap-



Tyra Hunter

pointed that Dr. Joseph A. Bastien, the D.C. General physician, still works in the emergency room there.

The jury found Bastien negligent for not ordering a tube inserted in Hunter's chest to drain fluid around his heart. He also failed to prescribe blood transfusions for his patient although four units of blood were available at the time.

"Tyrone was never treated properly," said Richard Silber, one of the attorneys who represented Mrs. Hunter.

Mayor Anthony A. Williams issued a statement that discrimination based on race, gender or sexual orientation will not be tolerated. The D.C. Fire Department recently launched a diversity and sensitivity training program for its employees. The program will be named for "Tyrone" Hunter.

*Daily Confrontations*  
By Kimberly Burnham

*One does not get infiltrated by hiding. One doesn't possess integrity by passing out on the carpet.*

Not every situation requires that we identify ourselves to others as being a dyke, a fag, battling for both teams, or transdegenerate. There are moments when declaring our sexual identity is simply irrelevant. If we're sitting in a movie theatre, and you lean over to me to say, "I like to lick butt"... mmm'so what?? I don't care! You may only think of countless situations in everyday life as a bitch in which you must choose whether to hide or reveal yourself. Some of you have cultivated the habit of hiding. You wish to tell yourself it is not worth the risk that may be involved in "going in."

We play with spice for self-censorship. Every miserable day we have the opportunity to shut the f\*ck up, or speak the mind to dismiss or acknowledge no matter what someone else may say or claim. You can hide, you can hide. You can also hide from yourself... not really. I cannot back that up. But you block up your connection with that spirit within you. When you blockade, you're cultivating habits of fear and self-rejection. You see, this is why I don't like you. Maybe you should accept yourself the way you are. I don't care if you're a freak; but feel free to make choices. Maybe if you become more comfortable with yourself, you can take the risk of letting others know you, ...bitch.

Today, I'm going to pass out on the carpet, because... I feel like it is something I really, really, really want to do....



## MY SISTER'S DAUGHTER'S WEDDING... US AND THEM

By Ann Onymous

Rose and her daughters don't hold me in very high regard. In fact, I am an embarrassment to them.

They openly discussed this to one another when Rose said, "I can tuck him ... her away at least during the wedding ceremony as a subservient, saving-us-some-embarrassment-at-the-same-time-we-can-use-him ... her-for-entured-service."

The name Cinderella comes to mind.

They are so proud of their daughter's union that they want their proud noble family there to witness the event: Roy, Frances, Tina and Kevin all the way from Chicago. "But what about Cairistona? What to do about Cairistona? After all the most important thing in this world is appearances and how people who are almost strangers to us might judges us if they were to associate us with Cairistona. We could not bear it."

Perhaps someday I will cease being an embarrassment to you."

Should I tell you that I know how you feel, and know what you are trying to do? Will it be instigation, or simply reaction? Curse me for having such insight. Tell me that I am wrong, can you?

Remember two years ago I was invited to Anna's baby shower. Then, when it became apparent that Stan's family was to be there, Rose uninvited me. When I cried my heart out to my momma, do you know what she said? I will never forget it. She said, "get ready to go, I am taking you."

No, I bowed out. Suffered the blow and said nothing. Do you know what it's like knowing your own family is ashamed of you? You can't even begin to imagine what it does to my pride and esteem.

Now I am manipulated into going through this all again and sit quiet. How did all this get started? I can hear it just as clearly as if I was in the same room when Rose told her daughters.

"Don't worry, momma will take care of it."

That one sentence started it all.

I am not so blind that I cannot see. As I quietly stand here and face the onslaught, take the blow alone. Saying nothing for the sake of preserving the family.

Three vampires went into a bar and sat down. The barmaid came over to take their orders. "And what would you, er, gentlemen like tonight?"

The first vampire said, "I'll have a mug of blood."

The second vampire said, "I'll have a mug of blood."

The third vampire shook his head at his companions and said, "I will have a glass of plasma."

The barmaid wrote down each order, went to the bar and called to the bartender, "Two bloods and a blood light"

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**KAREN KERIN....**

*(Continued from Page 8)*

know that it is easy to hate in the abstract, but very difficult to do so when one of the same team is part of that despised group. Group identity tends to breed unity. I am certain there will be some GOP members of the House that will have disdain for me, but I have a personality that does not easily fail to be persuasive.

AC: Karen, it's early in this campaign, but by now you probably have developed a good idea of what a TG person faces when they choose to run for office. What would be your advice to the TG person who plans to run for office in the next couple of years? What would you have done or said differently?

KK: I would not change a thing. Openness and honesty are qualities that people readily identify with. It explains the McCain success, and I think we owe him a large thanks for his pushing the envelope and possibly even Bush into a policy of inclusion. If I have made any mistakes, it has been not seeking a full time fund raiser before announcing. I face a huge war chest and will have to overcome it by working harder. Even if I fail, it will be so much easier next time, whether it is me or someone else.

So, let's say you're TG and live in Vermont. Should you vote for Karen Kerin or Bernie Sanders? That depends on your point of view. Kerin's views on the issues are cogent, clear, and well thought out, but they may not be popular with some in our community. They do fly in the face of some of what TG lobbyists have been advocating the past few years. But, think long and hard about Karen Kerin's ideas. Maybe some of our established activists haven't been going about it from the right direction. Maybe TG activists need to rethink their approach.

Think about it.

**TATS Tidbits**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• Is it just me, or are we seeing an inordinate number of TATS members in the media lately? Sure enough, no less than six of our members have been in print, radio or television news (or a combination thereof), in the past month or so. It started with Cristan Williams making a first appearance on TV news at a protest at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center over the death of Julia Carrizales, a transwoman. This past month, you couldn't pick up a newspaper or sit through a television newscast without seeing the smiling faces of newly-married Jessica Wicks, and her attorney (of Littleton fame) Phyllis Frye. That even spilled over to provide interviews (both print and on television) for Sarah DePalma on the same-sex marriage issues.

Coming up this month is an article featuring TATS' newly-elected president, Jessica Redman, as one of the top ten "new activists to watch" in OutSmart Magazine; and boardmember Monica Roberts representing NTAC for an interview on Gender Talk Radio. When you add to that our far-flung sister, Katrina Rose's radio interview, and prolific columns in recent months, Lilly Roddy's monthly appearance in OutSmart and Jenifer René Pool picking up movie roles right and left, you get the impression you can't sneeze without knocking over a celebrity somewhere! We'uns is gittin' pop'lar!

• WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — A trans-woman was attacked in the early morning hours of Sept. 11, according to Los Angeles County Sheriff's Dept. reports. The victim, a Latina sex-worker identified only as 'Jackie', was found with stab wounds to the neck, back and a severe laceration in the genital area. She was admitted to the hospital in serious condition, and was released Sept. 19. The Sheriff's Dept. is currently investigating, but has yet to find a suspect nor determine if there was a hate-related motive. West Hollywood is one of the few

cities around the nation will full civil rights protections for transgenders.

• Transgenders in the oval office – a miracle...? In a move to overshadow Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore's nomination of an Orthodox Jew, Green party candidate Ralph Nader had considered selecting a muslim transsexual, Shaniqua L'Pube, to be his running



mate. The Green Party came out early as fully supporting equality for all gay and lesbian (and presumably transgender) citizens.

"Miracles happen," L'Pube said in a press release outside her girlfriend's home in San Francisco, her voice deep with Daniel emotion. Formerly Kansas, the transsexual activist said Nader her to expect a call from the renowned consumer-rights watchdog in August. Apparently, Nader decided to stick with his running mate from the previous campaign, Winona LaDuke. Had it happened, it would have been the first transsexual vice presidential candidate in American history. One can only dream....

*(Continued on Page 13)*



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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support ●

Volume 8, Issue 11

Houston, Texas

November, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER? HRC... AND TATS!



The view outside the HRC Dinner: Awareness campaigners Gigi Wilbur (L-R) Angela Bridgman, Sarah DePalma, Beth Richard and Vanessa Edwards Foster

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Human Rights Campaign's Executive Director, Elizabeth Birth, deigned Houston with a visit this past month, and the dinner drew a large turnout from the local gay and lesbian community. The Houston area transgender community also turned out in sizable numbers. However, they didn't stay for dinner....

TGAIN Exec. Dir., Sarah DePalma, organized an 'awareness campaign' outside the event at the chi-chi Colombe D'or Restaurant on Montrose Blvd. The inconspicuous, normally-tranquil setting was crawling with activity: protesters with banners and colorful signs, about a dozen of Houston's finest - both uniformed and plainclothed replete with walkie-talkies and earpieces - camera-toting press, curious neighbors and passers-by, and the dinner-goers (including some of community-recognized Houston's politicians). It was a notably different evening than most Wednesday nights

there, to be sure!

The Sept. 27 event was mentioned about a week before, not allowing much time to plan. However, Sarah DePalma was up to the task regardless. As this writer drove up immediately after work, I passed by the Kroger's parking lot meeting place to see Sarah (the hub of attention), the other participants, and a reporter from the Triangle surrounding her.

Sarah deftly went into activist-in-an-interview mode with the reporter, detailing the continuing resistance of HRC to include T in ENDA's GLB protections. She recounted how many transitioning transsexuals, including some among the TATS membership, are driven to the brink of suicide and beyond over the long-term unemployment and prospects of homelessness and prostitution as a survival tool, and the incumbent fears of violence in those prospects.

(Continued on Page 7)

### MEETING SCHEDULE

November 11	Feelings Meeting at: Transgender Community Ctr. @ 3 PM
November 25	Social Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM
December 9	Feelings Meeting at: To be announced @ 3 PM
December 23	Social Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7 PM

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Perhaps this is a hyperbolic rant, but we in the transgender community – nationally, statewide and locally – are at the most critical juncture in our lives. We've got elections to choose our next President, Congress, and state legislators mere days away. The fruits of our labor are finally being recognized with calls for more information and panel discussions popping up like mushrooms. We've got a critically important issue to either push through or defend in our next state legislative session. We're even on the precipice of finally reaching this organization's goal – a 501(c)3 designation that would enable our little support group to do so much more.

All the while, we're all being stretched so thin, it's amazing we've not snapped!

Hilary Clinton, when asked in an interview about her impending election to the Senate about her stance on transgender inclusion in employment rights legislation. Her response? She hadn't been approached by the transgender leadership, and really had no information on any of our issues. The call came out for someone – anyone – in NTAC to contact her with information. Much as we all would have leapt at the chance ... no one had time! We've all become so bogged down in what we've got on our plates already that no one had a chance to accomplish this.

Some complained that HRC, who's had a virtual monopoly on Hilary's ear, should've said something. Duh! HRC is not a transgender civil rights organization! They are a gay and lesbian rights organization! Of course Hilary only heard about gay and lesbian issues! And what could an HRC say about transgender issues?

It's up to us to do the educating. I don't care if they do lock us out of any access to legislators, we must find ways – other ways – to gain access.

Sadly, we've done a poor job of education about ourselves over the years. Only now is the issue becoming known, and the open minds begging for more information on the subject. That, in and of itself, has kept us busy over the past couple years.

Additionally, more gay and lesbian groups are taking note of what talents and energy we have, and are utilizing this 'new blood' to infuse these groups with some needed verve. Our own local organizations are suddenly getting serious about



A frightful night for trick-or-treaters: Vanessa Republicson-Smith, "the Republican Bitch from Hell" (above, C, in Nancy Reagan red) converts two of them minority voters and 'sinful former Democrats', PVA's Tamara Jones (L) and Alejandro Morúa to the conservative 'big tent' of holy love at Zig's Halloween party Oct. 21. Be afraid, be very afraid...!

making an impact on the civil rights scene and beyond, requiring more attention. On top of this, those of us who are employed are finding our professional careers filled to above-capacity with workloads that are ever-increasing.

And with this, there is no time to take care of the spontaneous or unforeseen situations... and the stress and frustration builds.

As you'll note, TATS' president has submitted her resignation for most of the reasons listed above. Our nation's next President could determine whether we get shut out of employment rights, or cast along with the gays and lesbians into the pitch black of the eternal abyss. About now, nothing is looking positive – except positively more stress on the horizon. Take some time to vote on Nov. 7 for our futures! And pray for our futures as well!

**HOW TO REACH US:**

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (832) 483-9901 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats>

**A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

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# TATS MEMBERS HIT SOUTHERN COMFORT CONFERENCE

No less than four TATS members made it to Southern Comfort for this, their tenth anniversary of the event. It wasn't all fun for a few of us: one of our members held two separate symposiums on intersexed issues, and two others had to attend a national activist board meeting which also coincided with the conference.

Jessica Redman, our president-elect, took the

opportunity to do a bit of symposium style education at the conference. Our illustrious Ms. Jessi held not one, but two separate breakaway symposiums on intersexed issues. Though she claimed to be nervous, Jessica apparently was unduly worried.



Above, a various group of activists at SCC (L-R) Julie Johnson, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Tony Barreto-Neto and Jessica Redman.

At left, during a break some of the NTAC Boardmembers gather for a photo (L-R, front) Kathy Padilla, TATS' Vanessa and Monica Roberts, (back), Cathy Platine, Anne Casebeer, Board Chair, Dawn Wilson, Board Vice Chair Yosefio Lewis and former NTACer Monica Helms.

According to reports, both her symposiums were packed to capacity; with a very curious and entertained audience in attendance. In essence, she was a hit.

Additionally, the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition's Board meeting (NTAC) took place during the conference as well. Though Jessica Redman was also a board member of NTAC, she had to leave the conference on Friday morning for work-related reasons. However, TATS boardmember Monica Roberts and yours truly were there with Jessi's vote by proxy.

(Continued on Page 5)



# Court Rules Transgendered Boy Can Dress As Girl At School

By Sacha Pfeiffer and Mac Daniel

BROCKTON MA — Superior Court judge ruled on October 12 that Brockton school officials may not prohibit a 15-year-old student who is biologically male but identifies himself as a female from attending school in women's clothing, including wigs, dresses, and padded bras. To do so, the judge said, would violate the eighth-grader's right to free expression and constitute sex discrimination.

The decision, strongly criticized by school administrators, drew mixed reactions yesterday from parents and students at South Junior High School, where most girls interviewed who know the student said they like and respect him, while boys reacted with adolescent taunts and threats.

Parent feedback also varied. Some said the student's plight is pure discrimination, but one mother of a 14-year-old eighth-grader said she had given her son permission to beat up the student if he should touch him.

Defending their decision in early 1999 to restrict the student's dress, school officials said his behavior makes other students uncomfortable and disrupts the learning process. They also argued that "not every defiant act by a high school student is constitutionally protected speech."

But Superior Court Judge Linda Giles, who issued the ruling Wednesday, said that while the

school may discipline the student for inappropriate conduct, it may not punish him simply for dressing in female clothing.

Citing a therapist's conclusion that the student has a gender identity disorder that makes it medically necessary for him to wear women's clothes, Giles — who denied a request by the school's lawyers that she recuse herself from the case because she is gay — wrote that the student's decision to wear female garb "is not merely a personal preference but a necessary symbol of her very identity."

Giles and the student's lawyers refer to him using female pronouns.

A lawyer for the school system said it is "extremely likely" the decision will be appealed.

"The school over the past year has handled this situation beautifully, and I think we've handled it with compassion for everyone concerned," said School Superintendent Joseph Bage. "But we as a school system felt we had given as much as we could, and therefore ... we drew a line in the sand."

The student, identified in court papers only as Pat Doe, began wearing female clothing and makeup to school during the seventh grade in early 1999, prompting officials to repeatedly send him home to change clothes.

School officials say Doe's attire, sometimes including tight skirts and high-heeled shoes, caused

him to clash with others and resulted in confrontations, once after he blew kisses at a male student and once when he grabbed a male student's buttocks.

Doe, who school administrators said drew attention to himself by yelling and dancing in the halls, was also suspended at least three times for using girls' restrooms after being told not to.

When Doe entered eighth grade in September 1999, he was told to report each morning to the principal so his appearance could be approved. During the 1999-2000 school year, Doe stopped attending school, citing a "hostile environment" created by the principal, and had to repeat eighth grade, starting this September, as a result.

Doe's grandmother, identified only as Jane Doe, sued school officials last month after they said her grandson would not be allowed to enroll if he wore women's clothing or accessories.

Doe is not currently attending school, and school officials have provided him with a home tutor.

In her ruling, Giles acknowledged that Doe has engaged in behavior "that can be seen as detrimental to the learning process."

But Doe's behavior is a separate issue from his clothing, Giles said, writing that school officials

(Continued on Page 11)

# Southern Comfort 2K ... Monica's Notebook

By Monica Roberts

Once again I found myself on an airplane headed to a major community event, but only after I worked at the gate until departure time on the 950 PM flight! I'll spare ya'll the drama and get to the point for a change.

Last year I attended my first Southern Comfort Convention and had such a great time that I resolved to come back for this year's event. My decision was clinched when NTAC decided to have a board meeting in conjunction with this T-community event held in Atlanta.

I arrived in Hotlanta about 1230 AM with Anne Casebeer greeting me at the gate and filling me in on the latest happenings since SCC actually started on Tuesday September 26th. They were already poised to break their attendance record set last year and she proceeded to tell me who was in town as we sped up I-85 toward the Buckhead area. We got to the hotel and we proceeded directly to the bar where I ran into Vanessa talking to some of our fellow NTACers.

Once the bar closed, we headed upstairs where I was reunited with Jessica Redman. We tried to go to sleep, but when we are together we start acting like teenagers at a slumber party and we kept that up until we drifted off to sleep about 4 AM.

Friday morning was picture-postcard perfect as we arose early so that I could register for SCC and Jessi could check her e-mail. She had taught a seminar on the intersexed which I missed because I had to work. I proceeded to the registration area where I saw a very familiar face helping out. Dawn Wilson! We hugged each other and traded our usual good-natured ribbing of each other before I got down to the business at hand. Just after I finished another familiar face walked in, Laurie Cicotello. We hugged and discussed the book that she had contributed to about children of trans-genders. After a rather animated discussion I excused myself so that I could catch what was left of Dr Brassard's SRS seminar. I arrived there as he was wrapping it up but did run into Cathy Platine, who I had just visited up back in July along with Dr Sarah Fox, who that very day was having her SRS in Portland with Dr Meltzer.

I proceeded to the vendor area briefly before heading to the diversity seminar being taught by Dawn, Yosenio Lewis, and Dr Marisa Richmond. I ran into Karen Hayes at that point, and gave her a hug before the seminar started. I even got asked to contribute some comments as to some of my experiences here in Houston and how I got started as an activist. After that seminar I met a T-girl of color from Chicago, Raven Thompson who I hung out with for most of the convention.

Raven does AIDS education work in Chitown and I made sure I traded business cards with her before we left. She is a gorgeous girl with a great sense of humor and I liked her instantly. As a matter of fact, this Southern Comfort saw not only the largest attendance ever, it also had the largest con-

tingent of T people of color ever in attendance. The attendance record would have been even higher, but the hotel was sold out and they were forced to turn away 100 people for lack of space. (Word to the wise, register early for next year and get that hotel room booked!)

Lunch saw fellow NTACer Yosenio Lewis wowing the crowd with his eloquent speech, and I then went back to Jessi's room to retrieve my belongings since she was checking out of the hotel. I moved my stuff temporarily with Anne Casebeer while I searched for a new roommate. I eventually ended up over in the Lenox next door sharing a room with Cathy Platine and a BGB member named Michelle. I moved my stuff once again and prepared for the NTAC reception that night being hosted by TG Forum. Before I left for the fundraiser, we had to change rooms again because the air conditioning didn't work and Atlanta can get a little warm like Houston!

At the reception I gave my 'cousin' JoAnn Roberts a big hug and then went to work along with Dawn, Anne, Vanessa, Kathy Padilla, and Cathy Platine explaining what NTAC's vision was



TG Persons of Color, (2<sup>nd</sup> from left on back row, L-R) Monica Roberts, Raven Thompson, Dawn Wilson & Yosenio Lewis

Cathy and I decided we wanted to get away from the hotel and go out for lunch. Monica Helms joined us and we proceeded to walk down the street on another picture perfect Atlanta day to Ruby Tuesday's. We had some lively conversation and then returned to the hotel so that we could prepare for the NTAC wine and cheese reception. I broke away to fulfill a promise to my mother and buy some postcards for her. I returned after the reception started at 4 and when it ended at 6, I rushed

back to the room to change so that I could take part in a historic event. All 22 T people of color took a photo just before the masquerade ball started at 7 and I *definitely* wanted to look my best for that! (Hey, I was representing the great state of Texas) We ended up there for several minutes as we took pictures after picture. We enjoyed the singing of the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus and after the raffle ended we headed to the bar once again to talk to old and new friends until the wee hours of the morning.

The alarm rang at 5 AM on Sunday morning as I prepared to head back to Houston and the reality of my job. Ann took me back to the airport and when I got there I ran into Ann Hicks at the

ticket counter. Ann used to work with me in Houston before she transferred to Hotlanta. I then had to sweat it out for a few minutes as usual before eventually got seated in first-class. We pulled away from the gate early and I quickly drifted off to sleep after my very busy weekend. I didn't wake up until we touched down in Houston.

Even though I went primarily for NTAC business, I did have a great time seeing my friends at SCC and meeting some new ones. I highly recommend a trip to Southern Comfort. It is in my opinion the premier event in the T community and jam-packed full of things to do, see, and learn. I am anxiously awaiting September 2001 when the transgender community once again gathers in Atlanta for Southern Comfort.



NTAC Board Meeting: (facing camera, L-R) Cathy Platine, Sue Davis, Dawn Wilson, Chris Stinson, Monica Roberts & Angela Brightfeather; (with back to group, L-R) is Kathy Padilla, Courtney Sharp and Jo Roberts

and our future plans. When that was over, we went to dinner and watched the talent show hosted by "Cher" and "Elvis". More socializing took place at the bar when the show ended and Cathy and I finally went to bed about 1 AM so that we could get up for the 8AM NTAC board meeting.

Saturday arrived far too early as the alarm rang in our room about 7AM and we dragged ourselves out of bed for the NTAC board meeting. I was joined by Susan Davis who had arrived late Friday night and our treasurer Chris Stinson. Angela Brightfeather, Dawn, Anne and Vanessa came several minutes later and Yosenio joined us several minutes after it started. We also had Courtney Sharp and JoAnn Roberts joining us as observers as we went about NTAC business.

We finally broke up about noon and Susan,

**TATS' PRESIDENT RESIGNS**

In a shocking turn of events, Jessica Redman has turned in her resignation less than a month into her newly-elected term as president. Below is a copy of her resignation letter:

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

*It is with a heavy heart and deep regret that I finally make official what many of you already know. I Jessica Redman by this official notification resign from the Presidency of TATS, the advisory board of the Unity Committee, and Board of Directors for NTAC. My reasons for hthis move are quite simple, they are three fold.*

*Number one I need to focus on the launch of a brand new restaumat concept which my company has put me in charge of. This will require my being out of town 6 out of 7 nights a week.*

*Number two, I need to focus on my finances and my home. The past several years have been diasterous to my personal finances. Several large loans made to those in the community still remain unpaid. I will point no fingers, I just chalk this up to a learning*



**Jessica Redman by the pool at Southern Comfort Conference**

*experience, you all know who you are. Now that I am paying for my mother's \$5,000 a month hospital bills as well as all the other various and sundry divorce, surgery, and other costs, I need to seek new ways to replenish my finances which are at rock bottom.*

*Number three, this is the hardest point of all to talk about but...Goddess knows I have never been shy with you all... quite frankly I am tired of all the rhetoric. Our community is so good at talking a mean game but all I have seen of delivery is talk. I know of two exceptions, Cristan and Vanessa, both of who deserve all the accolades our community can dish out. These two have done more for you all than all the rest of us together. The rest of us are all so busy flaming each other and tearing each other down, I am exhausted physically and mentally from all of it.*

*So the girl who moved here three years ago to live with Jenifer has grownup. I am sorry for not being able to be the leader that TATS so desperately needs. You all need more than I can give you. So to all of you...I send you my love, my best wishes for a pleasant journey on the path of your life, this woman is hanging up her dancing shoes, the party is over.*

*Yours in the Light,  
Jessica Ann Redman*

**SOUTHERN COMFORT....**

*(Continued from Page 3)*

A lot of the NTAC board was bracing itself for a rather contentious conference and meeting; however, none of that panned out. In a surprisingly smooth fashion, the board business was attended to and everyone attending came out of the meeting feeling enthused on the future outlook for the fledgling transgender civil rights organization. Definite plans were put into action, parameters for the group were more accurately defined, and the members – and even the three guests to the board meeting – came away very positive on NTAC.

Also at the conference were the much-photographed Jenifer René Pool, who was invited to do a 'Pool' side photo shoot by none other than Mariette Pathy Allen; and also local comedienne Jami Ward, who again did another of her stand-up routines at the SCC talent show on Friday evening. Our local 'starlets' were out shining.

Speaking of stars, Alicia Goranson of TV and silver screen – the original Becky on the Roseanne Barr Show, and also one of the female co-stars in Boys Don't Cry – made an appearance at the conference as well. This author and Monica both decided to drop in on a GenderPAC reception during the event that had Ms. Goranson as one of the speakers helping pitch for funds for Riki Wilchins and GPAC.

During the question and answer after Ms. Goranson's speech, nobody had much to ask her ... so I decided to fill the time with numerous questions (never one to let dead air just sit there!) Afterwards, I went over to apologize to her for one of the more pointed questions, which kind of put her on the spot. We had a real nice chat after the intros and apologies – she's a very sweet, down-to-earth young adult; not much unlike what you'd find just bumping into someone at the local coffee houses. Totally unpretentious. More importantly, (GPAC notwithstanding) she was there to take a stand for the transgender rights movement. This author must commend her for her gutsy stand.

So what were my lasting impressions of my first Southern Comfort Conference? The diversity was amazing – seemingly every ethnicity, every facet of the gender variant community, every socio-economic level, casual participants and true TG community leaders ... they were all there! And in abundance! To actually see over six hundred gender-gifted individuals in one location is (trite as

it may sound) empowering. It gives you a sense that we really aren't alone in this struggle. Beyond that, you also see the true talent level of some of the best of the national TG populace.



**The NTAC Board listens as Vanessa Edwards Foster (hand on chin) addresses the group. Clockwise from Vanessa are Kathy Padilla, Cathy Platine, Sue Davis, Dawn Wilson, Chris Stinson, Angela Brightfeather and Courtney Sharp.**

Additionally, as with all events I attend, the most enjoyable aspect is making more friends from around the country. Julie Johnson and I had a chance to chat more this meeting – a very impressive lady. During one night at the hotel bar, I met a real neat couple of T-girls from North Carolina, Amy Alley and Stephanie Fortune, and joked and laughed with them into the wee hours of the morning – really fun gurls! My roomie for the event was probably my best find of the event. After spending

*(Continued on Page 18)*



**Vanessa (L) and Jenifer René Pool, goofing around at Southern Comfort in Atlanta**

# Monica's Excellent Reunion Weekend

By Monica Roberts

Ever since I began my transition in 1995, I have been working towards getting ready for my 20 year high school reunion which took place in Houston on the weekend of October 6-8. As a matter of fact, the excitement started for me when I was watching ABC 2000 back on New Year's Day and I remembered that the new year I was watching come in meant that the 1980 class of Jesse H Jones High School would be gathering together again. This reunion however, would be different. It would be the first time that "The Class With Class" would meet Monica Katrice Roberts. She was always there, but just not in the correct body. I am not the only transgendered member of the Jones Class of 1980 either! I have an F to M in my class also, but unfortunately Devin couldn't make the reunion.

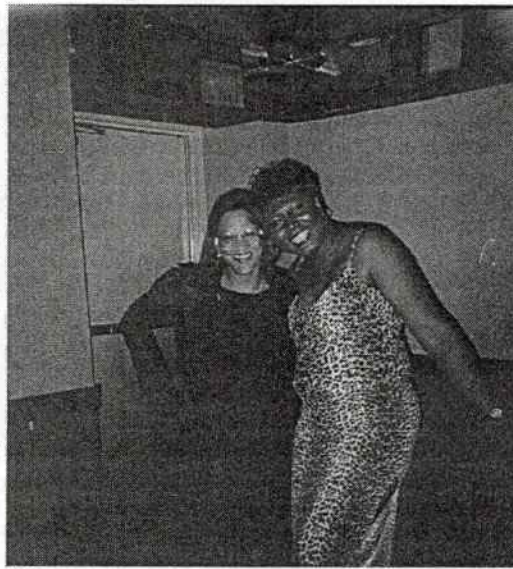
I was in a magnet gifted and talented program that HISD called Vanguard, and we were basically a 'school within a school'. My major subjects were taken within the Vanguard program, but any electives not offered within Vanguard we attended with the rest of the Jones student body. As a result, I had friendships with the entire school and not just within the Vanguard program, and considering how shy I was then it is amazing that I know as many people as I do in the Class of 80!

The first people in my class who were introduced to Monica were my Vanguard classmates in 1998. Galen Gillum and Dana Read, my geometry teacher were playing the 'whatever happened to ...' game one day and decided to organize a mini-reunion of the 1980 VG class at an Astros game. There were 67 people in my VG class so they rented a skybox for the occasion and in the process of trying to track Mike down they found out about my transition. I went to the game (the Astros-Cubs game) and had a great time along with the 30 classmates that did show up, including my junior year girlfriend Donna Greenwood. They had another one last year that I couldn't make because I had to work (sound familiar TATS?)

Fast forward now to April 8, 2000, and I showed up at a planning meeting for the 20 year reunion at Jones High. My co-workers Davette English and Melanie Childress are fellow Falcon alums and already had known

about my transition for several years. Melanie is also one of my close friends who has known me since junior high school. She and Davette had been asking me to show up for one of the meetings since many of my classmates by now had already heard about my transition and were curious about what I'd been up to. That particular day I was off so I could attend the Unity banquet so I squeezed in the meeting and had a great time. That meeting only heightened my determination to be there for my reunion, and as the months ticked off toward that October 2000 date the excitement grew.

Finally, the big day arrived, and I hustled off to the beauty shop to get my hair done for Day 1 of my reunion. We set up our reunions so that everyone has an opportunity to attend at least part of the festivities. We were having an icebreaker party at the Urban League headquarters that was due to start at 7 PM and I eventually got there at 8 PM after changing clothes three times before leaving the



What ever happened to...? Monica Roberts (R) and a close friend during high school, Joslyn Franklin (L)

house. I also brought my memory book from 1980 with me and on the bus ride to downtown had a chance to reflect on how I was now about to fulfill a promise I made to myself after the 1990 event. I vowed that at our next reunion I would be attending it as my true self, and I was moments away from making that a reality.

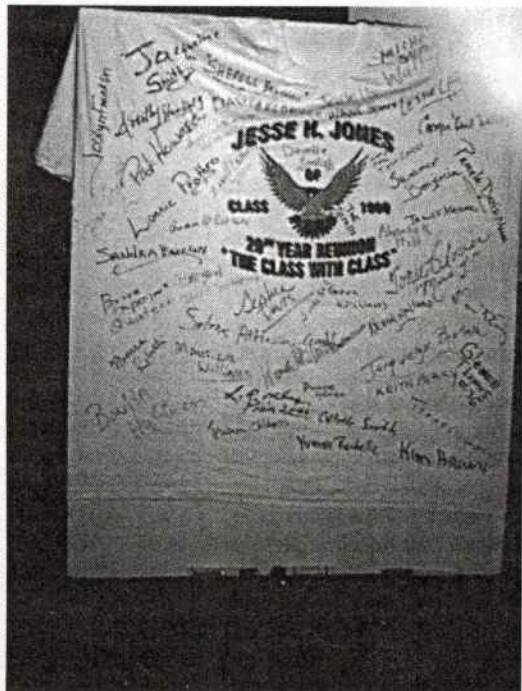
I was greeted at the door and after filling out my nametag I walked into the room. I spotted Brian Quintero, one of

my classmates who now is a Harris County attorney. We greeted each other and he introduced me to his wife. Other classmates started coming into the Urban League building and I circulated around the room talking to different people, including some that I hadn't seen in 20 years. Some were surprised at just how much I'd changed since I had my senior picture with me for comparison, and I happily took a lot of group photos that evening. I was also amazed at just how successful many of my classmates were.

Twenty minutes later Joslyn Franklin, one of my close friends arrived along with her twin sister Roslyn. Jos and I used to spend many nights on the phone talking about anything under the sun and I kept up with her even through her marriage and Air Force duty in Italy and Germany. The last time I saw Joslyn was in 1985, and I lost contact with her after she moved to Utah in 1991. She had been on my mind from time to time and I was very happy to see her, and after seeing the surprised look on her face, she ran up and gave me a big bear hug. After a few minutes of questioning, we picked right back up where we left off in terms of our friendship. At one point during the night as I began circulating around the room again, some of my classmates began asking Joslyn and Melanie who was the woman they were talking to, referring to me. We all got a big laugh out of that. The voting also began that night for the various award categories to be given out at the formal dinner Saturday night.

The alarm jolted me out of bed Saturday morning and I quickly got dressed and headed to the brunch that was to start at 11 AM at the Marriott Medical Center. I was really feeling the Falcon spirit that morning and dressed in our school colors of black and gold. I arrived at the hotel and sat with Jos and Ros and Roslyn's daughter Shalonda, who was now 22 years old. I promptly played proud aunt and whipped out my picture of my niece Chantoya. I picked up my breakfast and pulled out my yearbook and memory books as we reminisced about the fun we had and told stories about our days at Jesse Jones High. A few new classmates showed up for this event who weren't in attendance at the previous night's party at the Urban League building. After another round of photos

(Continued on Page 13)



Jesse Jones High School Reunion Memorial T-Shirt

**HRC DINNER...AND TATS....**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

"The names of every transgender who commits suicide because they can't find work should rightfully be placed at Barney Frank and HRC's doorstep!" fumed Ms. DePalma. "They are the only ones holding us up from getting into ENDA!"

After coordinating in the parking lot, and having HCDA's Brenda Thomas drop by to give the gang her moral support, the group walked the block over to Colombe D'Or. Not long after arriving we were joined by more of our awareness campaigners. Besides the organizer, Sarah, others attending included TATS' Melanie Black, Phyllis Frye, Beth Richard, Cristan Williams and yours truly, Jackie Thorne of GCTC, and Bi-Net's Gigi Wilbur. We also had a number of participants from the Gay & Lesbian community, such as Don Devers, Edwin Johnston, Kevin Spain and Alexis and John (didn't get the last names).

This, of course, was not your typical protest. The newest fold in the realm of activism, awareness campaigns and leafleting are becoming much more popular. Far from the days of picket signs and screaming, this was a quiet group assembled with the banners and signs ... and leaflets - factoids accumulated over the course of years on a portable sheet of paper for the dinner-goers to take in with them.

A much better reason for the newer approach to the protests of yore is that a large number of those attending the fundraiser were our friends in the gay, lesbian and even straight communities. It was almost like old home week, with 'protesters' hugging and giving kisses. Just the kind of sight that HRC likes to see when viewing out the window at the assembled 'protest.' Kinda warms the heart.

It was also a rather successful way of getting our talking points on the leaflets into the dinner itself. Additionally successful, is the way we were able to breach this subject with a good number of our attending friends who had no inkling of the situation theretofore. A good number of them, like the Dinner Group's Tori Williams, expressed a genuine concern over the current status; as well as asking for specifics on the disparities. Even State Rep. Debra Danburg and Democratic Party Chair Sue Schechter, on their way into the affair, stopped to ask for details on the gulf between the HRC and transgenders.

At one point, midway during the effort, we even had Elizabeth Birch out in front of the venue, going point / counterpoint with Austin's Angela



↑ Sign on the bottom line: Angela Bridgman (L-R), Vanessa Edwards Foster and Melanie Black show to HRC a sign of how T-exclusion makes them feel.

At left, Vanessa displays a sign of the times ... "Separate ... and Unequal!"



An unusual sighting: two old combatants exchange pleasantries in the midst of the HRC event. Phyllis Frye (L) and HRC Exec. Dir. Elizabeth Birch, share war stories, laughs and a hug outside of the Elizabeth Birch dinner at Colombe D'or

Bridgman over my flyer. Though I'd managed to get around to the front, she remained entangled with Angela the entire time.

There was a brief chance to hand her both Sarah and my flyers, but by then she was briefly ensconced in reliving some of the old war stories with another very familiar adversary, the war-horse herself: Phyllis Frye. Watching Phyllis and Elizabeth hug, smile and laugh like old friends was both touching and surreal at the same time. If anyone had a question that this was a protest, that pretty much blew the protest argument

time - not a 'short-term gain' situation. However, this was a great start: we managed to make a large number of the movers and shakers in Houston's Gay & Lesbian community aware of the HRC's intransigence on supporting employment protections for the B and especially T portions of the GLBT alphabet soup.

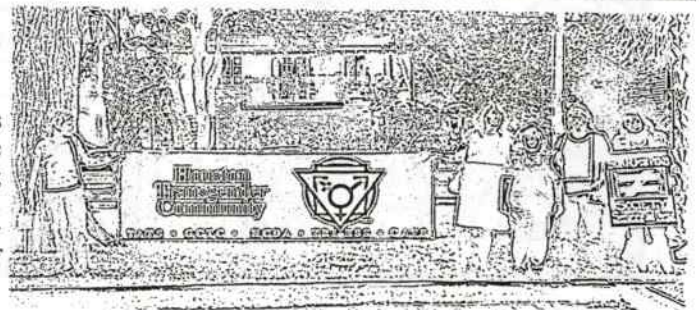
Little by little, the softest of water constantly flowing will erode even the granite cliff walls ....

**HRC APPOINTS TG TO ITS BUSINESS COUNCIL**

HRC recently appointed Michelle Martin, a transgender from Dallas, to its Business Council. Ms. Martin, who works as a customer service manager at American Airlines, is also the company's transgender liaison to Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, & Bisexual Employees at American Airlines (GLEAM). Ms. Martin was instrumental in the incorporation of transgender issues into American's EEO statement and has served as a consultant to other Fortune 500 companies, mediating on behalf of transgender employees and advocating for their explicit inclusion in corporate EEO policies. Michelle is a former board member of IFGE, and also worked with the Dallas School District's Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

out of the water.

How successful will this awareness campaign be in the long run? That's something that's a bit too early to measure. It's something that will occur gradually over the course of



# AN HRC ATTEMPT AT INCLUSION

(Pamela DeGroff, NTAC Media Release)

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is attempting to get a lot of mileage out of the fact that a transgendered person by the name of Michelle Martin has been appointed to the Business Council of HRC in Dallas, Texas. She is an employee of American Airlines, where she works as a customer service manager, and is the transgender liaison to Gay, Lesbian, Transgender & Bisexual employees at American Airlines (GLEAM).

She is also a former board member of the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), and has worked with the Dallas Independent School District's Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). While all of Ms. Martin's activities in the Dallas area have been high profile, and she is well known, it should be noted that her appointment is strictly to the Dallas office of HRC. HRC is using the opportunity to circulate this message in order to gain a positive spin for their progress on inclusivity.

The initial reaction by the national TG community has been, for the most part, lukewarm. Sarah DePalma, Executive Director of the Texas Gender Advocacy and Information Network (TGAIN), was tentatively approving of the appointment of Ms. Martin. "We welcome any transgender participation that will bring about our inclusion in the HRC." However, DePalma tempered this by reminding "...no matter how well intentioned this appointment may be, this is still mere nibbling at the margins.

"While we recognize Michelle Martin's appointment as possibly signifying progress within the HRC hierarchy," began Anne Casebeer of Louisville, KY, "the TG community can only judge HRC on what they do on Capitol Hill."

Other reactions were not quite as generous.

"This is just window dressing," stated Vanessa Edwards Foster, a transgender activist from Houston. "HRC has a hard time bringing themselves to say the word 'transgender', much less pushing for our inclusion in employment rights legislation. This is their attempt at being politically correct, however inadequate."

Take into consideration HRC's September 2000 report "The State Of The Workplace", and its chapter on gender identity. While the report call attention to the problems that TG folks face on the job, and summarizes existing laws to ban discrimination based on gender, simply providing a catalog listing of abuses and corrections is a long way from actively fighting for transgender rights.

While this indicates progress on behalf of HRC, it still lags far behind the levels of support Parents and Friends Of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG), or the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). Yet, some transgender community leaders remain cautiously optimistic.

Ms. Casebeer, Secretary of the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) Board of Directors is waiting "...to see whether HRC finally, as they should have done years ago, actively and clearly support employment rights legislation at all levels for TG people as a parallel goal to gay and lesbian rights. Nothing short of full inclusion in ENDA will be acceptable to NTAC."

Others don't hold out as much hope. Ms. Foster, of TGAIN and NTAC, sums up HRC's true intentions when she adds, "...when HRC fights for rights, they often neglect to mention or push for us...or worse, work against our inclusion."

HRC may be able to write us into their list of platitudes and rhetoric, but continues to ignore the transgender community when it's time to do the most important writing: TG inclusion in ENDA legislation.

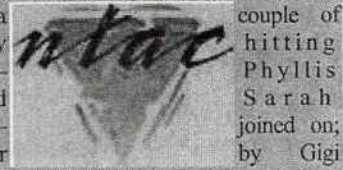
(The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition is the nation's preeminent organization working for the civil rights of all transgendered and intersexed people in every aspect of society. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.ntac.org>)

## NTAC SEES GROWTH IN HOUSTON AFTER ELIZABETH BIRCH'S DINNER

Even from the earliest of days back in those first dinner discussions in 1997, Houston had a lone presence on a fledgling, grassroots activist group: Vanessa Edwards Foster. Later, Monica Roberts and Jessica Redman joined Vanessa in formally founding what was to later become NTAC - the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition. Soon, a couple of our heavy hitting activists - Phyllis Frye and Sarah DePalma - joined on; followed later by Gigi Wilbur of Bi-Net, Beth Richard, Tri-Ess' Jane Ellen Fairfax and for a brief period Arwen Schiesler.

Since the beginning of October, the NTAC list has seen unprecedented growth from the Houston area transgender community. Melanie Black, Lilly Roddy, Vikki Lynn Skelton, HCDA's Brenda Thomas, Brandi Welch Williams and Alyssa Wright have all joined the usual cast and crew already on NTAC. Even Brandi notwithstanding, this makes Houston the largest city contingent in NTAC.

Great participation, gang! Give yourselves a round of applause. Now, if we can just get all these folks working on the various NTAC committees, or going up to Washington to lobby with us....





# WRITE THE CHECKS, BUT DEMAND MORE FOR YOUR MONEY

By Eric Resnick, Gay People's Chronicle:

**E**very subculture in America needs a lobby in Washington looking out for its interests. Our community is fortunate to have the Human Rights Campaign, which has become one of the most powerful and influential lobby groups in Washington.

HRC serves two purposes. There is the foundation side which is an advocacy organization that funds worthwhile projects such as the Coming Out Project and the Youth College. They aired the employment discrimination ad during the Ellen coming-out episode last year.

The other side of HRC is the political action committee or PAC, whose function is to give us the most gay-affirming U.S. Congress possible. For the purpose of this column, I will deal exclusively with the group's PAC side.

HRC's PAC is considered a "heavy hitter" in Washington, which is important. But we are at a point in our movement where we need to carefully examine how that perception has been created and ask if we want to continue down that path. Being a "heavy hitter" in Washington means the organization's director, Elizabeth Birch, gets invited to all the great parties and social functions. It also means that other PACs look to you as an authority.

But in the case of HRC, being a "heavy hitter" has not necessarily produced much in terms of gay-affirming legislation. HRC could not stop the ill-named Defense of Marriage Act in 1996. And they have failed to influence enough votes to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act over two sessions, despite overwhelming public support.

In the 105th Congress of 1997 and 98, HRC failed to get neither ENDA nor the Hate Crimes Prevention Act to the floor for a vote. One reason why this affluent, "heavy hitter" PAC has such difficulty with legislation is the way it conducts itself through the electoral process. Often, HRC chooses to impress the Washington elite instead of putting its wealth behind candidates whose votes can actually influence legislation. HRC does this by taking few electoral risks.

In 1998, HRC endorsed 194 candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate and contributed over \$1 million to those campaigns. Attendees at the Cleveland and Columbus HRC dinners will likely hear Birch or other HRC staffer proudly state something to the effect that 85% of the candidates HRC endorsed were winners. That sort of statement really impresses Washington types, but a more appropriate reaction from the source of all that money should be, "so what?" if it does not translate into enough votes to pass pro-gay legislation.

Ohioans are a major source of HRC's money. Each year, between the Cleveland dinner, the Columbus dinner, and the Federal Club contributions, HRC raises roughly \$300,000. In 1998, HRC made endorsements and contributions to six Ohio candidates running for the U.S. House of Representa-

tives and none running for U.S. Senate. A total of \$19,000 was spent. A simple look at what we got for our money reveals why we don't have the votes to move our legislation.

In Ohio in 1998, HRC's money made little, if any difference in the outcomes of elections - and it could have. In the U.S. House races in Ohio, four incumbents received contributions. Rep. Sherrod Brown received \$2000. Rep. Dennis Kucinich received \$4500. Rep. Tom Sawyer received \$2000. Rep. James Traficant received \$500.

One challenger, Cincinnati Mayor Roxanne Qualls, received \$5000. And Stephanie Tubbs Jones received \$5000 to run for an open seat in Cleveland.

The contributions made to Kucinich and Tubbs Jones were wasted - not because they are not great supporters of GLBT issues and worthy of our support, but because their elections were foregone conclusions. They didn't need the money!

The contribution to Traficant is a mystery. He had no real opposition, and according to HRC's own data, only voted with us 38% of the time in 1997 and 1998. Contributions to Sawyer and Brown were appropriate. Both had opponents with fat war chests, both were 100% with us in the most recent session of Congress, and both had fine gay-affirming records in previous congresses.

Is it any wonder that HRC can claim to support winners when their endorsed candidates have no real opposition? More importantly, is this any way to pass legislation?

HRC missed opportunities to support gay-affirming Ohio candidates. These were people who spoke to us and for us during their entire campaign and needed HRC's money to get their message out.

Most noteworthy was U.S. Senate candidate Mary Boyle. There was no question that Boyle was the most gay-affirming candidate ever to run for the U.S. Senate from Ohio. I served on the finance staff of Boyle's campaign and I had contact with HRC in the early stages of the campaign. More importantly, I saw the effect of no HRC endorsement firsthand. Not having an HRC endorsement, even for a vocal supporter, was demoralizing to the campaign and embarrassing for gay people who wanted to help Boyle.

Not having HRC's endorsement cost the Boyle campaign the endorsements of other PACs who are impressed by HRC and tend to follow their lead. Lesbian and gay contributors withheld tens of thousands of needed dollars waiting for HRC's endorsement which never came.

HRC's refusal to endorse Boyle made it appear that her opponent, former Cleveland mayor, Ohio governor and now U.S. Senator George Voinovich, wasn't so bad. But the truth is, Boyle was a sure vote for ENDA and the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Voinovich is a vote against both.

Early on, HRC told me they were not likely to endorse Boyle because "funds were tight". In fact, the reason why Boyle was not endorsed was that, unlike some other HRC endorsements, she had a powerful opponent. Her election was not a foregone conclusion. So, a Boyle endorsement may have meant that HRC might have only picked, say, 79% winners - and we can't have that.

I am not advocating that we do away with HRC or stop writing checks. I am stating the importance of an HRC which is not only a "heavy hitter", but able to move legislation and truly win elections - not just jump on winners' bandwagons. Campaign money should be spent in such a way that our agenda moves forward. Our friends should be supported and our enemies defeated. Nothing else matters.

## Imperial Court of NY Takes Stand for Inclusion

By Coco LeChine, Empress Heir Apparent, International Imperial Courts System

Dear Ms. Elizabeth Birch,

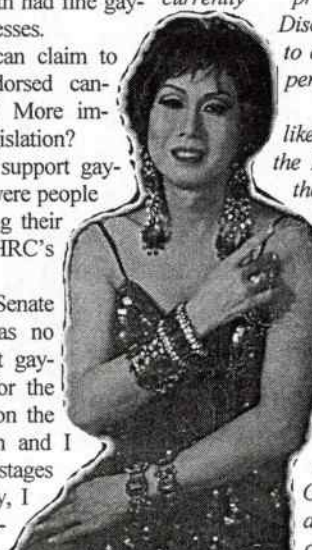
We are writing to express our concern that the currently proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act has been drafted to exclude the issue of transgendered persons in any concrete way.

By way of introduction, we would like you to know the following about the Imperial Court of New York, and the Imperial Court System in general.

The Imperial Court of New York... is part of the International Court System, which was founded 30 years ago. There are more than 60 courts throughout the United States and Canada, all of which are nonprofit corporations... In many communities, the Imperial Court represents the most cohesive and organized gay and lesbian organization in the community.

Members of the Imperial Court are a diverse and eclectic group of individuals - men and women, gay and lesbian, drag performers and leather men, transvestites and transsexuals, and even a few heterosexuals! - with a single purpose in mind: without even losing their sense of humor, or sense of dignity, to use dressing up in various ways to raise funds for gay and lesbian charities in their communities.

Every member of our organization would like to encourage the inclusion of transgendered individuals in ENDA.. we feel that this is an imperative. We feel that it is the utmost importance to remember that we are none of us protected, until we are all protected.



# WINN-DIXIE FIRES CROSSDRESSER AFTER 20 YEARS ON JOB

## Crossdressing Away From Work "Bad For Corporate Image"

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

NEW ORLEANS — According to an October 23 report, the sixth leading nationwide food retailer, Winn-Dixie Stores, is facing a federal civil rights lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of a man who was fired for cross-dressing away from work.

Peter Oiler, a married, heterosexual truck driver, worked for 20 years at a New Orleans area branch of Winn-Dixie, a Fortune 500 company with more than 1,100 grocery stores in 14 Southern states. According to news reports, Oiler's supervisors learned that off the job he occasionally cross-dresses and expresses feminine aspects of his identity, he was fired.

By terminating Oiler because he did not conform to the company's stereotyped notions of how a man ought to look and act, Winn-Dixie violated state and federal laws that bar sex discrimination, the ACLU contends.

"He was told that the fact that he cross-dresses was bad for Winn Dixie's image," said Eric Ferrero, an ACLU spokesman. A spokesman from the Jacksonville, Florida based corporate offices had no comment.

While existing legal precedent says that employers cannot force people to conform to rigid gender stereotypes, today's lawsuit goes further by arguing that the ban on stereotyping protects gender-variant people. The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Louisiana, seeks unspecified damages as a result of lost wages and emotional distress. "[Oiler] had gone to the Equal Employ-

ment Opportunity Commission to see if they would pursue the case," according to Courtney Sharp, a New Orleans based member of NTAC and It's Time America, "but they decided they would not cover it."

Approximately a year ago, Oiler had his ears pierced; which prompted comments and an October meeting with a supervisor who stated that the earrings were not allowed on the job. "You can't drive the truck with posts in your ear" said Ms.



Sharp, recounting the employers excuse in a phone interview. Meanwhile, "rumors started circulating among the other workers that [Oiler] was gay." This apparently went on for some time, before Oiler approached management to have the rumors stopped.

Later, during a periodic employee review, the evaluation stated Oiler was still doing a fine job. The boss asked Oiler about the 'rumors' that circulated about being gay, and whether they'd stopped. Oiler responded he hadn't heard much recently. Then the boss asked why Oiler was so upset over the rumors, and Oiler responded that it was because he was transgendered — not gay.

When Oiler then asked what the company's policy was on transgendered, the boss stated he didn't know and would have to check with the corporate office. After meeting with the corporate

honchos, the boss returned and immediately dismissed Oiler. Their response, according to Ms. Sharp, was "that it was bad for the corporate image of the company."

"Peter Oiler followed all company policies, never violated the dress code and, most importantly, he did a good job and earned numerous promotions and raises," said Jennifer Middleton, staff attorney at the ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project. "His termination strikes at the very core of why these civil rights laws exist — to keep bigotry and bias out of employment decisions."

Reportedly, the supervisor also told Oiler that they'd dismissed other transgenders in the company for the same reason, and were legally entitled to do so. "Performance was not an issue," Ms. Sharp recounted, "crossdressing was."

Of the more than two dozen municipalities that specifically bar transgender discrimination, some only allow off-the-job gender expression and others broadly prohibit gender stereotyping.

The Wall St. Journal reported earlier this month that companies are increasingly recognizing the need to add transgendered people to nondiscrimination policies. At the same time, local and state governments are increasingly passing legislation that specifically bars discrimination against transgendered people, with such laws now on the books in 30 municipalities.

The lawsuit (Oiler v. Winn-Dixie Stores) was filed in U.S. District Court, seeking unspecified punitive and compensatory damages for lost wages and emotional distress.

## DeKALB FINALLY MAKES IT OFFICIAL: TG NON-DISCRIMINATION!

By Miranda Stevens Miller

DeKALB, Ill. — At the end of 1998, DeKalb City Council passed an amendment to the DeKalb Human Rights Ordinance to add the category of sexual orientation. In August of this year, another amendment was introduced into DeKalb City Council which would provide protection for transgender and gender variant people. Monday night, Sept. 25, at the DeKalb City Council meeting, that amendment was passed unanimously.

The amendment came about through the dedication and lobbying of the local GLBT human rights organization (CMAD, Community Members Against Discrimination). The impetus to get the gender amendment introduced came from Kathie Hankins and Molly Judd, residents of DeKalb and members of both CMAD and It's Time, Illinois. Molly Judd had been working for a long time with the DeKalb Human

Relations Commission to educate them on the issues. Kathie Hankins really got the ball rolling a few months ago when she galvanized CMAD into action. The members of CMAD worked tirelessly for months to introduce and provide testimony which eventually led to the passage of the ordinance.

According to Norden Gilbert, Director of the DeKalb Human Relations Commission, the vote was unanimous and there was very little opposition. "On a vote of 6-0 (one alderman absent) tonight, the De Kalb City Council added gender identity as a protected class under its Human Relations Ordinance without any special restrictions. Two negative letters in yesterday's local newspaper urged opponents to come out to the council meeting, but the opposition simply did not materialize. A motion by one alderman to send the proposal back to the Human Relations Commission to

take another look at the wording of the definition of gender did not receive a second, and that alderman ultimately voted in favor of the ordinance." [Molly Judd and Kathie Hankins] spoke eloquently and most effectively before the Council."

The wording for the DeKalb ordinance was suggested by It's Time Illinois. The ordinance amends the Human Rights Ordinance by replacing the category of "sex" with the more inclusive category of "gender". The change guarantees that the group comprising "gender" is inclusive of a person's actual or perceived gender identity, appearance, or behavior regardless of whether they differ from those traditionally associated with one's sex at birth.

DeKalb joins Champaign-Urbana and Evanston as the only jurisdictions in Illinois with ordinances providing protection based on gender identity.

## Nashville TG Murdered

from Tennessee Vals Newsletter,  
November 2000

Nashville Police released the identity of an individual found dead October 13 inside of a south Nashville home. The individual, Maximiliano Cortez, 20, a native of Guatemala, had been stabbed to death.

The victim had been dead for more than a week when the body was discovered at the victim's home. Cortez was identified through fingerprints.

According to reports, the victim went by the name Ana Melisa Cortez, and carried on day-to-day activities dressed as a woman, a police spokesperson said.

Police currently have no leads, and urged anyone with information on Cortez's slaying to contact the department's murder squad.

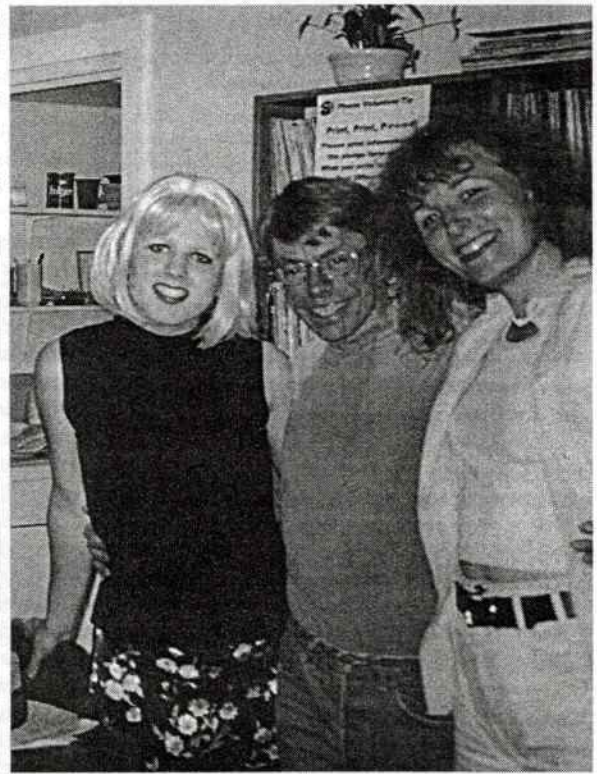
## TATS Tackles Transsexual Homelessness

The TATS girls took on homelessness among the transgendered, inviting the controversial Chanel Divadita, the 19-year old subject of the flap between the Houston TG community and Covenant House. Chanel was the nameless teen written about in the Houston Voice who was summarily sent packing from Covenant House for not keeping an appointment for a physical. According to Chanel (and others who spoke up after the incident began), Covenant House does not allow teens to transition in their appropriate gender in the charity residence.



Cristan Williams has been in touch with both Councilmember Annise Parker and State Rep. Debra Danburg's office; however, the issue remains unsolved. As in many cities, Houston has no facility equipped, or willing, to take homeless transgendered. Many prefer to house homeless TGs with those of their birth gender, which put M2F transsexuals at the greatest risk of being physically or sexually assaulted by the other male residents.

The bright spot of this story is that a woman has taken Chanel in, thus keeping her off the streets!



Above (L-R) Chanel Divadita is greeted by KPFT Radio hosts Jimmy Carper & Vanessa Edwards Foster.

Upper left: (L-R) guests Melanie Black, Cristan Williams and Chanel Divadita retell the story of what occurred at Covenant House for the KPFT After Hours Radio Show in the wee hours of October 15.

Lower left: (L-R) Chanel, Vanessa, Cristan & Melanie joke around after the show.

### TRANSGENDERED BOY...

(Continued from Page 3)

"appear unable to distinguish between instances of conduct connected to plaintiff's expression of her female gender identity, such as the wearing of a wig or padded bra, and separate from it, such as grabbing a male student's buttocks or blowing kisses to a male student."

If Doe's behavior is disruptive, Giles said, school officials should discipline him just as any other student would be disciplined. But to say that Doe's garb alone is disruptive amounts to a "heckler's veto," Giles wrote.

Jennifer Levi, a lawyer for Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, which is representing Doe, praised the decision, saying that "the school is focusing on this student because of her difference and is treating her more harshly than it does other students."

"The school says it's important to expose children at an early age to diversity," Levi added. "But rather than appropriately putting an emphasis on educating students about difference, school officials were allowing other students who are uncomfortable or lack knowledge about transgender people to decide that it is not OK for her to attend."

But Edward Lenox, a lawyer who represents the school system, said the decision to prohibit Doe from wearing women's clothes "was not a knee-jerk reaction."

"The school was extremely reserved and respectful of the individual here," Lenox said. "But the school needs to look out for the educational interests of hundreds of students in a given school."

Meanwhile, outside the school yesterday, "to each his own" was a phrase heard often.

Clyde Dodge, waiting for his daughter and niece, said the case is a simple matter of freedom of expression. "This is America, remember," he

said. "It's a free country."

But a woman who identified herself only as Sue said she had given permission to her 14-year-old son to "beat up" Doe if he touched him.

"In my opinion I don't think it's right," she said. "[My son] shouldn't have to put up with being touched. If [Doe] wants to be treated fairly he should wear men's clothes."

Doe's friends said he considers himself a woman trapped in a man's body and badly wants to return to school to be with them.

They also said Doe's desire to use the girls' bathroom is more an issue of safety than of flaunting his differences. In the boys' restroom, they said, Doe would face taunts and possibly violence.

"Boy or girl, he's still our friend," said one eighth-grader.

**Editor's note: although winning the case, Pat Doe has yet to re-enroll in school out of safety concerns. The superintendent cited the same concerns for her)**

March 15, 2001?

By Katrina C. Rose

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, members of Congress, I speak tonight for the dignity of humanity and the destiny of Democracy. I urge every member of every party, of every religious belief or lack thereof, of all races, from every section of this nation, to join me in that cause.

At times, history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in humanity's unending search for freedom.

So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was at Appomattox. So it was at the Stonewall Inn. And, so again it was last week in Austin, Texas.

There, long-suffering homosexuals, bisexuals and transgendered people peacefully assembled to petition their state government to end the denial of their right to equal protection of our law. Many of them were brutally assaulted – some in the name of the state, others in the name of religion. One innocent person – the heterosexual child of a transsexual – was killed by a police officer who carried both a bible and a gun.

There is no cause for joy over what happened in Austin. There is no justification for self-satisfaction in the excessively-long denial of equal rights to millions of Americans. However, there is cause for hope by virtue of what is happening tonight.

The cries of pain and the tears of anguish and the protests of oppressed people have summoned into convocation all the majesty of this great government.

Our mission is at once the oldest and the most basic of this country – to right wrong, to do justice and to serve humanity.

Rarely in any time does an issue lay bare the secret heart of America itself. Rarely are we met with a challenge, not of our growth or abundance, or our welfare or security, but rather to the very purpose and meaning of our beloved nation.

The issue of equal rights for homosexuals, bisexuals and transgendered people is such an issue.

Should we defeat every foreign enemy, and should we double our wealth and conquer the stars and, yet, still be unequal on this issue, then we will have failed as a people and as a nation.

There is no gay problem., No lesbian problem. No bisexual problem. No transsexual problem. No family values problem. No morality problem. There is but an American problem – and we meet here tonight, not as partisans, but as Americans to solve that American problem.

'Equal protection of the laws.' Those are not just clever words. They should not represent an empty theory – but for non-heterosexuals, they do.

The harsh fact is that in many places in this country people are excluded from employment, educational opportunities and housing for which they are the best qualified – simply because they are not heterosexual.

Every citizen must have an equal right to live

and be judged solely on ability, not on their sexuality.

Every device of which human ingenuity is capable has been used to deny this right. The homosexual may go to apply for work only to be told that the day is wrong or that the hour is late. The transsexual may go to apply only to be told that the person in charge is absent. If actually allowed to apply, the person's application will be thrown away before it is ever evaluated.

The Constitution says that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion and that no state shall deny its citizens equal protection of the laws. We have all sworn an oath to support and defend that Constitution – the supreme law of the land. We must now act in accordance with that oath.

Tomorrow, I will send to Congress a law that will forever eliminate the ability of the federal and state governments to allow the existence of any form of directly or indirectly state-sanctioned irrational, inhuman discrimination of the kind that has run rampant against non-heterosexuals for far, far too long.

There will be cries of 'moral decay!' and for 'states' rights!' There is no issue of states' rights or of church's rights or of national rights. There is only the struggle for human rights.

The cause of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people must be the nation's cause too. As a transsexual – as a woman who once was not one of 'them,' who once had undeserved special rights for no other reason than being perceived as being a heterosexual male – I can tell you that it is not just 'them.' Really, it is all of us who must overcome this crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice.

And we shall overcome.

<applause – or gunshots>

Though modified a bit, I plagiarized the above from Lyndon Johnson's March 15, 1965, address to Congress. Even if I do get to be in the position of delivering such a speech, I feel confident in saying that it won't be in 2001. Someone needs to do it then, though. Until a Prez does, passage and enactment of ENDA is a deranged delusion.

Look at the announced Prez wannabe-oids. Be honest. Will any of them be willing to make that speech? (Okay – I know none of them will talk about being a transsexual, but you get the idea.)

Hope or, if you're so inclined, pray that the events preceding President Kat's speech don't happen. I, however, am afraid that they will – and, if they do, there won't be an angry white transsexual in the White House to twist Congress's collective arm to stop the madness.

Think about that the next time you're seduced by George W. Bush's lies. We have to overcome them first.



## TS Receives Poor Hospital Treatment

Submitted by Monica Helms

COLUMBIA, SC — On Friday, October 13, Britney Gray, a pre-op transsexual, was admitted to Palmeto Richland Memorial Hospital because she had passed out earlier. Gray, 46, has a variety of health issues, some stemming from a stroke she had two years ago. One of the problems caused by the stroke is that she can no longer walk.

Shortly after being admitted to the hospital, the doctor treating her (his name withheld at this time) discovered her Transgender status and began referring to her with male pronouns on several occasions. Gray continually corrected him, and even showed him her driver's license, with her legal name change and gender marker change. She should not have had to show him the license, but even so, this did not seem to matter to him.

Early Saturday, Gray needed to use the bathroom, but could not get any help from the nurse's station. Crawling out of bed, she made her way to the bathroom and vomited all over the toilet. She lay on the floor for over twenty minutes before help arrived, even though she was continuously pulling the cord for the nurse. Later, she discovered that the doctor knew she was on the floor, but rather than going in and helping her himself, he sent in a nurse. The mess in the bathroom stayed there for over eight hours.

Sunday, Gray contacted Tracy Rhodes, a friend in Atlanta, to see if she could get any help. Rhodes put in a call to the Hospital Administrator and to an Atlanta activist, Monica Helms. Helms contacted Gray to get the full story, then also placed a call to the Hospital Administrator. Hospital Director B.J. Traynum assured both Rhodes and Helms in two separate conversations that this was unacceptable and the hospital did not, in any way, condone such behavior from its doctors or staff. Helms offered assistance with diversity training by providing the hospital with appropriate printed materials, and Traynum accepted her offer. He told Helms that as a training facility, Palmeto Richland "retrains" its doctors and staff to show proper respect for the patients. Traynum also informed Helms that he had spoken with Gray, assuring her that the problem would not happen again.

### Let's Talk Turkey...

**A woman called the hotline to find out how long it would take to roast her turkey. To answer the question, the Talk-Line home economist asked how much the bird weighed. The woman responded, "I don't know, it's still running around outside."**

**A lady was picking through the frozen turkeys at the grocery store, but couldn't find one big enough for her family. She asked a stock boy, "Do these turkeys get any bigger?" The stock boy replied, "No ma'am, they're dead."**

# “Transgender Termites” The Mini-Series: Part II

By Vikki Lynn Skelton

In Part I, I basically defined what a “Transgender Termite” is. I also tried to give some idea of how you can tell the difference between a “Peaceful Hider” and a “Transgender Termite” within the woodwork of society. Though they both hide within the woodwork of society, the “Peaceful Hider” may or may not secretly help the TG community but they will not hurt it or lash out in disrespect at those on the front lines trying to help the TG community. However, the “Transgender Termite” not only eats freely from the foundations that others have built and continue to build, they also tend to not help the TG community or care whether anyone else in the community is able to enjoy the same benefits they have enjoyed. At the same time, when their “safe” world is rattled by the actions of those trying to help the TG community as a whole, they will lash out at them in disrespect and criticize and complain about their actions.

Part II of “Transgender Termites” is focusing on the fact that there is a bigger picture than our individual self. To start off this article, let me give you a little background about my experience in getting a name and gender change.

### A Little Background

I am a pre-op M2F transsexual still working as a male. I live in Houston, Texas. I could not afford to hire a lawyer to do my name and gender change. So, I did some research and learned how to do my own. I figured that \$100 or so court fees was easier to lose than \$800 or so legal and court fees when there was no guarantee, even with a lawyer, that I would get a sympathetic judge. Plus, like most of us, I could not afford both the lawyer and court fees at the same time and I did not want to wait and save up the money. But that was my choice and you must make your own choices. If you can afford it, I suggest you use a lawyer who is experienced in TG matters. Though there are no guarantees, you will increase your chances dramatically of attaining the legal correction you desire in regards to your name and gender designation.

It was in the early 1990’s when I drew up my papers and went to the courthouses in downtown Houston, filing for my name and gender

change. Unfortunately, I got a judge that was not totally sympathetic to my case. Fortunately, I got a judge that was partially sympathetic to my case. She allowed me to change my name but did not allow me to change my gender. Though some judges will give a pre-op a legal gender change as well, there are many more that will not and many who will not give the name change. I was not able to acquire a legal gender change because my judge said that I must have the operation and present proof of such before she would grant it. Her decision was not based on any law, but on personal preference. The same is true with the judges who *have* decided to give the legal gender change before SRS. Right now, for most of us, to get the gender changed legally, we have to seek out the “loop holes” in the law and use them and just maybe we will still get a judge that is compassionate and understands our plight and will give us the gender change. Unfortunately, most judges will require one to have the sex change before giving the legal gender change. Unfortunately, in the court system, there is no law that states how one’s gender is to be determined and thus it is left to the whim of the lower courts. Hopefully, through the Littleton case, that will be changed in such a way that it will benefit the TG community and allow us an easier time to get that sex/gender designation change legally. Currently, I have had my name legally changed on my driver’s license and social security card. This has been sufficient since most people do not really even look at the sex designation on the driver’s license. Most people just barely even glance at the driver’s license itself.

Like the majority of transsexuals across the United States, I probably will never be able to afford the SRS. It is only a very small percentage of us that are able to have the privilege and benefit of obtaining SRS. This is true no matter how hard we work and how much we save. This is one reason we need the ability to legally change our sex/gender designation without SRS. At the same time, the legal & medical expense to even acquire a legal gender change tends to also be out of the reach for most transsexuals. Even then, there are no guarantees. It is up to the luck of the

draw as to whether you get a judge that will decide in favor or against you. If the judge you happen to get to consider your request does not give you the change, then that money is just thrown down the garbage disposal. There are *no* guarantees right now. In order to get these guarantees,

we need more of us out there fighting the fight in the courts, making the media aware of the injustice we face, an educating society as a whole in regards to TG issues.

### More is Better

More is better when it comes to TG  
*(Continued on Page 15)*

### MONICA’S REUNION....

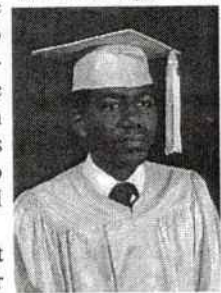
*(Continued from Page 6)*

was taken, the brunch wrapped up about 1:30 PM and we all left to get ready for the formal dinner later that evening. Melanie took me home and we proceeded to talk on the way back to Southwest Houston. Melanie and I have always been able to talk about anything on our minds honestly with each other. Every few months she asks me the “are you sure you want to transition” and “are you happy” questions and my answers are usually the same, *yes* and *yes*. I realize though that she is asking me these questions for her own peace of mind and to make sure that transition is what I want to do.

She picked me up later that night and off we went to the formal dinner which was being held at the Edwin Hornberger Conference Center. Everyone looked fabulous and Joslyn immediately spotted me and steered me toward the bathroom for some girl talk. We returned to the table as more of my classmates filed in for the formal dinner. After eating, Davette, the reunion committee chair began the program which included a musical slide show of all my classmates who had passed away. The program also included a speech from the current principal of Jones High, my classmate Lawrence Allen.. We also had a slide show going that included pictures of our school days and baby pictures of many of us in the Class of 80, and pictures taken at the earlier events of this current reunion. Of course, the flashbulbs from all of the cameras in the room gave this event the feel of a Hollywood premiere.

Then the awards portion of the event started and one of the categories was the “Most Changed Award” I’ll give you TATS boys and girls one guess as to who won it! As my name was announced, Joslyn and Greg Williams teased me by saying “You know you had this award locked up the second you walked in the room last night, so don’t even play like

you’re surprised!” It’s also been a running joke of mine for the last two years with T and non-T peeps. I also received a standing ovation as I nervously walked up to the rostrum to receive my gag gift and certificate. When the awards portion concluded, we then took a class photo. In the 1990 picture I was standing in the back and was about to head to the back row again when Melanie and



**‘Michael’ Roberts 1980**

Joslyn motioned for me to sit down on the front row with them. So I crossed my mile-long legs and sat down on the floor with the rest of the girls as we took that class

photo. We had a picnic scheduled for Sunday and Lawrence stepped up to the podium and announced that because of the crappy weather, the picnic was being moved indoors to Jones High! I was already bummed because I had to work Sunday and couldn’t get off, so I spent the rest of the night collecting business cards and phone numbers from various people.

The picnic went on without me, but the two days I spent in the company of my Jones Family means more to me than you will ever know. It was a passing of another milestone on my transition journey. I can’t turn the clock back to 1980, but the reunion allowed me to do that in spirit. I guess the best way to end this is with the Jones school song, since I am writing about my high school reunion:

*Our Gold and White we love so dear,  
We’ll remember through the years.*

*Courage, love and loyalty,  
True to our school we’ll always be.*

*Falcons stand out among the rest,  
Meeting each and every test.  
Cherished you will always be,  
In our hearts and memories.*

**ASTRO FORECAST**  
for **NOVEMBER 2000**  
By Lilly Roddy

**General Information**

The good news for this month is that Mercury, ruler of communication, decision making and initiate new projects is going direct on November 7th. You will need to wait until the 10th before your start any new projects or ventures. Thanksgiving week can be a bit more stressful than usual this year. Keep those visit home short and the conversation about the weather.

The full moon this month is on the 11th in the sign of Taurus. This full moon is about money, personal values and material things. Taurus is also about sensuality and tactile sensations. You may want to spend that Saturday involved in physical sensations. Have your lover give you a massage and feed you chocolate at the same time. And then let your creative juices flow. The new moon is on the 25th in the sign of Sagittarius. This is a time to being new ventures that have to do with expanding your knowledge base and broadening your cultural perspective. So, plan a trip to your favorite place for the holidays.

Some of the stressful days ahead are November 1st, 7th, 8th, 14th, 15th, 18th, 19th, 22nd, and the 25th. Keep your schedule flexible and build in plenty of exits on these days. Fun days are the 2nd, 9th, 10th, 16th, 24th, 26th and 27th. Plan to do festive things on these days.

**ARIES** — Shared resources are up for you this month. Just how much money do you and your lover have together? And are yall working on the same agenda for your future security? And since thinking about the future is not a place where you visit too often, you may not know all the questions to ask. But that won't stop you. You need some excitement in your relationship this month. You can get that through a experimental sexual adventure or an argument over who's in charge of what. The holidays are more peaceful and calm for you than the rest of the signs. You could sit back and watch those fireworks and have an extra slice of pumpkin pie.

**TAURUS** — Ok, so we know you are confused about your career direction. And you don't really know what you want to be when you grow up. So avoid any conversations about your future security with your partner. This will only add to your insanity and make you feel even more inadequate. You are still finishing up your review of the past and what you did on your summer vacation. Tell them that you will know after the end of January because you read it in your astrology column. That should make them feel more comfortable with you and your situation.

**GEMINI** — Can you say busy, active, industrious, and over extended? Because you know you are there. You don't even have time to read this. You had better be getting some handle on your

schedule or ill health will be paying you a visit during this month. You are trying to carry too much of the load. And just because you can juggle everything, so what? Start paring down what you are doing or you will be Melba toast by the end of the month. Don't worry, your active and good luck phase will continue well into next year so you don't have to do it all before the end of the year.

**CANCER** — This is a playful, fun, creative month. You may not want to work too hard but you will be successful even without too much effort. You are going to put a lot of energy into your home this month. You may be entertaining there more, redecorating the kitchen or have more energetic expressions of your libidinous proclivities. Relationships are more fun this month. You and your lover just get along better. You can feel the love. Business can be good this month, but it will have not to seem like work. Promotion and parties for the holiday season will be perfect for you.

**LEO** — With all the activity in you home this month, you may get lost up in the shuffle. You should be careful that you don't overload yourself during this holiday period. You are going to want to have everyone at your house for the holidays and when they get there, you are going to want them to leave. Be sure you have plenty of fire escapes so when you start getting hot under the collar you won't feel trapped. You also don't know what you want to do with your life at this time. Just make sure that it involved having a good time and you getting plenty of acknowledgement. After the holidays, you are ready to get back on track. You are more creative and the solutions will be on your finger tips.

**VIRGO** — Normally, with Mercury, your ruling planet retrograde, you get your life organized. But that has not been the case this time around. You seem to see what needs to be done but are not able to put your energy in a focused direction. After the 10th, your organizing skills come back and you feel like your old self. You are going to be busy at work through the end of this year and well into next year. You will need to build upon the opportunities that you are encountering. But as for the best directions to go in, you are still not sure yet and don't have to be. Keep your holiday encounters this year with the family temporary and amiable.

**LIBRA** — Mars, the ruler of Aries, your opposite sign, moves into your sign on the evening of the 3rd. Mars is active, aggressive, confrontive, impatient, inspirational and self motivated. This is not the things that the lovely Libra's are usually known for. So, don't hold this energy inside of you this month. Find some mirthful outlets for this dynamic verve. An exercise or health program might be a good way to express this but make sure you have someone to share in the adventure. Don't do it alone. And for the holidays, have then send you the agenda ahead of time so you can decide if it fits into what you think is best for every-

one.

**SCORPIO** — The beginning of the month is a stronger than normal time of introspection. Decisions will be harder than usual to make. But the lack of external actions is no indication of what is cooking below the surface. Your thoughts bubble to the surface after the 9th. Relationships are especially highlighted on the weekend of the 10th through the 12th. Try to keep busy because home is a rather unsettled place for you. And make your Thanksgiving visit to the old home place short and sweet.

**SAGITTARIUS** — Part of you wants to be social and part of your wants to be on a mountain top this month. You really want to have some deep conversations this month. Try to so some of both so you won't feel drained and overextended. The relationship and social arena continues to open up for you. It is very good as you get closer to the holidays and gets even better as December begins. Make sure that you take advantage of this time for business or personal promotion.

**CAPRICORN** — Lucky for you this November that your career is extra energized this month. After Mercury goes forward on the 10th, you are ready to take charge of your life. Watch that you enthusiasm doesn't have you driving the car over someone's foot who was getting in too slowly. Friendships and groups are very powerful for you this month. And you should have some contact with people that you have been away from for a while. The holidays find you restless and easily bored. Make sure you have plenty to do. Reliving your aunts hernia operation over the turkey and cranberries can push you over the edge. But don't worry, crimes committed during the holidays come with a built in pardon.

**AQUARIUS** — You will not want to rest on your laurels this month even if they are very attractive. You want special recognition this month for your leadership qualities. And particular acknowledgement for how smart you are. So, here it is. Gosh you have such a big brain. You will not be easy to deal with if you are passed over or ignored. Remember, in your heart lurks the Leo that wants attention and adoration from all that meet you. Relationships are still on the rollercoaster ride. You might as well get some cotton candy and enjoy the ride.

**PISCES** — And don't you need a rest from last month. You didn't know if your were going to be able to escape the planet or not. And darn, you missed the bus to Heaven and you are still here. Time for a trip during the holidays. You will probably even enjoy being with your family during the holidays. You are especially open minded this month. Get ready because big things are happening where you live at the end of the month. You may move or get some new furnishings. Even where you work may change locals. But you are ready for some excitement.

Visit Lilly Roddy's website at:  
<http://www.cybersim.com/hermes>

## TG TERMITES, PART II....

(Continued from Page 13)

issues. The more of us that work on our fears of losing what we have and gain the courage to step up to the plate and take a swing for, not at, the TG community, the more we will be able to accomplish in a positive way.

Maybe you can only help in stealth mode right now while you remain a "Peaceful Hider". That is fine. Just do it! (JDI!). Maybe you are able to step out and become a little more active in helping the TG community. That is fine as well. JDI! Maybe you are able to transition full time and are completely active in helping the TG community. That is fantastic. JDI! Whatever you can do, JDI!

The more TGs we have helping to educate society about TG issues, fight injustices against TG individuals, and lobby the political arenas in regards to TG issues, the more positive changes we will be able to accomplish. The more positive changes we can attain, the better it will become in the long run for all within the TG community and not just the few.

More is better when it comes to TG issues. To really affect positive changes within the TG community, we need to become a vital, active, and productive force in society, both as individuals and as a group of individuals.

### A Bigger Picture than Yourself

So far, the blood, sweat, and tears of those that have blazed the trail before us and are continuing to do so today have gained the privileges and benefits we have acquired to this point. They...

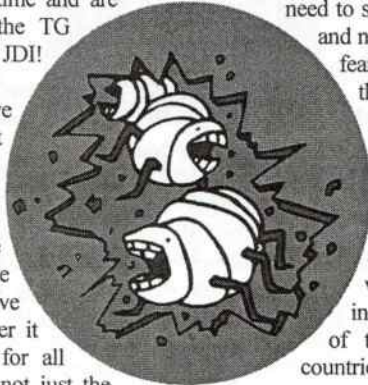
- 1) Made the sacrifices,
- 2) Spent their time and money,
- 3) Put in the hard work,
- 4) Lost the family members & friends,
- 5) Put their careers on the line,
- 6) Took the heat from the TG community and others, and
- 7) Have even died

...to give us what little freedom and protection we now have, if any at all in reality.

Christie Littleton thought she was well protected from the injustice she is now experiencing. Christie Littleton's case proves that not one transgender individual that has transitioned fully or is in the process of transitioning is safe from the whim of the courts or society, no matter how hidden within the woodwork of society they have become. She was not safe. Many have thought they were safe, but *because of the injustice* of the Texas Courts toward Christie, and *not because of Christie's case*, other lives of those both within and without the woodwork of society are being disrupted. This disruption has caused many of the "Transgender Termites" to rear their ugly heads. They have begun to come out of hiding and start

condemning those who are trying to put an end to this type of injustice. They forget to look at their own selves and realize that through their "hiding" and not doing what they can to help the TG community they are also responsible for some of the injustices we face from the courts and society as a whole. Instead of helping to end this type of injustice toward the TG community they lash out and criticize and complain about those who are doing something to better things for the TG community.

If a TG wants to "hide" and believe their world is "safe" from interruption by the court systems, then they have the right to do so. However, they need to stay "hidden" in a peaceful way and not rear an ugly head of hate and fear toward those who have made the choice and have the right to help the TG community while putting all they have on the altar of sacrifice. If it had not been for those that had blazed the trail before us and are continuing to blaze the trail, we would not be able to enjoy in relative safety in some areas of the United States and other countries the privileges of...



- ◆ Name changes,
- ◆ Being able to dress in public in clothes opposite of what our bodies portrayed and society said we should wear,
- ◆ Going out into public in relative safety,
- ◆ Not worrying so-much about police harassment in many areas of the U.S.,
- ◆ Having greater understanding from many in society in regards to TG issues,
- ◆ Being politically active and able to run for various offices as a TG individual in some states,
- ◆ Hiding in the woodwork of society and not take any risks to help the rest of our community to protect our rights as human beings and American citizens, and
- ◆ Much more.

Many have already begun to feel the effects of the injustice that Christie Littleton suffered at the hands of the Texas court system. Other lawyers and states have picked up on the unjustifiable ruling and are beginning to use it to make their own similar rulings in various cases involving Transgender individuals. That is more important now than ever before, that stand together and fight against injustices within the legal, political and societal communities against the TG community. Remember that it could have happened and still could happen to you. Christie Littleton expected to live a happy and productive life married to her husband. Christie *did not* expect to...

- ◆ See her husband die at the hands of malpractice,
- ◆ Have gender to be an issue in the malpractice lawsuit she filed,

- ◆ Have her happy marriage of many years that was legal in Kentucky to be dissolved by Texas,
- ◆ Have a state that helped pay for her SRS turn against her,
- ◆ To go through financial ruin,
- ◆ Be in the financial ruin that this whole ordeal has brought her,
- ◆ Lose her career or have it suffer as it has,
- ◆ Go through any of what she is now going through.

We must realize that it was only a matter of time before the issue of gender in the court system and what is to determine the "f" or "m" designation on legal documents and such would have come out. If not now with Christie, then with one of us in regards to some unforeseen event in our life, even if we are a "Transgender Termite" hiding in the woodwork of society.

So you see, there is a bigger picture than our individual self. We can all be affected by something we have no control over. Somehow, we must attain a proper balance of taking care of our own individual lives while at the same time helping others to attain the same privileges we enjoy. We must realize that it is only as a cohesive group, working toward common goals that we will be able to accomplish greater good for all within the TG community. We must realize that if anyone is not safe to live in his or her Preferred Gender Expression (PGE) then no one is safe to live in his or her PGE. We must realize that it could happen to each of us, "Transgender Termite" or not, just as it happened to Christie Littleton.

That ends Part II to the "Transgender Termite" Mini-series. Look for Part III and the final episode in the next issue. If you have any comments or questions in regards to this article, feel free to e-mail me at [heres\\_2\\_u@theglobe.com](mailto:heres_2_u@theglobe.com). May God be with you and yours until we meet again.

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# SEX: None Of The Above . . . . By Katherine Connella

From *The Advocate*, October 24, 2000

**G**rowing up gay isn't easy. So as adults, gays should be among the most accepting people in the universe, right? Ha! With the dawning of a new millennium, perhaps it's time to loosen the ties that bind each "alternative" sexuality unto itself to the exclusion of others. Take me, for instance. I've lived in Los Angeles for eight years and have been writing horoscopes for gay magazines for seven of those years. I think my reputation has been pretty much that of a straight fag hag, given my many nightclub appearances with drag performers like Jackie Beat and Alexis Arquette. But in the eyes of the law in some states, I'm not even a female. I was born what is called intersexed—meaning I was biologically neither fully male nor fully female but a combination of the two.

Growing up, I knew nothing of this. I was brought up as a boy named Charles; all my friends were gay males my age. They thought that's what I was too. In school—at least until I could no longer bear being the Carrie White of my community—it was assumed I was gay as well. I was constantly teased, though not with the usual gay insults; I was "the boy who acts just like a girl."

I didn't know what I was. The more I learned, the more confused I became. And my gay friends were no more help than my parents in helping me to sort things out. At 16, I was stamping hands at Dallas's biggest gay disco. I had a blast, even if I remained unknissed. At 17, I made one lame attempt to be a "drag queen." What a disaster—instead of lip-synching, I insisted on singing live.

I first heard about sex changes in my teen years and began to wonder if *that's* what I was—a transsexual. I dismissed it at first, but when I was 18, I decided I was a male-to-female transsexual after all and began six months of physical and psychiatric examinations. Here's what the doctors found and chose not to discuss: The fact that I started growing breasts at age 11, long before most of the girls in my class. That what appeared to be a normal boy's penis as a baby never progressed and instead became an enlarged clitoris. That a grossly unethical hormone treatment, undertaken by my family physician to force me into being male, had failed. (It was only a few years ago that a sonogram proved I have a full female reproductive system.) None of that was considered: I was a transsexual. I was just relieved to have an official name to put on what I was.

I began group therapy to be with "people like me." Major disaster. I didn't really understand how these people were different from the female impersonators I knew; the transsexuals thought I was from another planet. There was no bonding.

Twenty years later I have yet to find "people like me." I've known that I am intersexed for 15 years now. It was a relief but didn't change anything. I was still the kid who wore a wig to school in the first grade and who tried hard to learn



Katherine Connella

how to "cruise" as a teenager. My best friends are still gay men because of the similarities in what we endured and discovered about ourselves. But now I no longer flee from those lucky enough to be born fully one sex while choosing to become another, in part because I understand why transgendered people are the last to leave their closets: They fear rejection not only from heterosexuals but also from the gays and lesbians who may well be the closeted transgendered person's closest friends.

Knowing that nature has a sometimes demented sense of humor only proves to me that those people who claim same-sex attraction is a choice are about as grounded as those who say you can't get pregnant if you have sex in a swimming pool. Life experience proves such theories wrong. Life experience should also teach us that a person undergoing sex-reassignment surgery is not just another gay person who can't deal with reality and that that person has more in common with us other sexual deviants than gay people are sometimes willing to admit.

Let's face it: Almost no one is born fully normal—whatever *that* means. And it's time for the separatists among us to stop trying to ignore all the subgroups within our community. Gay, lesbian, transgender, transsexual, or intersexed, we're all the way we were born. And we all have to find a way of coping.

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**TATS Tidbits**  
By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• Marilyn Manson backs George Bush for President.... It may sound a bit far-fetched, but it's true! In an interview with *Talk* magazine, the ever-so-shocking rocker stated that he (she?) backs the Bush ticket because he can't stand Gore's running mate, Joe Lieberman. Apparently the rift is over Lieberman's comments condemning Manson's music and style. (One would also presume Manson would hold similar views of Tipper ... she of the Recording Industry's lawsuits and congressional hearings to censor more graphic music releases.)

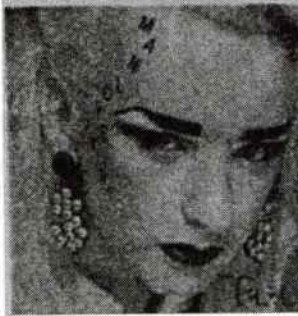


**Bush Babies: the Mansonites look positively angelic while waiting for that GOP 'big tent' to welcome them into their loving arms. Ah... traditional Republican values...!**

"Gov. Bush is a different kind of Republican - but not that different!" Bush campaign spokesman Tucker Eskew responded. Continued Eskew, "We do not plan a coalition of Cross-Dressing Glam Rockers for Bush anytime soon." Meanwhile, Marilyn Mansonite goth kids and hard-core right-wingers are lining up, shoulder-to-

shoulder at the polls, displaying that diversity that makes America the mosaic that it is ... and life is beautiful!

• The City of Steel Honors ... Boy George??? No, not George W. Bush ... we're talking about the real crossdressing George, of Culture Club and "Do You Really Want To Hurt Me?" fame. Apparently, the city council of Pittsburgh declared October 1 as "Boy George Tribute Day" and made the gender-bending singer an "honorary Pittsburgher." (With cheese? Hold the pickles...)



**By George, Boy... Happy Day!**

Joking aside, city councilmember Jim Ferlo, 49, sponsored the proclamation in honor of the singer's anti-drug message and "tireless energy to the music industry, as well as to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities" via his music, high profile, and recent positive example.

• CINCINNATI, Ohio — A police officer filed a federal lawsuit Monday against the city of Cincinnati, claiming he was demoted from his rank as sergeant because he is a transsexual. In the lawsuit, Officer Phillip W. Barnes seeks reinstatement to the position of sergeant and unspecified compensatory damages.

Barnes, a 19-year employee of the Cincinnati Police Div. and Marine veteran who served in Desert Storm, claims he was demoted for two reasons: because he was a transsexual who did not fit the masculine stereotype, and because his supervisory officers were motivated by prejudice against male officers who were

not heterosexual. A police report outlining the reasons for the demotion claimed he had poor judgment in street situations, lacked time-management skills, and had no 'command presence.'

• STERLING, Va. — The Immigration and Naturalization Service has settled a lawsuit against a couple, who say they have been targeted because they are transgendered. Katherine Spray, 32, who was born male; and Pat Spray, 44, who was born female married in 1995 and applied for a marriage-based visa for Katherine Spray, an Irish citizen. But a grand jury charged that the Sprays broke the law when Pat Spray "falsely concealed" two prior marriages on the 1996 visa application. The INS learned that one of the two marriages had never been properly dissolved.

The settlement was reached after Pat Spray dissolved the marriage in question sufficiently to satisfy immigration regulations. The Sprays acknowledge that Pat Spray failed to disclose the marriages on the application, but reported they are being prosecuted because they are transgendered. Immigration lawyers not connected with the case said the INS normally allows applicants to fix such problems after they are discovered.

• Prehistoric sex change.... *The Flintstones* originally had a son. In the series' press release and in a Little Golden Book adventure, there was a boy named Junior. When the decision was made in 1962 to give Fred and Wilma a baby, merchandising determined the sex. The belief was more girl dolls could be sold - so, Pebbles. Years later, we have a woman playing the vocal part of Bart in *The Simpsons*. Yabba Dabba... D'OH!



(Continued on Page 18)

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TATS Tidbits

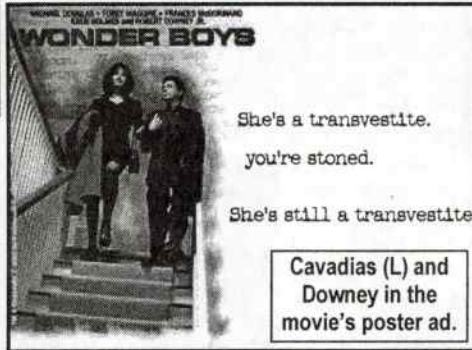
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• Dr. Cole is holding his semi-annual get-together on December 2, with the usual bill-of-fare: light snacks, sharing information, and lots of networking with other T-folks from around the region. Doors open at 10:30, and the meeting goes on until 2PM. Admission is \$5 And remember, this is the same time as Dickens On The Strand weekend. Perhaps make it a 2 for 1 weekend....

• News in New Jersey .... From a report by Rebecca Juro of the NTAC list, if a transperson has legally changed their name through the courts, and presents a therapist's letter that they are transsexual, all New Jersey Motor Vehicle agencies must now allow that person to choose their preferred gender for their driver's license. It all came about due to the tireless efforts of Dr. Aviva Nubel, a psychiatrist from Bridgewater NJ who treats a number of trans patients, with cooperation from the NJ Motor Vehicle Dept. and Federal Government agencies.

"Dr. Nubel... has devoted her life to making life better for the transgender community," stated Ms. Juro, a patient of hers. Considered a trans community hero, Nubel has "literally saved the lives of more transgendered people (including mine)... through her staunch support and activism on behalf of our community." Sounds like this doc has the right medicine!

• Paramount pictures is trying something unusual: they are re-releasing the film Wonderboys (originally released in Feb. and largely ignored) starring Michael Douglas as a burned-out writer. So where's the trans-community tie-in? Robert Downey Jr. (Douglas' editor in the film) is a bisexual who dates a crossdresser (played by newcomer Michael Cavadias, lead singer for the



rock group Bullet.) The movie is set to re-release Nov. 8.

• Bangladesh politician calls for trans-rights .... According to a Planet Out news report, a member of Bangladesh's Parliament from the ruling Awami League has called for civil rights for transgenders, and a junior minister for social welfare said his ideas would be considered. MP Mohammad Shahjahan referred to the group known throughout the subcontinent as "hijras" (commonly translated as "eunuchs", but including transgenders ranging from intersexed individuals to transsexuals to effeminate gay men, as well as males who have been castrated.)



There is an age old tradition of hijra subculture in Indo-Asian society. Hijras are a marginalized group who survive mostly as entertainers. Sometimes they are viewed as bestowing blessings or curses. Shahjahan estimated there may be four million hijras in Bangladesh, many of them uneducated because of the harassment they suffered in school, most of them denied the right to vote. He said last month that, "I don't understand why 'eunuchs' should not enjoy social and human rights." He urged that hijras be

considered a physically challenged group and called on the government to provide them with medical treatment, saying, "Modern medical science has found ways to transform 'eunuchs' into full human beings." Contrast that humanitarian approach to less civilized countries like, say, the United States, where the only politicians who publicly mention us in our national government do so to ridicule or with intent to marginalize us further!

• DELHI, India — Police believe a man murdered his wife and child out of his desire to be with his hijra lover, the London Times reported. Migrant factory worker Prem Paswan, 33, came to Delhi three months ago from Vaishali, Bihar, and met his hijra lover Sharada through a hijra neighbor. Three weeks ago his wife Reeta Devi, 30, followed him to Delhi with their two-year-old daughter Sulekha, but on October 2 they were found on the steps of a temple dying of poisoning. Police arrested Sharada and are searching for Paswan.

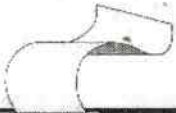
SOUTHERN COMFORT....

(Continued from Page 5)

the first night with Jessica and Monica, I spent the next two with Mara Keisling — one of the stalwarts of the SCC planning committee over the past few years. A Pennsylvania girl (like Jess), we hit it off immediately — another "sister" with a wicked sense of humor! Mara's definitely a pal!

Lord knows I'm not much of a participant in more recreational pursuits (remember, I spend my vacations going to DC and Austin and engaging in dogfights with conservative ideologues!) However, for those who are of a mind of attending national transgender events / conferences / holidays, etc.; this is the one to attend! Sure, it's fun, but you also get to meet folks like Mara, which really make it all worthwhile. I may just, make another one myself sometime ... and not for business, either!

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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support ●

Volume 8, Issue 12

Houston, Texas

December, 2000

TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

## TWO TRANSGENDERS WIN CAUCUS AWARDS

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus (HGLPC) held their annual Awards Gala on Sunday, November 19. It was the Silver Anniversary Gala celebrating the Caucus' 25<sup>th</sup> year in existence, making it the oldest GLBT civil rights organization in the south. And befitting the special occasion, this year's Awards Gala was a very notable event!

We had a rather noticeable attendance of TATS folks at this year's banquet – much more so than ever before. Officially attending were HGLPC board member Jessica Redman and officer Vanessa Edwards Foster, joined by Sarah DePalma and her SO, Lori Rice, Beth Richard, Desirée Walton, Brandi Welch Williams, Jennifer Nelson and Dr. Harlen Howe. This marked the largest TG attendance ever at the Caucus Gala. Most notable, though, were two of the award winners this year also came from TATS – Jessica Redman and yours truly.

Those of us organizing the event had every seeming roadblock tossed our way (Murphy's Law, you know?); nonetheless,



A well-deserved honor, Jessica Redman (L) picks up her Newcomer of the Year Award from Caucus president Sean Carter...

we managed to pull it off successfully. After getting the room set up late that afternoon, organizers Sean Carter, Mike Bodin, Jessica Redman and myself stood back for a second and looked – the room was gorgeous!

After a quick change into evening wear, we all dashed down to the hotel lobby bar for the wine and cheese reception for keynote speaker: Exec. Dir. of NGLTF, Elizabeth Toledo. Unfortunately, Elizabeth learned of a medical emergency with her mother, and had to fly out to Tucson that morning. Regardless, the wine and cheese affair was a hit.

Our guest of honor became State Rep. Senfronia Thompson, author of the James Byrd Hate Crimes Bill, who gave a wonderfully stirring speech about sticking with values, and not leaving others behind. Senfronia, for those who may not know, was the one who refused to cut GLB protections out of her hate crimes bill; knowing it would not pass both houses.

Councilmember Annise Parker gave a great follow-up to Rep. Thompson, detailing how she was proud of standing up for inclusion and especially being a pioneer for the inclusion of transgenders. The last

(Continued on Page 5)



Vanessa E. Foster (R) bags the Civil Rights Award

## NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OBSERVED



On the steps of City Hall, Sarah DePalma (C) addresses the Houston Day of Remembrance vigil participants while Phyllis Frye (L) and City Councilmember, Annise Parker (R) listen intently and the lights of the downtown skyline twinkle in the background.

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

It was a beautiful night: Christmas lights lit the trees, the downtown skyscrapers were accordingly lit up for the holiday season, workers busied themselves with preparations for setting up the city's official Christmas tree, and pedestrians scurried by Hermann Square on their way to someplace important.

Meanwhile, inside Hermann Square, a gaggle of Houston's GLBT community were chatting idly while waiting to line up. More participants drifted in as time proceeded, and joined the little crowd, the conversations and introductions. Jessica Redman kneeled on a patch of grass, head bowed, and silently prayed to the goddess; then grabbed her prayer book and proceeded to City Hall. Yours truly ran around

(Continued on Page 4)

## MEETING SCHEDULE

December 9	Feelings Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 3 PM
December 23	<b>MEETING CANCELLED</b> <i>Have a Safe and Wonderful Christmas!</i>
January 13	Feelings Meeting at: <i>To be Announced @ 3 PM</i>
January 27	Social Meeting at: <i>To be Announced @ 7 PM</i>

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**EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Strange days indeed... most peculiar, mama. Quoting John Lennon from the album released immediately after his death, I couldn't agree more. This election year is the most bizarre I've ever seen - nationally, locally, and at TATS. It's nearing the end of the toughest year I've had since being employed: emotionally brutal, maddeningly frustrating, and more turmoil than a stirred-up ant mound.

Oddly enough, I should be happy - I just won my first award ever, and saw Jessica win one as well. Income is up over last year. But I'm quite the opposite of where I should be, emotionally. Holiday blues? That's a common complaint. Perhaps it's exaggerating the situation.

But the situation is there nevertheless. The national election recounts are bringing in some ugly stories from Florida. In the most recent headlines, "a right-wing mob screamed outside, pounded on furniture, attempted to force their way into the building, surrounded a Democratic Party official and falsely accused him of stealing a ballot, and kicked and punched a Democratic spokesman as he attempted to hold a news conference. Amidst this evil display, Republican representative John Sweeney of New York announced that "thugs in that building are trying to hijack this election." Shortly afterward, the Miami election commission abandoned its attempt to count the votes."

This does not bode well for our country. When a mob mentality sets in, and individual groups are able to affect the outcome of elections by disruption, coercion or force; it sets an ominous precedent for the future. Far from what people worried about some 30 years ago - that radical leftist insurgents would commandeer our election processes and turn this country inside out - we instead find it's the radical right that's actually instigating this.

The right ... home of the conservatives, traditional morals, mainstream organized religion, patriotism and its counterpart democracy. How ironic to see the ones who were first and loudest to fight any compromise of the free democratic process become those who would subvert the same system. It's not about issues any more. It's not about morals anymore. It's become who wins; no matter who's wrong or who's right. When an issue or candidate are self-evident, and they still lose due to a 'win at all costs' attitude from the opponents, we



Speaking at the TCA PFLAG panel.

all suffer. Our community is quick to condemn this type of behavior in our politicians. But recently, I've noticed a disturbing trend.

There is a rather known member of the Houston community who has blustered and coerced whenever necessary in order to achieve their goals. Through their group affiliation, they have managed to build a cadre of support that they can call at their will in order to bloc out a vote or disrupt a meeting or withdraw enough support to cause an effort to fail. Apparently, it's been successfully utilized at times in the Unity Committee. It's also a poor example of what unity is all about ... what leadership is all about.

Suddenly this precedent has even inspired some of our own members. We are seeing the same patterns: the clandestine lining up of support, the leverage applied to those whom they oppose, histrionics when the vote doesn't go their way, etc. If this is successful, then the end justified the means. The problem is what kind of message we are sending to those coming up behind us, and also those just entering the community?

When things don't stand based on the merit of the proposal, we have problems. Houston has gone through phases in the past where we have a 'clique' or 'camp' mentality. In essence, various camps form and attempt to divide the community into one camp or another. Luckily, that hasn't been the case lately. However, when we allow individuals leverage over us in order to keep the peace, it sends the wrong message: Winning is everything, community is next to nothing. It's simple: deal above board and above reproach, or deal under the table and reap nothing but suspicion and a like response. If it's the latter, we all lose big time!

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If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

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- Katrina Rose, Albert Lea MN
- Sarah DePalma, Exec. Dir, TGAIN

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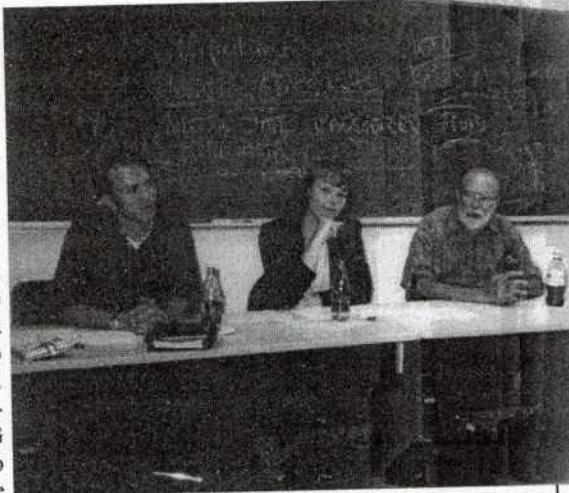


# A BUSY MONTH FOR PANEL PRESENTATIONS!

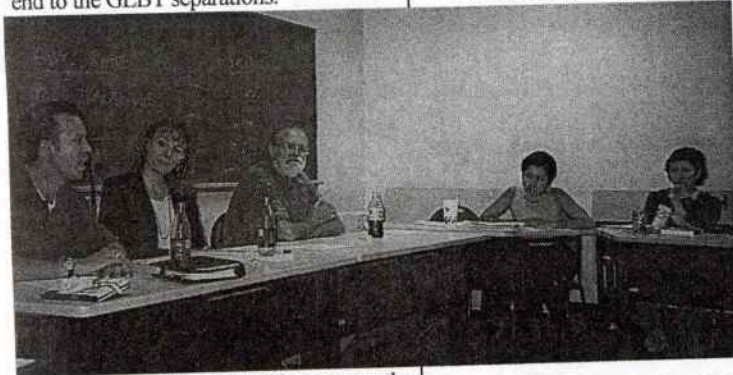
By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**Y**es, it's been a busy month for panel presentations! It was also a month for different panel set-ups than other previous ones where it was specifically trans-folks before university classes.

The first panel was a bit of an impromptu performance. I was given a call by Caucus president Sean Carter at work on Halloween day, about 3 hours before the panel was about to begin! He needed a trans-person on the panel, and would I do it? Three hours later, I was sitting in Dr. Fisher's class for social work grad students. But this wasn't the typical 'TG education panel'. No, this class wanted to explore the various factions within the GLBT community – the reasons for the divisions between trans, and even bi, from the gay and lesbian community, a history of the disenfranchisement, and what the straight community could do to bring an end to the GLBT separations.



Above & Below, Sean Carter (L-R), Vanessa Edwards Foster & Ray Hill conduct a panel representing the three generations, and various aspects of the GLBT community at the University of Houston.



Above and at right, Prof. Katherine Henderson (L) heads the Texas A&M Gender

Studies class that Jessica Redman (C) and Vanessa Edwards Foster (R) gave a panel discussion to Nov. 2 in College Station. Below, some of the GLBTA Aggies join the panelists on stage: (L-R) Amy Dell Hinze, former GLBTA president, Jordan Davis, Katherine Henderson, Jessica and Vanessa are all smiles and laughs.

Attending the panel with me were the granddaddy of queer rights activism in Houston, Ray Hill, and the youngest-ever Caucus president, Sean Carter. Sitting between those two, and hearing Ray's intro speech declaring he was "the old man of the queer rights movement" and having the only 20-something activist on my other side, it was only natural I declare myself "the middle-aged trans-woman of the queer rights movement!"

It was a great cross-section of views from, arguably, the three pre-eminent activists in the community – Stonewall-era, post AIDS-era, and bridge generation trans perspectives. The discussion was frank; and the subjects covered, needed. It was a great way to explore, not only commu-



fixed (pardon the pun) class. As is usual, we overstayed our allotted time and answered questions well beyond class let out. Afterwards, Amy, Jordan and Dr. Henderson took Jessica and I out for a wonderful meal at Café Eccell. We said our goodbyes, and drove off in the midst of a mean little thunderstorm.

November 9 was yet another non-TG specific panel, this time as a part of PFLAG Houston. The Texas Counselors Association was holding its convention at the Westin Galleria, and one of the panels was on GLBT issues. Besides

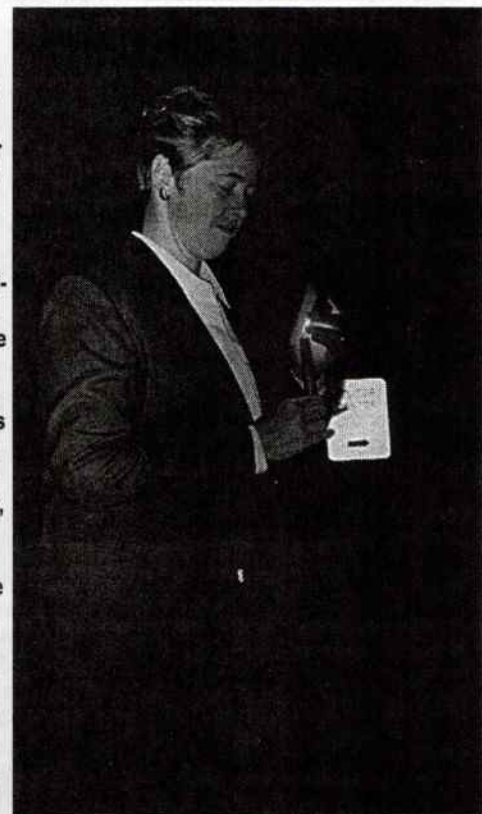
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## NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OBSERVED IN HOUSTON

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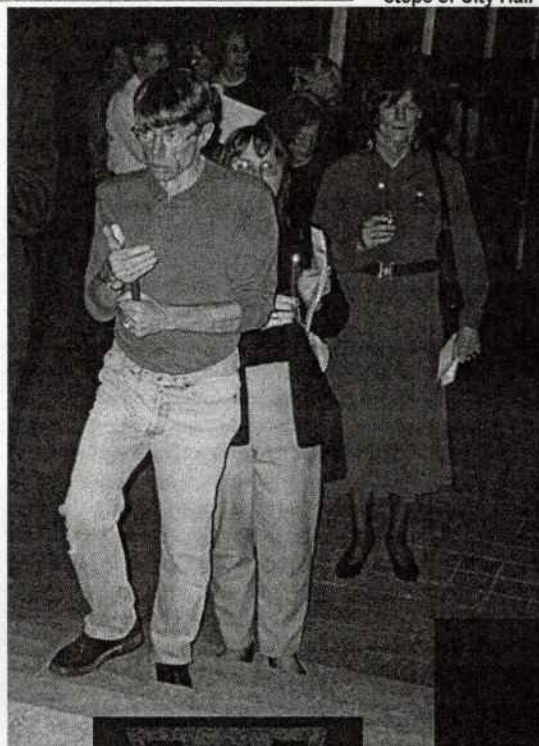
At left, the vigil procession wends its way through Hermann Square towards City Hall, led by (L-R) Councilmember Annise Parker, Jessica Redman, Cristan Williams, Alicia Beckman, Laurel Lee, Sue Null and others. At right, Councilmember Parker cups her candle against the swirling winds. Below, Jimmy Carper, April Lauper and Jackie Thorne lead the procession up the steps of City Hall



herding participants, passing candles, and name and info sheets, running to set up the bell and staging area on the City Hall steps and back again to the participants.

Save for the two organizers hustling around nervously, the mood inside the square and more so outside, belied the reason for the little assembly in front of City Hall – the most somber occasion of the year for the national transgender community. The juxtapositions of the festive holiday mood and the commemorations that would elicit heart wrenching emotions and tears, were stark. All the while, the city lights twinkled like jewels in the backdrop

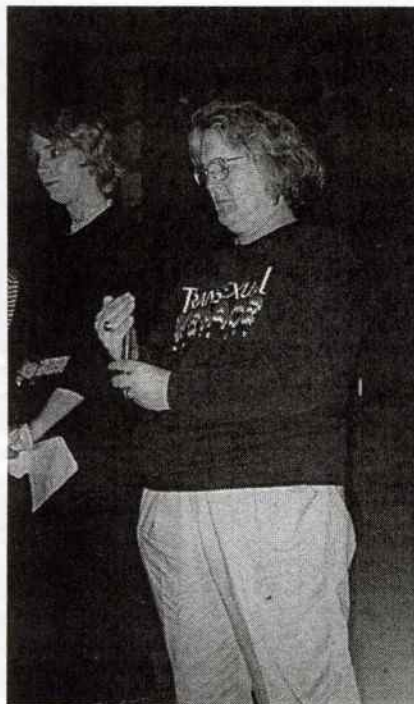
This was the first National Day of Remembrance. Taken from the one year



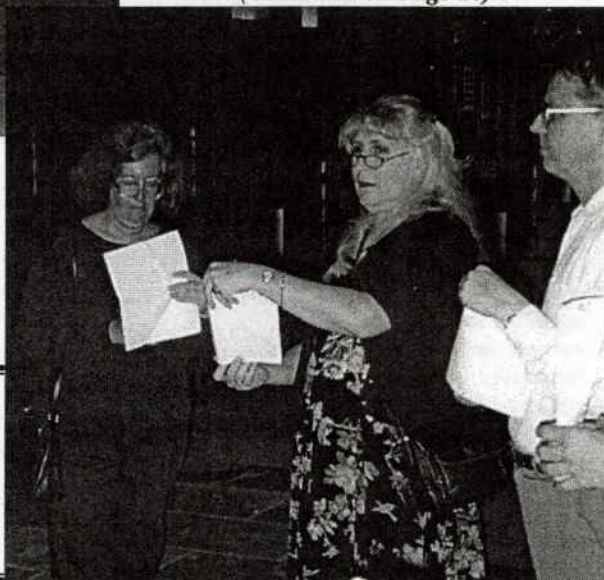
anniversary of the Remembering Our Dead website ([www.gender.org/remembering.html](http://www.gender.org/remembering.html)), and accompanying candlelight vigil in San Francisco; the Day of Remembrance was created by the creator of the website itself: one of the Gazebo's list-moderators, Gwen Smith. Both the website and the vigil were created to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice – with the event in most cities focusing on the victims over the course of the past year.

The event this year was commemorated in numerous cities across the nation: New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Baltimore, Tampa, Tucson, Albany;

(Continued on Page 10)



At left, the grandmother of Houston trans-activism, Phyllis Frye (R) watches her candle during the vigil, as Alyssa Wright (L) focuses on the ceremony. At right, Ella Tyler (L-R), Lilly Roddy and Wendy Parker pre-read their victim name and info sheets, and shield their candles from the gusting winds.



## TWO TGS WIN CAUCUS AWARDS

(Continued from Page 1)

speaker, Democratic National Committee Member Sue Lovell, also gave a very inspired speech; making points with how the African American movement and the Women's movement reached back to pull up the gay and lesbian movement. Sue finished up by saying it was up to the gay and lesbian movement to reach back and pull up the others – as she directed her gaze toward the transgender table. Jessica Redman leaned over to me after Sue's speech and commented, "she's really grown!" I have to agree.

Then came the big moment – naming of the award winners for the Silver Anniversary Awards Gala. The Harvey Milk Award for the elected official who shows great courage on behalf of GLBT's was keynote speaker, State Rep. Senfronia Thompson. Senfronia was honored for refusing to pull the words 'sexual orientation' out of the James Byrd Hate Crimes Bill.

A few other awards went to names rather widely known among most of the TG community: The John Paul Barnich Humanitarian Award went to our friend on Houston City Council, Annise Parker, who took all of her re-election funds and staff and plowed them into Progressive Voters in Action (PVA), an effort to identify all progressive (and presumably GLBT supportive) voters in Houston. The Don Hrachovy Lifetime Achievement Award went to Parker campaign manager, Grant Martin, for his campaign work with Annise Parker, extensive work with NGLTF – including holding a Leadership Training Class in Jan. of last year, and for creating PVA. The Gary Van Ooteghem Unsung Hero Award, just created this year, went to HAN-Net founder Brandon Wolf for creating the network that's kept us all in touch – the Houston Activist Network.

The remaining four awards all went to Caucus board or officers, all winning for their first time. The Bayard Rustin Civil Rights Award was a shocker. As Caucus president Sean Carter read the intro to the winner, talking about a "transgender who's fought long for civil rights," this author was busy getting a good shot of Sarah DePalma. That wasn't to be. Sean continued the intro, about how he was "always hearing about her lobbying in Washington or Austin, or doing panel discussions somewhere else..." Then he read off the



Above, the meal was delicious as Deborah Bell (L-R), Donna Garnier, and TATS' Beth Richard and Brandi Welch Williams will attest. Right, Desirée Walton is bubbly at her first banquet. Below, Sarah DePalma (R) and her SO Lori Rice get a good laugh out of one of Senfronia Thompson's stories. Left, a very proud and pleased Jessica Redman sits pretty.



win a Caucus Award. I also became the second TG to win the Civil Rights Award; joining the likes of Phyllis Frye (who won in 1992), Annise Parker, former U.S. Rep. Craig

Washington, Gene Harrington, Brian Bradley, Dale Carpenter, Gary Van Ooteghem and others.

The Dennis Spencer Award for Community Service went to a very deserving Scott Simpson, board chair of the Caucus. As per Tony Carroll's

(Continued on Page 9)



Above, State Rep. Senfronia Thompson (C) accepts the Harvey Milk Award from presenters Sean Carter (L) and Annise Parker (R). At left, Annise (R) accepts an award of her own from Caucus President, Sean (L) and her own spouse, former Humanitarian Award winner, Kathy Hubbard (C). At right, Grant Martin, campaign mgr. to Annise's successful elections, shows off his Lifetime Achievement Award.



# TS BATHROOM FLAP PUTS DENNY'S ON THE HOT SEAT

**By Jennifer Farrell, St. Petersburg Times**  
 SPRING HILL, Fla. — Inside the ladies' room, Aleisha King felt like one of the girls. Standing in front of the mirror in a cocktail dress and heels, the blue-eyed redhead checked her hair and makeup and joined in on the after-hours banter among several exotic dancers who had gone to Denny's last month for breakfast after the late shift.

It wasn't until King headed back to the table that the trouble started.

"She's pretty for a guy, isn't she?" shouted one of the dancers to a male friend across the dining room. Then things turned ugly, King said.

First, the man across the room shouted anti-gay slurs at King, 37, who is part way through the sex-change process and lives as a woman. Then, the man walked over, grabbed King's arm, spun her around and demanded to know if she was a man.

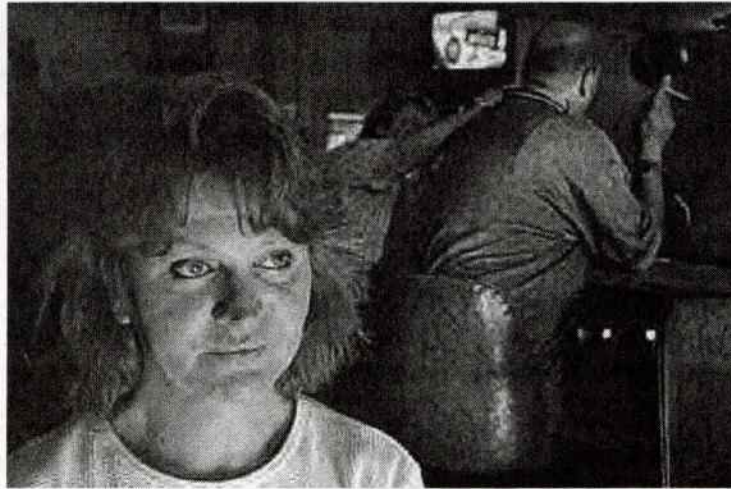
King, while hurt and embarrassed, thought the incident was over after restaurant employees called police and the man walked out of the restaurant. She had been a regular at Denny's on weekends for more than a year and had never before had a problem.

Two days later, though, the phone rang at Differences Pub, where King tends bar and performs as a female impersonator. King said a night manager at Denny's talked first to her boss, then called back and told her that the ladies' room would be off-limits to King and other transgendered people who had frequented the restaurant on weekends after the pub closed at 2 a.m. The manager also suggested that Lynne Greene, who owns Differences, stand guard outside the bathroom door when King and the others went inside.

To King, the new rules made no sense. "I can take my makeup off and still look like a woman," she said. "I know no other life."

The problem escalated the following weekend, when a group from Differences went to Denny's after the pub's Oct. 29 Halloween party.

This time, police were called when a disturbance erupted between employees and Jamie Benton, 41, a female impersonator and reigning Miss Gay Hernando (FL). Benton, who also performs as a woman at Differences but lives as a man, said



**Aleisha King (L), organizer of the latest boycott of Denny's Restaurant, at work at Differences Pub. "They basically want us to go away...."**

employees harassed him even though he took off his makeup and donned jeans and a T-shirt before going in the restaurant, then used the men's restroom when he got there.

"They were telling me that I had come out of the women's restroom, really getting right up in my face," Benton said. "They were extremely rude. They embarrassed me."

After a loud scene, in which Benton said a cook yelled at him in front of a packed restaurant, the group of eight walked out of the restaurant, leaving their food on the table.

They have not been back.

"Honey, if I went in there in drag and they want me to go to the men's restroom, I have no problem with it. That's fine with me just as long as I can go pee," Benton said last week. "If they had a problem with something, they should come up and say something, not carry on the way they did in front of the whole restaurant. There's a right way to do things and a wrong way to do things."

King and Benton say the incidents prove that they will be harassed no matter what they do. They, along with other patrons of Differences, have organized a boycott of Denny's and are considering a civil rights complaint.

Denny's manager Bill Cushman declined to discuss specifics of the incidents. He confirmed

that there had been problems at the restaurant stemming from men dressed as women using the ladies' room. "I believe we have it solved," he said last week. "They've been good guests for over a year... We're trying to accommodate them."

But Greene disagrees. Her partner and co-owner of the pub, Elaine Wanker, used to work at Denny's and the couple were at the restaurant during both incidents. Greene is considering joining in a possible claim against Denny's. "They basically

want us to go away," she said. "I feel that is discrimination."

Jessica Archer, who is director of the Tampa-based Florida Organization for Gender Equality, said the incidents reflect a national trend of violence toward transgendered people and transsexuals. "The rule is that you use the facility of the gender that you are presenting," she said. "That rule is based on safety."

Archer said transgendered people often face ridicule and violence. On average, she said, more than one transgendered person has been attacked and killed every month in the United States since 1998. "This is a problem that is not just a problem of Spring Hill, but a problem of Florida and the nation," she said. "At some point we have to start putting aside our stereotypes and start appreciating people as human beings. Denny's has treated these people as walking stereotypes."

In the early 1990s, the Denny's chain faced frequent charges it discriminated against African-American customers. In 1994, the chain agreed to pay \$54-million to settle two class-action discrimination suits. Three years later, Denny's Spartanburg, S.C.-based parent firm, gave \$1.5-million to nine civil rights organizations.

## JUDGE RULES AURORA LIPSCOMB TO REMAIN IN FOSTER CARE

**By Kevin Mayhood, Columbus Dispatch**

A 6-year-old whose parents wanted to send him to school as a girl will remain in foster care, according to an agreement approved in Franklin County Juvenile Court. Parents Paul & Sherry Lipscomb will have separate, supervised visits with the child. The Lipscombs are estranged.

Kara Morgan, attorney for Mr. Lipscomb, said the child "just needs time, and this gives him time." The boy will continue to receive counseling.

Judge Kay Lias accepted the plan and praised the mediation. "At the outset of this case, I would

not have believed mediation was possible," Lias said. "I think the result is a good one."

Franklin County Children Services filed complaints in August saying the child was neglected and dependent (or in need of government intervention). The agency and prosecutors agreed this week to dismiss the neglect complaint, which faults the parents.

The Lipscombs agreed not to contest the dependency complaint; which says that, through no fault of the family, issues exist that warrant government intervention.

"We believe this plan covers most of the issues, and all parties believe it will be in the best interest of the child," said Cynthia Sours Morehart, assistant Franklin County prosecutor.

The parties will meet in January to determine whether the Lipscombs are ready for unsupervised visits. The parents yesterday asked that no pictures be taken of them, and declined to discuss the case. They sought media attention earlier this year when the county agency sought custody of the child, alleging their civil rights were being abused.

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**BUSY MONTH FOR PANELS....**

*(Continued from Page 3)*

myself, the panel included Don Upchurch and Blake Weisser (representing parents' perspectives), and Jeff Van Eys and Mary Egert. Ross Venable from Texas Southern University was our moderator. Again, there was some great questions from the attendees, some of them school counselors, on how to deal with GLBT youth and how to approach parents of children who may be unaware of their child's private anguish.

During this particular panel, I was inspired to provide some examples of lob-

Courtney Sharp of New Orleans to attend the Regional PFLAG Conference in March.

In response to the Covenant House situation, where they tossed out a homeless teen, Chanel Divadita, because she was transgendered, Cristan

reach program, is not stranger to making the presentations – it's her full time job. Her presence with Cristan apparently threw the Covenant House directors off. After initial concerns, the directors allowed the meeting to continue, whereupon Brenda



Counter-clockwise from upper left, Vanessa Edwards Foster (L-R), Don Upchurch and Jeff Van Eys at the beginning of the November 2 PFLAG presentation before the Texas Counselors' Association Conference. Left, Vanessa reminisces fondly for the panel at the Westin Galleria about her growing up 'the wrong gender'. Below, Vanessa (L), Jeff Van Eys (2nd from R) and Blake Weisser (R) listen intently as Don Upchurch tells the painful story of his son's coming out and subsequent discrimination. Below right, True class: the class of volunteers for the transgender education training for the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard of Houston (GLSH) held at the Montrose Counseling Center. Right, Vanessa takes the first crack addressing the November 17 Gay & Lesbian Switchboard of Houston class, as Sarah DePalma (L) watches. Above Right, it's Sarah's (R) turn to do some class instruction as Vanessa (L) waits in the wings.



bying strategies with the audience, and encouraged them not to let the politics of fear intimidate them. Noting the recent presidential elections, I encouraged all – especially the parents – to get involved in letting their voice be heard about real 'family values.' Afterwards, I got a chance to chat with Mary England of PFLAG Dallas who commented on how my concise and informative my information was. She repeated an earlier invitation by

Williams and Brenda Thomas revisited the local Covenant House for an educational presentation. The administrators were welcoming, though a bit tentative as well. Brenda, who is the Houston Health Dept. Transgender Liaison for the HIV / AIDS out-

utilized a Powerpoint presentation. The first meeting went well enough to schedule a second one for the staff later this past month.

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## TGAIN LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

By Sarah DePalma, Exec. Dir, TGAIN

*"In our system of government it is for the legislature, should it choose to do so, to determine what guidelines should govern the recognition of marriages involving transsexuals. The need for legislative guidelines is particularly important in this case, where the claim being asserted is statutorily based. The statute defines who may bring the cause of action: a surviving spouse, and if the legislature intends to recognize transsexuals as surviving spouses, the statute needs to address the guidelines by which such recognition is governed. When or whether the legislature will choose to address this issue is not within the judiciary's control."*

*Justice Hardberger  
Littleton v. Prange*

The Littleton case has created unprecedented publicity concerning the Transgender Community in Texas. For all of those people who have contacted me suggesting that we should put our heads down, keep our eyes closed and hide; let me state bluntly that it is much too late for that. The Texas courts and the legislature are well aware of who we are. Our challenge is to use this publicity in such a manner that we leave an indelible impression on the legislature concerning our humanity as mothers, fathers, spouses, and valued family members. Most importantly we must impress the legislature with our desire to be employed tax paying citizens.

Earlier this year TGAIN sponsored a survey asking what you viewed as the most important issues to be addressed in this session. The answers were, jobs, employment issues, and jobs. With this in mind, let's talk about our name change/change of gender marker bill.

Under the current system anyone can petition the court for a change of name. The problem is that transsexuals also need a corresponding change of gender for their driver's license. Failure to obtain a name and change of gender marker leaves us with an incomplete document. TGAIN has heard about numerous cases where people have been left with a driver's license where the name says "Suzy" but the gender marker says "male." This incomplete documentation renders seekers of new employment essentially unemployable.

The introduction of this bill provides us with the perfect opportunity to discuss employment discrimination with our legislators. You should be aware that nothing in this bill mandates a corresponding change of gender marker at the time the change of name is granted. What the bill would do is create better

*(Continued on Page 12)*

## CALIFORNIA TG ENDA KILLED BY LESBIAN?

By Katie Szymanski, Bay Area Reporter

California's legislative session wrapped up with some victories as well as some disappointments for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities, with the passing of a handful of significant statewide gains and the defeat of an important bill that would have prohibited discrimination in employment and housing against transgenders. What's most disturbing, according to an e-mail exchange between Assemblyman Fred Keeley's office and several LGBT advocates, is that the transgender non-discrimination bill, AB2142, appears to have been recommended for veto by Governor Gray Davis' secretary of the cabinet, Susan Kennedy, a lesbian.

AB2142, by Keeley (D-Santa Cruz), never had an easy time. The bill passed the Assembly but was defeated in the Senate Judiciary Committee because it needed a fifth vote. According to Keeley's office, that fifth vote was eventually secured. Keeley's office was confident it could get the bill out of the Senate as long as it was not considered "veto bait" by the governor's office, and according to the e-mail circulated by Keeley's office, "Ann Richardson in the governor's office assured us that this was not the case, and that she was recommending the governor support the bill."

"Before Assemblymember Keeley could get the vote set," the e-mail continued, "Ann called and said things had changed and that Cabinet Secretary Susan Kennedy was recommending a veto." Not surprisingly, attempts by the Bay Area Reporter to secure a comment from Kennedy were unsuccessful. Roger Salazar in the governor's office told the B.A.R. that Davis's staff members "generally don't comment on legislation" before it reaches Davis's desk.

AB2142 is on "pause" until next session, and Boyce Hinman of the Lambda Letters Project noted that it made remarkable progress for such a short period of time.

## AURORA...IN FOSTER CARE....

*(Continued from Page 6)*

The Lipscombs relied on a diagnosis by a Cincinnati doctor, who said the child suffered from a gender-identity disorder. The story became national news.

Rebecca Steele, a public defender appointed to act in the best interest of the child, argued in September that gender disorder was not the real issue. Steele focused on threats of violence by the child, who has been hospitalized four times, has seen 13 doctors and has had psychological and behavioral disorders diagnosed.

## TG MURDERS IN GUATEMALA

Submitted by Gwendolyn Smith

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala — Human rights groups are calling for the investigation and arrests of the killers of Astrid La Fontaine fka: Alan Roberto Martinez Castillo (killed May 20, 2000) and Beverly Lineth (killed July 5, 2000). Both murders were committed in public. To date, authorities have not even launched credible investigations to identify those responsible, in spite of complaints filed by OASIS (Organizacion de Apoyo a la Sexualidad Integral frente al SIDA). OASIS has documented 6 to 10 murders of transgenders every year between 1997 and 1999. All remain unpunished. "Social cleansing" is a steady and unsanitary reality in Guatemala. Among the main groups pursued, persecuted, murdered, and harassed have been the lesbian, gay and — most especially — transgender communities.

Over decades of armed internal conflict, the violence exerted against these sectors remained unseen and mostly untold. However, in the past few years, murders of transgenders have been increasing, and increasingly visible. OASIS' figures show 6 and 10 transgender murders every year: yet these represent only known cases, where friends of the victims filed a complaint. In the first 6 months of 2000, 4 murders of transgender sex workers were documented; and another has left the country as a result of threats and intimidation following an interview with the country's most widely read publication.

Of those murdered most recently, Astrid La Fontaine was one of the transgenders most closely involved in AIDS prevention work and in providing support to her companions. She was a strong contributor to OASIS's cultural and artistic activities. Astrid was a sex worker in Zone 1 of Guatemala City. She was killed while working on a street corner, in the early hours of May 20, 2000. Her attacker and murderer stepped from a car nearby and shot her.

Beverly Lineth was murdered in the early hours of July 5, 2000. Beverly, known to her companions as a calm, shy, and highly ethical person, had been a sex worker for only a year and a half according to her colleagues. According to reports, three young men in a vehicle drove through the downtown area, badgering and bullying transgenders. One of Beverly's fellow workers says that she felt frightened when accosted by the men and immediately notified a police patrol of the Anti-Narcotic Operations Department. The patrol ordered the men to stop, asked them for identification and then let them go.

A few minutes later, the young men returned and took Beverly by force. At about 6 that morning, one of her companions who lived in the same hotel searched for her through the round of local hospitals, worried because she had not returned. She found Beverly in the General Hospital, beaten severely but still alive. She then went to fetch other friends and, upon her return to the hospital, was informed that Beverly had died.

"Beverly was one of the prettiest, her skin was smooth and soft, very fine-looking. But when I saw her, she no longer looked like herself. Her face was totally disfigured," said a friend, who demanded anonymity. "Her face was so large it did not seem hers. Apparently she was beaten with a piece of pipe or something like that."

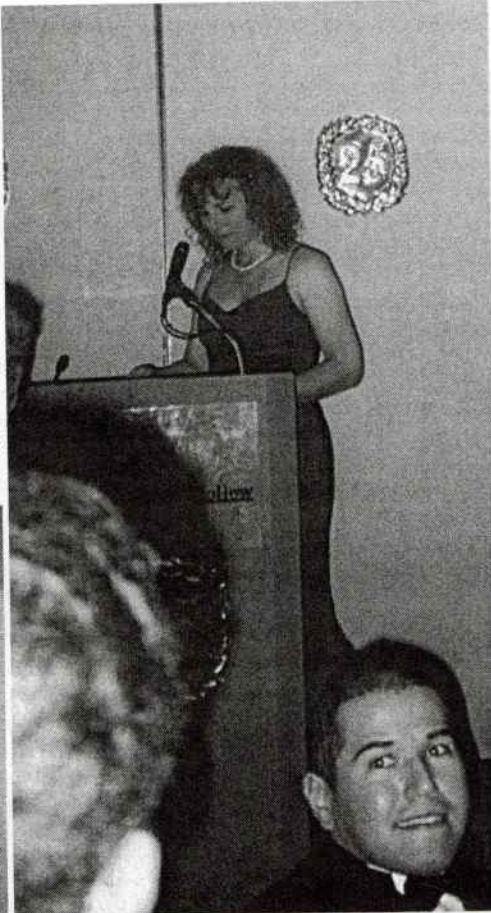
Beverly was Nicaraguan, and her family did not know about her work in Guatemala. They are frightened and do not want her birth name revealed.

## TWO TGs WIN CAUCUS AWARDS

(Continued from Page 5)

description, more than anyone else in the community, Scott has the ability to defuse any conflicts or sticky situations, and handle even the most difficult of people with diplomacy. Scott's been the organizational stalwart for the Caucus for years, and has volunteered for virtually everything. He also received a warm standing ovation for his devotion to the Caucus over the years, on this, his first award.

The Caucus' sweetheart, Mike Bodin, followed, pulling in the Barbara Ciganeiro Volunteer of the Year Award for his extensive volunteering with the Caucus – heading up the successful 'Get Out The Vote' program. Mike was a hit, cracking numerous jokes about the Gay & Lesbian Political "Fracas" and comparing the Florida election fiasco to his own experience growing up under Louisiana-style politics; where victors are always declared in their elections because they



Caucus Award winners: Above, Civil Rights Award winner, Vanessa Edwards Foster, struggles to retain composure at the podium. At right, Mike Bodin (L) proudly displays the Volunteer of the Year Award with Caucus President, Sean Carter (R). At left, Sean (R) presents Scott Simpson (L) with the Dennis Spencer Award. Below, Newcomer of the Year, Jessica Redman speaks to the crowd, as Sean (L) watches proudly in the wings.

there's a heaven."

Last, and certainly not least, the Jim Owens Newcomer Award saw the second TATS member of the night honored. Jessica Redman became the fourth T-girl ever to win a Caucus Award. She also joined the likes of former TATS president, Michelle Myers (who won in 1998), current Caucus President, Sean Carter, Jay Seegers, Dale Carpenter and Terri Richardson to win that award. Jessi was chosen for her award-winning ideas on fundraising (a committee she eventually chaired), and for going the extra mile in ensuring the proposed ideas were a success – most especially the successful Millennium March Raffle. Jess gave a



have sense enough to pay the right amount of money to the right people to make sure they win that office! Getting serious, though, he also lavished praise on Caucus president Sean Carter, for holding the organization together, and moving it in a positive direction – even with all of the odds stacked against him. Mike also opined that "the Bayard Rustin Civil Rights Award should be re-named the 'Proof of Heaven' Award," because "when you watch Vanessa do all the things she does for the community, at the level she does, you know



stirring acceptance speech of her own; detailing how she bounced around the country to eventually end up in Houston, which she now refers to as "my home." Once here, Jessica found a real community worth living in and fighting for. "Now I've found my family," Jessi related, her voice cracking with emotion. "All of you here tonight, everyone in this room, you are my family!"

After the banquet, the Caucus president, vice-president, board chair, and nearly all of

(Continued on Page 13)

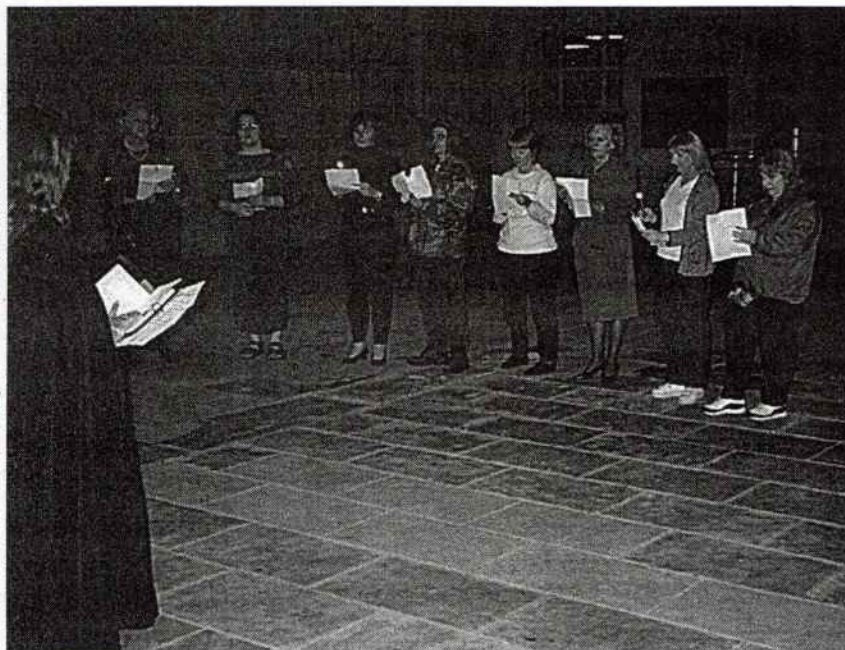
**DAY OF REMEMBRANCE....**

*(Continued from Page 4)*

Tallahassee FL and the original locale San Francisco. Houston, of course, was almost obligated to be on that list. Two of last year's victims, and one again this year, were from Houston. Over the course of the last two years, regardless of how active and relatively safe our transgender community is, it has also been one of the deadlier cities for transgressors during this time as well. The juxtapositions were all too evident.

The assembly, once lined up, proceeded at mourner's pace from one end of Hermann Square to the opposite end at the steps of City Hall. Our best friend in City Hall, Councilmember Annise Parker, led the procession. Our druidess, Jessica Redman with prayer book in hand, came next, followed by Alicia Beckman, Cristan Williams, yours truly, Laurel Savannah Lee, Sue Null of PFLAG, Sarah Jane Connell, Rose Wall, TGA/Exec. Dir, Sarah DePalma, Melanie Black, After Hours' Jimmy Carper, April Lauper, Jackie Thorne, Ella Tyler from county judge Bob Eckels' office, Lilly Roddy, Wendy Parker, Carolyn Bosma, Alyssa Wright and ending with the founder of transgender activism in Houston, Phyllis Frye. Equality Rally founder, Dan DiDonato, was our assigned Quasimodo, bell ringer emeritus.

Though there was threats of rain, and showers earlier in the day, we managed to dodge the bullet for our inaugural Day of Remembrance. The weather may have kept the attendance down some: if we counted press photographer Dalton DeHart, we had a mere 22 attending. Not what this organizer was hoping for. However, we did have enough participating to have one person for every victim's name to be read; which was the most critical part. The ceremony itself was touching, to say the least. The vigilants stood facing downtown's skyscrapers, with City Hall and its ambient lighting as a backdrop, the speakers facing City Hall with the star-scape skyline behind. After the opening invocation given by Jessica Redman, all those given a name and a candle (beginning with Jessica) read the name of the victim, and brief bio and cause of death; followed by Jessica snuffing the candle and a simultaneous toll of the tubular bell. Dan's accurate timing on tolling the bell, coupled with the snuffing of the candle lent a very dramatic wave to the reading of each name.

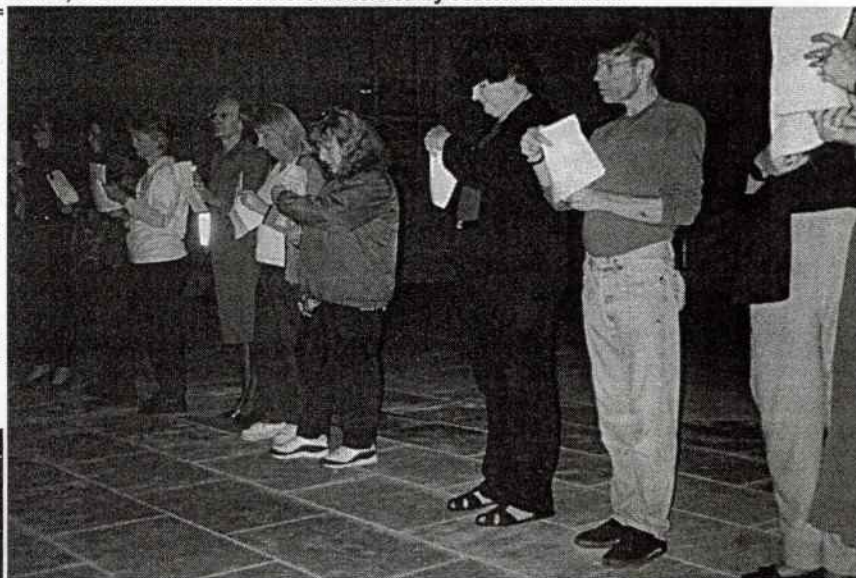


Above, an invocation by druidess Jessica Redman (L) began the ceremony, as vigilants Alicia Nicole Beckman (L-R), Cristan Williams, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Laurel Savannah Lee, Sue Null, Sarah Jane Connell, Rose Wall and Sarah DePalma hung on each word. Below, the line up of Jimmy Carper (R-L), Melanie Black, Sarah DePalma, Rose Wall, Sarah Jane Connell, Sue Null and others were transfixed by Jessica's sermon.

"It was if each candle that went out, and each ring of the bell, was another slap in the face," opined Jessica Redman. "It was very powerful."



Annise Parker addresses the vigil.



It was so overpowering, one of our readers, Carolyn Bosma, was too overcome with emotion to read her victim's name / info sheet - ironically, that of Julia Aguilar Carrizales of South Houston. Jessica deftly took the sheet and read it for her. After all the names were read, one candle remained lit; that one held by Phyllis Frye, our first speaker to the gathering. Phyllis commented on the victims, and how few of the most victimized parts of our community - the crossdressers and drag community - were attend-

ing the vigil. Councilmember Annise Parker took the lit candle and spoke next of how we must all remain vigilant and active in the fight. Passing the candle, Sarah DePalma followed that with the frustration of crossdressers who, even after being victimized, didn't follow up by filing charges; and how legislators didn't see the 'numbers' justifying any action on their part. This author took the candle from Sarah, and expounded on her last point, noting how we went from two victims on the list last year to one this

*(Continued on Page 15)*

**BUSY MONTH FOR PANELS....**

*(Continued from Page 7)*

For the second visit, Cristan was more utilized, as she was the party fielding and answering the audience questions. Overall, the meeting was well-received, though there were pockets of intransigence on the issue from some staffers. The rest were not only respectful of Cristan and Brenda, but very actively participated in the question and answer session; thirsty for more information. Though there was no immediate word of change in policy, Cristan reported that they were receptive to the information provided, and were desiring an equitable resolution on this issue.

The follow up to volunteer training for the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard took place on November 17 at the Montrose Counseling Center. This was a panel presentation – a tag team duo between Sarah DePalma and myself. We had seven volunteers learning what to do when staffing the hotline and having a transgendered caller in a personal crisis. It was a fairly lively class, and we shared a few laughs during the course of the training. Even better, we got a chance to educate more completely, given that we were allowed two hours for this training session!

We really have to admire the volunteers for the Switchboard. They will be providing a crucial lifeline for GLBT folks who find themselves falling through the cracks. The Switchboard volunteer program is trans-inclusive, and does indeed get a number of transgender callers – thus, the need to have some of us there! In fact, Pat ‘Amber’ Sidwell is one of the crop from the first volunteer class! (Go Pat!)

November 21 saw our return to Rice University after a long dry spell. Rice, of course, is where TATS panel participation all got started with my assisting Rice alum, Dr. Sarah Fox, on her return to her alma mater’s psychology class. This time it was the same building – Sewall Hall – but different class and perspectives – Gender Studies, taught by our friend, Lynne Huffer. Again, the dynamic duo of panels – Jessica Redman and I – quickly

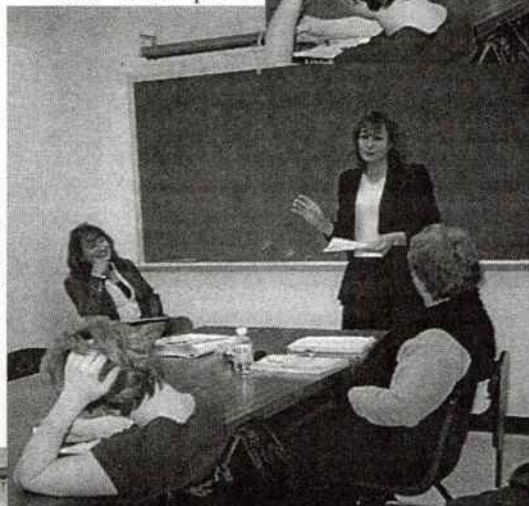
assembled a class for Lynne. Typically, Jessi and I always seem to work well together; and true to form, there was a good deal of laughter throughout the class. Heckle and Jeckle, doing their thing again!

Judging from the class reaction, it was a hit! There were a lot of questions after our hour of background presentation. We even got a few questions never asked before. Lynne was awesome, too; preparing the class with reading materials such as Kate Bornstein’s *Gender Outlaw* and Leslie Feinberg’s *Transgender Warriors*, as well as prodding us with her own questions.

According to Lynne, the students were all raving about our presentation. One student, Jessica, wrote “I just wanted to say that class yesterday was really great. Meeting people who have experienced what we’ve read about put a



The pictures on this page are from the Gender Studies class panel at Rice University. The instructor, Dr. Lynne Huffer, was very thorough in assigning TG and intersexed reading material as a precursor leading up to the panel. Needless to say, it made Vanessa Edwards Foster (in the black jacket) and Jessica Redman’s jobs much easier. It was one of our better panels!



people.” That was pretty much our thoughts all along, and our goal to impart to the unknowing.

It was TATS’ busiest month yet for panel presentations. Even with all of the above, there was yet another panel at Lamar University in Beaumont by Dianne Boucher and Mary Michelle Robinson, that we didn’t receive a report on. Bussing ourselves with the educational panels means we’re succeeding, folks! And if success is measured one victory at a time, then we had a very successful month!

**PORTLAND VOTES IN NON-DISCRIMINATION**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

PORTLAND, Oregon — A late breaking story tells of passage of a non-discrimination ordinance in this Pacific Northwest city. Details are still incomplete at press time.

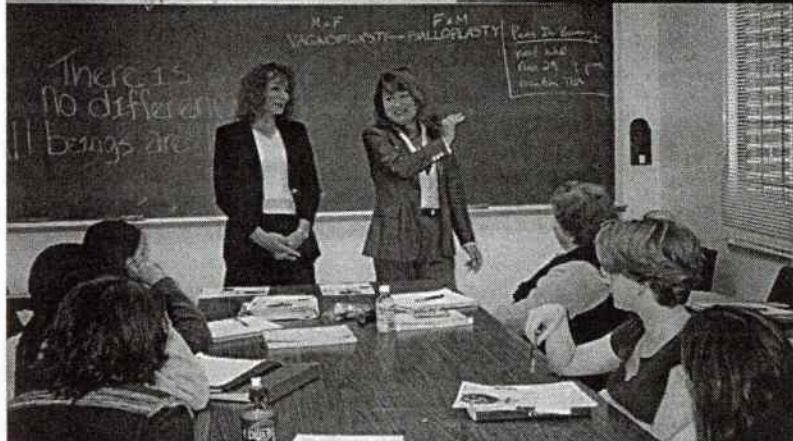
The ordinance calls for employers to make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in the use of ... bathrooms for individuals who are in the process of gender transition. Employment policies will require workplace dress appropriate to a person’s consistently expressed gender.

Other policies or regulations involving sex-segregated housing for persons under the age of twenty-five; and also discrimination protections and protections regarding competitive sports.

Congratulations to the Portland bunch!

whole different spin on it all.”

Another student, Ashley, made a point to come to us after class let out to thank us for taking the time and having the courage to do what we were doing. The best part was her observation: “I don’t see y’all as anything but regular



# LIKE A ROSE UNDER NOVEMBER SNOW

By Katrina C. Rose

For Thanksgiving two years ago, I did a "twenty years ago today" column, reminiscing about how 1978 affected me - somewhat ashamed that of the names Bob Crane, Earl Campbell and Harvey Milk, the latter was, at best, a distant third in significance to me as I experienced 1978.

If I did a "twenty years ago today" column now, I'd be talking about Ronald Reagan's election, John Lennon's death and Bum Phillips' firing. Granted, two of those three didn't happen until after Thanksgiving, but you get the point: Too depressing.

On the other hand, November of 1998 wasn't exactly a happy time for this Kat either - I had to strain to find something to be thankful about.

Yes, I had a small circle of friends who cared deeply for my well-being - and who were worried about me. Yes, I had the support of my mom - who, because she was so accepting of her transgendered child, I did my best to shield from the pain that was enveloping me then.

My quest for employment as an attorney was on the short end of profession-wide bigotry that is embodied by one particular blonde shrew on Ally McBeal and her attitude toward an attorney who dared to date a transgendered woman. Anyone who can't imagine what her reaction would be toward the possibility of hiring a transgendered attorney for that firm simply isn't trying. (And remember: that firm has a bathroom where penises and vaginas co-exist! The shrew hated the transsexual for existing - period. It's the bigotry, stupid!)

A few months after Thanksgiving I did find an employer who was able to look past gender and actually see my resume, and off to Minnesota I went.

Earlier this year (in April, in fact, when the Streisand line I bastardized for this week's title would have been appropriate; seriously - we do get snow in April up here), the Houston transgendered community honored me with an award named after my dear friend, the late Dee McKellar.

I felt guilty about receiving it - not because I was, by then, living in Minnesota but because I had left just when Texas needed all of the transgendered attorneys it could find. No, I had no way of knowing that Littleton v. Prange was brewing, but I still felt a sense of guilt at being over a thousand miles away when our identities were ripped apart by two arrogant conservative judicial activists in San Antonio.

I also felt bad about not being in Houston to accept the award. But I was thankful that I was alive to receive it - and, to those in the Houston transgender community who thought

enough of me to give me an award named after Dec, I say thanks a bunch.

As for my precise whereabouts that weekend. On that April Saturday, I was driving around snow-covered back roads of northern Iowa with a truly wonderful woman: my life partner Tanith. Cameras in tow, we marveled at and snapped countless pix of one particular little erector-set-esque bridge that had icicles all over it.

I know that I often write of big things (ENDA, the Constitution, HRC's anti-transgender arrogance, etc.) in these pages - so much so that I'm sure some of you can't imagine me paying attention to little things.

Often I'm unable to, even when I want to.

It wasn't just a bridge. It wasn't just icicles. It wasn't just a bridge with icicles.

The wind had been blowing during that entire late-season storm - and all of the icicles on this old bridge had formed with a curvature which followed the wind.

Awesome, every damn one of 'em. Maybe some of you have seen such icicles before. I hadn't.

Goofy, I know. Certainly not a 'gay issue' by any means - and that's the point, or at least a part of it. I'd love to be thankful for there being no need for the words I write. I'd love to be thankful for being able to spend all of my spare time in artistic pursuits with my sweetie.

But I can't. The job I do have is wonderful. But, it's not a lawyer-type gig and it isn't set up to last forever.

It is November now. The first icicles have formed. The first snow has arrived. Thanksgiving soon will, as well. And when it does, I'll celebrate it with someone I'd never have met if I hadn't taken the path from then to now that I took. It'll be me, Tanith, a gaggle of hooliganistic four-legged felines and one lovable Doberman - all together in a quaint little house in St. Paul.

No, I can't say that life is perfect. 1998 has gone, but pain and disillusionment linger.

I'll never forgive those who still refuse even to consider the academic and professional qualifications of transgendered attorneys. I'll never forgive those who have inflicted hurt upon my darling Tanith over the years.

I see the pain in her eyes as she sees mine - just some of what draws us together. The pain left over from discrimination and abuse skew people's lives. Those who say it doesn't are lying. And those who say it shouldn't, just don't get it.

Two years ago I said that I was simply thankful for being alive. Well, that's the closest I've ever come to lying to all of you.

However, this year I'm truly thankful for being alive. All I'll have to do on Thanksgiving is look at my beloved to remind me why.

# TGAIN LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

(Continued from Page 8)

legal justification for providing granting both changes at the same time. Within the next few days I will be E-mailing the revised text of this bill to everyone on the TGAIN mailing list. At that time I will also discuss the specific provisions and how we will present them to our legislators.

Let's address the issues raised by the Littleton case.

After several months of discussion with personal colleagues, respected civil rights activists, and organizations knowledgeable about legislative matters, TGAIN will not raise the issues emanating from the Littleton case. The reason is very simple: We haven't got the slightest chance of winning. Instead we will wait to see if the issues are raised by the political right wing. Assuming that they will draft legislation that attempts to codify the ruling of Justice Hardberger, this is where our battle will be fought.

Why fight a defensive action? It puts the issue of basic fairness on our side. We can portray the right wing as mean spirited Goliath's attacking the smallest and most defenseless minority in the state. Furthermore we have the "heterosexual argument" on our side. We can point out the effects of the ruling on heterosexuals with non xx or xy chromosomes. Plus we can argue on behalf intersexed individuals. It is quite likely that we could gain the support of civil rights opponents fundamentally opposed (pardon the pun) to mean spirited legislation. We could bring in doctors, psychologists, and even members of the clergy to make our case.

It is sheer madness to create a fight in which we are guaranteed to lose. It is a totally different public relations campaign for us to defend ourselves against bullies. After many months of review and planning I am convinced that we have a realistic chance winning if we take the defensive approach. For all our sakes let's hope none of this happens.

On February 19, we will have a Lobbying 101 training session. (It's a national holiday and many people will have the day off.) We have a tentative location in Austin for the training and this will be firmed up within a few days. We will assemble at the back steps of the capitol building at 9 AM on February 20. We had 54 people attend our last Lobby Day. This year the goal is a turnout of 100 participants so please get the word out now.

Last Lobby Day I reserved a cluster of hotel rooms and quite frankly that didn't work out. I will be in Austin on February 18, to get everything coordinated. I will announce my location well in advance so everyone will know how to reach me. Folks who plan to come to Austin on February 19, for Lobby 101 training and stay overnight will be responsible for finding their own hotels. However, TGAIN will once again sponsor a roommate matching service. If you are staying overnight and need someone who can split the cost (perhaps even several people to a room) please let us know. We will try our best to make Lobby Day affordable for everyone. If anyone in Austin can offer a bed or even a sofa to someone in dire economic straits that would be much appreciated.

Once again I want to state in the clearest terms possible that anyone and everyone wishing to attend is welcome to attend. TGAIN has never made the kind of distinctions that we so often hear within the community. No matter how you define yourself, if you want to attend we will be glad to have you with us. Our only request is that everyone please dress professionally in the clothing of his or her choice. Remember that you will be representing not only yourself but also the entire community. I have spoken to the capitol police and the restrooms will not be an issue.

**2 TGs WIN CAUCUS AWARDS**

*(Continued from Page 9)*

the transgender community attending that night, hit the hotel bar for a well-deserved chance to decompress. Once there, plans for future banquets, and opinions on how this year's banquet started rolling in. First-time attendee, Beth Richard commented that she thought this year's Gala was wonderful – even without the keynote speaker. “Everyone here was very friendly” and she “saw no signs of the problems” rumored about the Caucus for years. Another first time attendee, Desirée Walton, added that she “really had fun at the banquet!” She added that she also thought it was very well produced.

Sean himself, gushed about the help he received from the Caucus board: Mike Bodin, Tony Carroll, Scott Simpson, Jessica and myself.

Even with all the problems that arose, we still managed to pull it off and have a successful banquet! Later Sean mentioned how pleased he was with the transgender participation in the Caucus this year, and how he wanted to return that support!

It was certainly a night of new beginnings: the first board in the new millennium, the first significant anniversary, and for the T community, the first time more than one TG was honored in the same

event. The word transgender was frequently used, and president Sean Carter left no doubt that the Caucus is trans-supportive. Taking a page from what the T community has done with it's lobbying; the Caucus hopes to raise funds with a series of house parties to do likewise – sending a contingent to Washington to lobby for GLBT rights! And even more surprises will occur on that trip, but I don't want to spoil the surprise now! Let's leave it

by saying the transgender community is a definite part of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus.

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the Caucus is back! If you were sitting on the sidelines wondering if this group would survive, then you'd better hop on this bandwagon now; 'cause this bird is about to soar into the stratosphere! For more information on the Caucus, dial 713-521-1000, or Email [Carter721@aol.com](mailto:Carter721@aol.com)



At left, longtime civil rights activist and 'proud mama', Sarah DePalma (C) with her two 'prodigal daughters' Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) and Jessica Redman (R), showing off their newly-won Civil Rights and Newcomer of the Year awards, respectively. Above, the three amigas (L-R) Vanessa, Jessica and Desirée Walton relax and share a hug near the end of the evening's festivities. Above right, most of the TATS contingent at the Gala line up for a photo-op: (L-R) Brandi Welch Williams, Beth Richard, Sarah DePalma, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Jessica Redman & Desirée Walton. At



right, Jessica hugs Sean before accepting her award. Below, Vanessa in shock asks "Who did they say won that award?" Bottom left, Vanessa (R) recovers from the shock enough to joke with Sean Carter onstage while displaying her award.



## Another Understanding, Another Approach! Part 1: Divide and Fall; Divide and Conquer!

By Vikki Lynn Skelton

I am fairly new to TG activism. However, by being on the Transunity and NTAC e-groups I have had a quick education in much of what is happening in the political and local arena's when it comes to transgenderism. Much of what I have read spurred me to post some thoughts on the NTAC e-groups list similar to what I have written here. I have submitted it to the TATS newsletter in order to reach those who may not be part of the NTAC e-group.

I am sure that some, if not all, of what is said here has been considered before by many. However, there may be some that have not considered it and there may be some things said here that have not been considered at all. The purpose of this article is to help get the T-community to think of new ways of approaching non-discrimination of T's in the work place and more specifically in approaching ENDA. I am not necessarily saying that we should stop working to get T's included in the current ENDA bill with this article. I am simply supplying another thought line on the whole issue or at least my thought line. If you have comments on this article, feel free to e-mail me at [heres\\_2\\_u@theglobe.com](mailto:heres_2_u@theglobe.com).

### Divide and Fall

One thing that we need to avoid is the "divide and fall" syndrome amongst ourselves that seems to be so prevalent among the T-Community. Christ said,

"Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house against a house falls."

The principle applies to the situation he used it in and it applies to us. If we continue to go into flame wars with each other and begin to divide our community over various issues then we will get very little, if anything at all accomplished. This does not mean that we have to agree on everything or how to go about accomplishing certain things. What this means is that we have to have a common purpose that we all work toward, maybe in our own ways if necessary, without hindering the efforts of others toward that same purpose in doing so.

We must understand that there is usually more than one right way to accomplish a great deal of things. I can turn a blouse inside out, I can turn it outside out, I can start with the right sleeve, the left sleeve, the collar, the back of the blouse, the right front, the left front or whatever in order to iron the blouse. There are many right ways to iron a blouse and just because someone does it differently does not mean they are doing it wrong. The same is true with us. If our goal is to acquire non-discrimination in the work place then we need to realize that there is more than one way to skin a cat (if you are an animal rights activist then substitute an orange).

So, what I feel is that we need to come together in a round table type of discussion and come to a consensus and decide what our main goal is. Then we need to allow the various groups and individuals within our community to work in their own ways toward accomplishing the goal. At the same time, we should continually come together and discuss in a safe environment what each of us are doing, to see if there is a way that we can help and or compliment each other, to offer suggestions on how to make greater headway, and to encourage each other. We need to do this without tearing each other's methods down, flaming each other, and dividing our community up. Most battles are not won by hitting the "enemy" head on. Most battles, most wars, are won by a combination of attacks...cutting off supply lines, using frontal attacks, hit and run type attacks, and by other methods. In other words, there is more than one way to do many things. While working together as one unit, we need to allow others the freedom to approach things in their own way while at the same time not taking on a "my way is better than your way" attitude within ourselves.

### Divide and Conquer

Just as division amongst ourselves can bring us down and keep us from accomplishing higher and better things for our community, dividing up the "enemy" amongst themselves can conquer them and allow us to see

greater results. It is very unlikely that we will be able to win over a group of people, especially in the political and the religious arena, unless we deal with them on an individual basis. I feel that we will have a greater degree of success if we divide them up by working on the politicians and religious leaders and lay people on an individual basis when it comes to Transgender issues.

When a person is standing amongst their peers that believe the same thing, they become more strengthened in their beliefs and resolve. However, when a person is separated from their peers and they are able to look at an issue outside of their peer group in a safe atmosphere, the defensive walls have a greater chance of falling and they are more likely to be more open to the issues of Transgenderism. At the same time, this is not always the case. There are just some people that will not change their views no matter what. But overall, in order to increase our chances of accomplishing our goal, I feel that we may want to make sure that part of our focus is to divide and conquer the "enemy." We should talk with them on an individual basis. Then we may want to pull together those who seem to be moving our way into a general meeting of some sort so they can see that there are others that believe the same thing or at least open to it.

### Last Word

So, in summary, I feel that we need to pull together as a community, toward a common purpose. At the same time, we need to encourage each other as individuals and all the various TG groups to become involved and to work toward that common purpose in the best way that they see fit. We need to stop the flame wars, the personal attacks, and realize that there is more than one way to accomplish many things. We need to focus on dividing and conquering the "enemy" instead of ourselves.

Part 2 will be about another possible way to approach ENDA.



*Priests are assholes that perpetuate into other peoples assholes to put their ego there.*

— Antonin Artaud.

I don't feel more conscious than usual of the ways that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are marginalized in our society. But, that is my fault. I don't get out much. I don't get out there in the world and 'activate' (like Vanessa Edwards Foster, Chris Duffy, Sarah DePalma, and Phyllis

Frye.) I don't read the CATS or TATS newsletters because, quite honestly, it is boring for me anyway. I'm not blind. I still see the injustices in this world. It makes me sick. I still feel the injustices in my own life. I believe the two injustices are separated. I'm not deaf. I know what the activists say, "get out there and activate!" Do you know what I say? I would say something like 'look good, feel good, be authentic, then go out there and activate if you want to. You don't have to. Take care of yourself first. If you're not true, if you're not real, you cannot convince anybody or anything.'

Instead of simply field marshaling our old defenses of resentment or fear, we should cultivate responses that come from a sense of wholeness and

higher self-esteem. Let's try to be proactive, and not be so reactive. Let's use our heads, and not be so emotional all the time. We don't have to participate in or internalize the notion that we are sexual deviates. Maybe you are. Perhaps not. I know what I am. You almost had me convinced of what you are. Instead of creating a fictional story about your persona, you should affirm to yourself the love of the other person towards yourself — the boundaries, the needs and the traditions. We should be assertive without being so defensive.

Today, I don't want to be proactive with others, unless my friends want something from me. I'm willing to pretend who I am, but realistically know what I need.

**DAY OF REMEMBRANCE....**

*(Continued from Page 10)*

two verses of the civil rights song. Spontaneous though it was, it was the perfect culmination of our first Day of Remembrance in Houston.

Opinions on the event were all similar: extremely sobering. Councilmember Annise Parker commented to Jessica that she "didn't realize there were so many" victims, or that the problem was this bad.

Jessica herself was nearly moved to tears numerous times, especially when reading her victim's name and info. Jessica, being intersexed, had strong feelings for the intersexed child that was killed by the mother. "I really had a hard time maintaining my composure.

"It was really important to have some sort of ritual or ceremony to commemorate this," said Cristan Williams, president of CATS. By coincidence, she happened to get the name of a 19-year old TG named Alina Marie Barrigan, just a few weeks after trying to secure residence for a local 19-year old homeless TG. "It wasn't only about the individuals whose names were read this year; but those who, like Phyllis said, have been forgotten. There are many people out there who wouldn't have a problem killing me," she added, "just because of who I am. Our lives aren't easy."

By chance, I also happened to pick a name I had a strong relation to: Vanesa-Lorena Ledesma (even my middle name is the English equivalent of hers: Lorraine) - a transgender activist from Argentina who died in police custody. Just the reading about her set me near the edge of choking up.

"Very moving," was Sarah DePalma's impression of the memorial. "You really want to put a name and a face with the victims," she added. "I can't see how you could've done it any better."

"This was wonderful! Well done!" chimed in retired activist, Phyllis Frye, "we need to make this an annual event!" Indeed it will be. Sadly....



At left, as the night skyline twinkles in the background, organizer Vanessa Edwards Foster speaks to those assembled with Councilmember Annise Parker standing behind in support. Above, Cristan Williams gives a tearful speech that evokes emotion from the crowd, and Annise Parker as well.

**Remembering Our Dead**

**Top Toy Rejects For Christmas 2000**

3. "Gates-opoly" from Parker Brothers - Just like the old "Monopoly" but only one person can play and you start the game with all the property on the board and all the money in the bank. You then spend the next few fun filled hours trying to buy or destroy all of the other Parker Brothers board games.
2. XXX-Files Action Figures - Now you can do what Mulder and Scully should've been doing many season's ago.... rutting like wild boars in heat! Hours of meaningless sex in a cheap hotel on the FBI's Amex card.
1. Disney Automobile Air Bags - Fast moving, potentially lethal car safety equipment adorned with all your favorite Disney characters! Watch your child's last moment's on Earth be filled with joy as he is greeted head on by a smiling, 200 mph visage of Mickey, Minnie, Donald or Goofy! ("BayWatch" and "Seinfeld" characters available for small adults).



# "Transgender Termites" - The Mini-Series: Part III

By Vikki Lynn Skelton

This is the third and last installment of the mini-series on "Transgender Termites." In the first one I defined "Transgender Termite," and how you can tell the difference between a "Peaceful Hider" and a "Transgender Termite." In installment two, I attempted to show that there is a bigger picture that we must look at and that if one person is not safe to live in their PGE (Preferred Gender Expression) then no one is safe. Therefore, in order to effect greater and quicker positive changes in society toward the TG community, more of us need to step up to the plate to fight the injustices we face, educate society as a whole on TG issues, and become an active, productive, and vital member of society. In this installment, I am going to talk about the choices we have. Yes, we have the choice to be a "Transsexual Termite" or not. That is up to you. But there are other choices as well. So, grab your favorite cup of beverage, sit back and enjoy.

### Surprise, Surprise, Surprise

No, this is not about Gomer Pyle. To be frank, or is it frankie, who knows, I am surprised at how "Transgender Termites" can selfishly ream those who are out on the front lines, battling it out, fighting the injustices we experience in the court system and society as a whole. I am surprised at how they can bite the hands of those who have decided to NOT hide in the woodwork of society so that we all can work in, be legally considered according to, and live in our PGE. I am surprised at how "Transgender Termites" can criticize those who have given of themselves so that we would not have to worry as much about the hassles, dangers, discrimination and so-forth that go along with being a Transgender individual. It just surprises me at how an individual can be so selfish about their own little "safe" world when there are so many others that are not able to enjoy life in their PGE in relative safety. Sometimes, it just baffles and pains me at how ungrateful we can be as human beings toward those who have put everything at stake to help us attain what we have now.

Well, maybe it isn't all that bad. We must be doing something correct if we are beginning to flush out the "Transgender Termites" from their hiding places. At least, maybe some of them will open up their eyes and see that since there "glass world" could be disrupted so easily, then no one is ever safe until all are safe to live out their lives in their PGE. Maybe some of them will come to this realization and step out and begin to direct their energies toward helping the community versus tearing it down with their criticism and complaints. Just, maybe. We can only hope and pray.

### It's My Right to...

Yes, we all have the right to...

"Hide in the woodwork of society and live out a quiet and "normal" life,

"Hide in the woodwork of society and work behind the scenes in "stealth" mode to help the TG community,

"Jump in and out of our hiding place in society as we work in openness to help the TG community,

"Be more courageous, to put everything we have attained at risk, and to go out to the front lines, to do our best at putting a stop to the injustices we face as trans-

gender individuals in our court systems and in society as a whole, or

"Even hide in the woodwork of society as a "transgender termite."

We all have the right to hide and live in our larger closets of "reclusiveness." Yes, we all have the right to eat off what others have built before us and continue to build. We all have the right to live in fear of being "exterminated" if anyone found out we were there hiding underneath the surface or even deep within the foundations of society itself. Yes, we even have the right to complain about those we feel are causing waves that could disrupt our lives through the hard work they are doing to help the TG community as a whole. We have the right to express our fears of losing what we have attained. However, we do not have the moral right to lash out, cause division, demoralize, disrespect others, and to be unkind to others. Express your concerns, communicate your fears, offer suggestions, but do so in a respectful way and with the understanding that there is always a price to pay for freedom.

It is through respectful positive communication with each other that we are able to develop new strategies, enhance older strategies, and find better solutions to bring greater understanding within society as a whole and the legal and political system. It is through respectful positive communication that we will have a greater chance of making positive changes for the transgender community. Let's not just make a difference for the positive change in our community; let's BE THE DIFFERENCE for the positive changes in our community and society as a whole.

### It is My Choice!

Each and every one of us have a choice each and everyday of our life. We can live in fear of losing everything we attain or we can put that fear aside and do what is right. We can choose to help others attain what we have attained by doing whatever we can to fight the injustice in our court systems and in society as a whole. It is our choice.

We may think that we are not living in fear. But are you really? If you are upset by the fact that your gender on your driver's license and birth certificate could be reverted back to its original designation then you are living in fear. If you are afraid that someone may find you out and you will lose your job, then you are living in fear. When you strike out at those who have done whatever they can to help your community and fight the injustices we face, then you are living in fear. When you are afraid of having the media getting wind of what is happening on the front lines, then you are living in fear.

On the other hand, can we ever completely stop living in fear? Probably, not. However, I do believe we can reduce the amount of fear we live within each day by putting the interest of others above our own and working from a basis of love. Is it easy? No. But if we work together and truly support each other then it will be much easier than if we did it by ourselves. Will there be a price

to pay? More than likely, yes. Again, working together and truly supporting each other will help make the price not be so costly on an individual basis. Remember that it is your choice and only your choice as to how you will live your life. Just don't criticize and complain against and disrespect those who have made the choice to step out and fight on the front lines to help make things better for the TG community.

### The Cost of Change

If you think about it, going through the transitioning process only to hide within the woodwork of society is only an act of moving out of a smaller "closet of reclusivity" to a larger "closet of reclusivity." Whether we make that transition as a "Peaceful Hider" or as a "Transgender Termite" it is up to us. At the same time, we need to realize that if we choose to NOT help the TG community in any way, then we still will pay the cost in the long run. In making that choice, we are only helping to slow down the process of ending the injustices many TG individuals still face and or are in danger of facing. If we decide to become a "Transgender Termite" and stand back and criticize those who are making the sacrifices to make sure that we are able to legally live freely and safely in our Preferred Gender Expression (PGE), then we are actually hurting the cause and even creating setbacks in some cases.

With every skirmish, battle, or war, sacrifices are made. Until we have won the fight and even for some time after we have won...several of us will possibly lose our...

- "Jobs and careers,
- "Family & friends, and
- "possibly our lives

There are always costs for making changes in our society. Some will suffer greater costs than others will. Even some of those who have freely eaten from the table of privileges we have at this time, provided by others at great personal expense, will suffer loss at times. That is the price we pay for freedom. We will also probably suffer set backs and such in various areas of the U.S. Why? Not because of those who are on the front line defending us against the injustices of the court systems and within society. They are doing what is right. It is mainly because there are far too many of us who are apathetic, want the free meal ticket, and are not willing to stand up and fight for what is right out of fear of losing what they have attained. There are far too many of us who are too willing to remain in our closets of "safety & selfishness." There are far too many of us who are perfectly content with the injustice that is imposed upon others while we sit in the "safety" of our own little world/closets, hiding in the woodwork of society.

### Why? Why? & Why?

Why do those who enjoy being lost in the woodwork of society, enjoy living in their closets, as "normal" individuals, bite the hands of those who have gone before us and won us the privilege of living as "normal" individuals as best as possible? Why is it that so many of us are happy with our quiet secret lives in their PGE when so

(Continued on Page 20)





**TATS Tidbits**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- The 9th Annual Unity Banquet date is set: March 24th, 2001 at the Westchase Hilton Hotel - 7 p.m. until ? The emcee this year is comedian, Nancy Ford. March 24th, 2001 Westchase Hilton Hotel - 7 p.m. until ? Tickets are \$35, and can be purchased by credit card - a first for the Unity Banquet - by calling Melanie Rudd melpreg@prmpub.com or phoning 281-347-6878. For TATS members, tickets can be purchased by contacting Melanie Black: thanatos@cityscope.net
- This past month, the Montrose Counseling Center made some minor amendments to their Employment Policy. One change included the employment non-discrimination clause - "MCC does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, national origin, disability, religious preference, marital status, parental status, pregnancy, political affiliation or belief, or sexual orientation" to now include the words "gender orientation." A big thanks goes out to the MCC Operations Board for a principled stand for equality....
- Connecticut anti-bias law covers transgenders. The state's Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities has ruled that a state law banning sex discrimination covers transgendered people. The ruling came in the case of Ann Hopkins, an associate at the accounting firm of Price Waterhouse, who contended she was denied a partnership because partners considered her too masculine.  
"This is a very important decision for transgendered people, who have historically been excluded from many civil rights protections," said Jennifer Levi, a staff attorney at Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, a legal

group. "The commission's ruling takes note of the still-pervasive discrimination that many people face simply because they do not meet society's stereotype of what people think a 'real woman' or a 'real man' should look like."

- SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Assemblymember Sheila Kuehl scored a win for transsexual and transgendered people in California when Gov. Gray Davis signed into law strengthened protections for Californians against disability-related discrimination. Among other provisions, AB 2222 removes Transsexualism and Gender Identity Disorder (GID) from the list of conditions that are excluded from protections, and provides that the California law may provide greater protection than the ADA, which specifically excludes transsexual people and people diagnosed with GID. Wish we all could be California girls....



- In a historic move, Lutherans Concerned/North America (LANA), the GLBT arm of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA,) has passed two trans-inclusive resolutions. It has endorsed the Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA) and emphasize the need to adopt legislation at the national and state levels to protect LGBT persons from hate crimes; and also endorsed trans-inclusion in ENDA, transgender rights in general, and inclusion of gender identity in state and local legislation.
- A Minnesota transsexual has successfully sued in a case where the employer denied use of the restroom. In the ruling, the appeals court judge's opinion was that the employer, West Group of Eagan MN, was at fault for

"intentional sexual orientation discrimination and hostile work environment under the Minnesota Human Rights Act." Minnesota is the only state that designates specific protections for transgenders based on 'real or perceived sexual orientation.'

The plaintiff, Julienne Goins, a M2F transsexual, had undergone transition in the summer of 1995, and begun work at the Eagan plant after transferring from the Rochester NY location in early October 1997. Soon after arriving, four female employees approached the human resources director, stating they were uncomfortable using the restroom with Goins. When the HR director, and supervisors of the company admonished her to use a separate restroom; she refused and subsequently resigned due to the "unwelcome, stressful environment."

• Quote of the month from Congress. This courtesy of Rep. James Traficant (D) Ohio, on the House floor: "Mr. Speaker, a 22-year-old Boston transvestite kidnapped and molested a 12-year-old boy with a screwdriver. After all of this, the judge said there is just a little too much hype about this case. Thus, Judge Lopez sentenced this sex offender to 1 year probation and no jail time.

"Unbelievable. What is next? Country clubs for child molesters? Think about it. These courts are so screwed up, admitted serial murderers get 3 square meals, TV, law libraries, and air-conditioning. Beam me up. I say there should be a court-ordered sex change on this transvestite performed by Dr. Lorena Bobbitt in Boston, Massachusetts. That would stop this garbage." Subsequent findings in the case involving the offender, Ebony Horton, showed a number of inconsistencies in the victim's claims and testimony. Most compelling among those inconsistencies was after the screwdriver that Horton allegedly forced the boy to suck showed no residual evidence of saliva whatsoever after testing.

(Continued on Page 19)

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**TATS Tidbits**

*(Continued from Page 18)*

• **ROXWELL, UK** — The wife of a transsexual whose body was found weighted down by chains on a beach has been charged in connection with her murder. Alison Hooley, 38, of Roxwell, Essex, has been charged with "assisting an offender" and obstruction of justice,



**Christine Chappel**

Suffolk Police said. The naked body of Christine Chappel (formerly Bryan Hooley) was found near Kessingland Beach near Lowestoft on March 2, 2000. Mrs Hooley was to appear before Lowestoft magistrates in late November.

• A British court ruled that a transsexual seeking a divorce from her second husband is indeed a woman because the penis she was born with is "tiny." The 53-year-old woman, known in court papers as Mrs. W, was born with a tiny penis and was raised as a boy. She was forced to undergo testosterone injections when she was 15 by her stepfather, who considered her too feminine.

In 1987 she underwent a sex-change operation and married for the first time in 1990. Her second husband, from whom she was divorced in 1997, had been trying to have their marriage annulled on the grounds that W was biologically male and that same-sex marriages are illegal in the United Kingdom. However, the judge in the case ruled that W should probably have been considered female since birth.

• Getting her ire up .... A transsexual dentist from Athy, County Kildare, Ireland is bringing suit in the Irish High Court to have her gender changed on her birth certificate. The plaintiff, Lydia Annice Foy, 54, a formerly married and father of two, had her SRS in 1992 and is seeking through the courts to live a life officially as a

female. Her attorney, Bill Shipsey stated that Gender Identity Disorder is now universally recognized as a diagnosable and real medical condition.

• **VANCOUVER, BC** — The British Columbia Human Rights Commission said on Tuesday that a person's driving record should not be used as a way to find out if they have had a sex change. The commission said the office that keeps driving records has agreed to modify its system so that drivers who change their name and gender will have all past driving offenses listed under their new identity.

The records are being modified for transsexuals to give them more privacy, officials said, and to stop people from finding out about a sex change by running a check on names and driving records. The old system "raised concerns about the privacy for transsexual people who said there was no need for anyone to know the details of their past," the commission said in a press release.

• Thai kickboxer, Parinya Kiatbusaba has begun her dream of a career in show business, making her singing and dancing debut at the Icon Club in Bangkok on September 28. Thailand's most world-renown katoey (or transgender), known for her fierce prowess in the kickboxing ring, had her SRS earlier this year (paid for with the proceeds of her kickboxing career). She said she's happy in her new job and that, "I want to be in showbiz, or any business which isn't as tough as boxing."



• Transsexual Brits must wait a bit more.... Plans to review the law on marriages for people who have undergone sex changes have been shelved to avoid a pre-election controversy. The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, has decided to postpone a review of the law that would allow transsexuals to have their new genders legally recognized until after the next election. Ministers feared an outcry that could jeopardize their Parliament seats.

• **Norway Transsexuals and endangered species...?** Trans people in Norway have, over the years, received access to state medical resources for their condition since 1963, making advanced compared parts of the world. Since January of this year, however, that treatment has dried up leaving a waiting list of fifty trans people with literally nowhere to turn. Norwegian TS support group LFTS is talking to politicians to try to initiate some action on the issue.



As Tone Maria Hansen explains: "The reason why the treatment was terminated, was because the two psychiatrists only worked with this in their spare time. The Government would not pay them to work full time and they decided that they would not be able to work under such conditions. In Norway there is only one surgeon that can operate on transsexuals and he also left his job. The government will not take responsibility and blame the situation on the hospital, while the hospital blame it on the Government and they say that they need more money to restart the treatment."

**TRUISMS**

- Life is sexually transmitted.
- Kids in the back seat cause accidents; accidents in the back seat cause kids.
- Living on Earth is expensive, but it does include free trips around the sun.
- The only time the world beats a path to your door is if you're in the bathroom.
- If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would have put them on my knees.

**You Can Call On Me!**

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**TRANSGENDER TERMITES III**

*(Continued from Page 16)*

many others do not have the privilege of living that way?

Why is it that so many of us do not realize that it is only in numbers and the willingness to do what is right that we will be able to truly make the changes that need to be made?

We all have the right to hide in the woodwork of our society. We also have the right to step up to the plate and make sure that the right thing is done and that our rights as American Citizens, though transgendered, are protected and not violated.

**An Opportunity Like None Other...**

We stand at the brink of an opportunity to make a difference like never before. We have not seen such an opportunity since we began fighting for Transgender rights. It is up to each one of us as individuals and as organizations as to whether we will take advantage of this opportunity or let it slip through our fingers.

What has happened in the Littleton case and across this nation, though lives are being interrupted and sacrifices are being made, I see as a good thing. I DO NOT see the pain and loss that others have suffered as being a good thing. That is rarely ever a good thing. But think this through with me. Now, courts across this country are going to have to stop avoiding the Transgender issues that are being brought to their attention. Many judges will have to stop and seriously consider the gender issue and hopefully stop making rules based on how they feel about the issue versus the scientific and medical and psychological evidence that is out there before them in regards to gender. Rulings against the Transgender Community will

be challenged and hopefully, new positive rulings will be made.

We have the opportunity to make it known through the media that there are more of us out there than they thought and that we are not like what you see on the "Jerry Springer" talk shows of the world. We have the opportunity more now than any other time in our history to stand up against the injustices we face in our court systems and in society. We have the opportunity, more now than any other point in our history, to reach out and educate the general public about the issues we face and to gain greater understanding. We have the opportunity now to have the highest court of the land to make a positive ruling in our favor, thus overturning the rulings of Texas' lower courts and Supreme Court. We have the opportunity to force those in the political arena to look at the transgender issues before us instead of hiding their heads in the sand and ignoring them.

So, to all of you "Transgender Termites," stop reaming those who are making waves of disruption in your own private world of "safety" while they are doing everything they can to make positive changes for the TG community as a whole. Why not be thanking and encouraging them for the hard work and the sacrifices that they have made? Why not step out and join them in the fight?

**Take the High Road**

Let's not fight against each other and demean ourselves with childish name-calling. Let's take the high road and...

"Encourage those on the front line,

"Be human enough to have compassion for those who do not enjoy the same privileges as we have enjoyed,

"Do what we can to help those who have suffered loss because of the injustice in our courts and society, and

"Do what we can to stop those injustices.

**Last Words**


Many within the transgender community have been able to live a life in relative "safety" in their PGE. Until ALL of us are able to have the right and enjoyment of living our lives in our PGE, without worrying about losing our jobs, children, finances, and or suffering loss through the court systems because of our gender expression, then NONE OF US are truly "SAFE."

I hope that the anger and fear that the "Transgender Termites" express can be turned to more productive means other than criticizing and calling people names. The anger and things they tend to expressed toward those in the front lines making waves of change are no different than what many within the community have faced from those in society who would condemn us to death and then to hell for being something we had no control of. It is my prayer that none of the "Transgender Termites" that are out there have to suffer any injustice from the courts through some unforeseen event in their life as Christie Littleton has. Why? Because no one deserves to go through what she and others like her have been through and so that they would not have to eat crow and seek the help of those whom they have reamed.

That ends this mini-series on "Transgender Termites." If you desire to send your comments and insights, feel free to respond at my e-mail address. It is heres\_2\_u@theglobe.com.

Until we meet again, may God watch over you and me.

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