

TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 6, Issue 1

Houston, Texas

January, 1998

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.

ANNISE PARKER WINS RUNOFF, MAKES HISTORY!!! LEE BROWN ELECTED AS HOUSTON'S FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAYOR

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

The runoff election on December 6 was a truly momentous occasion: for the first time in the city's history a minority was elected mayor, and an open lesbian was elected to city council. Lee Brown beat back a challenge by Rob Mosbacher, and inspired the black community in unprecedented numbers to turn out the vote that put him over the top. With all votes counted, Brown won with 156,307 votes -- or 52.67% -- to Mosbacher's 140,449 which amounted to 47.33% of the votes cast. It was a very heated contest, and a very close vote throughout the night, with the neck-and-neck vote changing lead on numerous occasions. Mosbacher held a conference to concede the race late in the evening, and did so in a very conciliatory and classy manner. In Brown, we have a mayor known in past experience for his 'consensus building;' and as a minority himself, more likely to listen to the plight of the 'little guy'... which includes, possibly, the transgender community.

An added benefit of the Brown mayoral

race was the high African-American vote, which directly helped make Annise Parker's campaign an overwhelming success. Annise garnered 144,417 votes -- outpointing all non-incumbents in the race, and even Mosbacher! Her election seemed never to be in question, with the exit-pollsters predicting her victory even before the vote count. She opened up a slight 51% to 49% lead with just one percent of the vote count, and never trailed the entire night as her lead continued to widen throughout. With the final votes counted, Annise won 57.9% of the vote to Don Fitch's 42.1%, or 105,017 votes. In his own concession speech to her success as being the result of "having run for



Kathy Hubbard (L) and her partner, councilmember-elect Annise Parker (R) celebrate the victory

THE WINNING TEAM: TEAM PARKER!



Dec. 6 Election Victory Party at Riva's Rest.

(L-R) vol. coord. Patrick McIlvain, field dir. Deborah Bell, campaign mgr. Grant Martin, vol. coord. Vanessa Edwards-Foster, and the victorious candidate Annise Parker

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| January 10 | Social Meeting at:
Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM |
| January 24 | Un-Meeting at
Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM |
| February 14 | Social Meeting at:
Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM |
| February 28 | Un-Meeting at
Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM |

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TATS Officers

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Monica Roberts

Katrina C. Rose

Jessica Wicks



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) 827-5913 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

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:
http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

A belated Happy New Years to you all! 1997 has truly been an active and notable year for our community. This particular occasion -- a beginning as well as an ending -- tends to make us look back in reflection over the course of the past year. It's a base from which to measure where we were, where we are, and where we plan to go. It's also a chance to remember what went right and what went wrong. Reflection and hope generally sum up what New Years is about.

Personally, I'm just as happy to be done with the old year. It's been bittersweet. There have been some positive events in 1997: working as an integral component to Annise Parker's campaign, her eventual victory on election day, completing my name change, visiting the nation's capital while lobbying and renewing some old friendships...even being elected editor for TATS and president of GCTC. However, these events have been tempered by other occurrences that tarnished the year's lustre. Since late April, I've lost 11 friends and relatives -- many more deaths than I've ever dealt with before. Most sad was the loss of 3 of the 4 closest people in my life in a six week span, and the remaining one (my baby sister) becoming more distant as a result of my outing myself to her and the family. Add to this chronic unemployment, my spiraling financial morass, dealing with my mother's move after selling her home, and my sister's move and ongoing problems, and concerns for my baby sister's marital turmoil...and you get the picture. It's definitely been *bittersweet*...

For the group, I believe there's been the same mix of bitter and sweet; but I believe the emphasis was much less bitter. It's funny to look back and remember how the group seemed to be faltering a little. This last year has seen TATS find direction and, especially with the new group of officers and board members, has become pro-active in promoting the organization. One need only look at recent meetings to see the effect: every meeting has close to 20 attending (a record 26 attended the Thanksgiving meeting). This contrasts with the mere handfuls that used to attend some of last year's meetings. Even better, the group has more members joining up and others in the wings!



A few of our members have reached their goal this year by surgical reassignment. Carey Porter, Kristin Ingram, Susan Alcorn and Michelle Belanger all completed their journeys into womanhood in 1997, and Sarah Eris Caffee will soon join them on January 20.

The only real downside for TATS this year was the loss of two members, and a frequent attendee and SO of another member. In May we suffered the loss of our ousted president, Carolyn Patek to a lung embolism. Just a few short months later, Jessica Wicks' mate Skip Wood died from health complications due to a bout of viral encephalopathy in August. Just when we thought we couldn't handle any more, activist Dee McKellar suffered a massive heart attack and passed away on Labor Day weekend. Certainly there have been deaths in the group's past, but this was more than the usual or expected amount in the 'post AIDS epidemic' era. The song says, "should auld acquaintance be forgot..." but I don't think we should (or likely ever will) forget. Our friends may be gone, but with our memories, they will continue to live on in our hearts.

In Memory...

Carolyn Marie Patek
former Pres. TATS, 95-96
1960 - 1997



Dee Skene McKellar
Former ofc. ICTLEP, activist
1942 - 1997

Joe 'Skip' Wood Jr.
Songwriter, beloved of Jessica Wicks
1945-1997

A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

Michelle Myers

Terri Lynn

Marti Bennett

for submitting humor

Lauren Robison, suburban Baltimore MD

Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV

Sarah Fox, Crystal Club, Columbus OH

for submitting photos

Christine Fusco of Hubbard Financial Serv.

for submitting photos, scanning & articles

Katrina C. Rose, a great **BIG THANKS!!!**

Our Advertising Rates Are:

Business card sized ad (1¼ inch x 3½ inch)

\$30. per year

Double card sized ad (3½ inch x 3½ inch)

\$60. per year

MICHELLE'S MUSINGS - THIS IS MY DESK

By Michelle Myers

I would like to wish all TATS members a very Happy New Year and I hope that 1998 brings you all the things that you need the most. I also hope you all had a pleasant holiday season and were able to spend some time with your family, be it your family of "blood" or of "choice". A special thanks to Paula and Arwen for opening up their hearts and home for many of the members on Christmas. Also congratulations to Jessica and Crystal on their recent union.

I did want to mention that the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, I had the opportunity to talk with the management committee where Jessica works and give what was termed a "sensitivity training" session on what it means to be a transsexual. The presentation went quite well and I believe it was well received by Jessica's management. They are approaching this serious issue in a way that shows compassion and understanding.

The general approach for the presentation was to examine those facets of the situation that can make the experience a positive one for the organization and the people within it. Jessica and I had discussed what the more important points were and how those issues might be addressed. I then took from my and others' experience to discuss the situation that transsexuals typically find themselves in. It was not an apologia for Jessica but merely an opportunity and atmosphere for those present to explore their questions and concerns. It total there were approximately 15 people in attendance and the session lasted about one and a half hours.

With this first effort behind us, I believe that TATS can now offer any of its members the same sort of personally focused help. If anyone is interested in a "sensitivity training" session or would just like to go through the process with me to gain the benefit of a different point of view, just let me know. Also, if someone is getting ready to approach their management about transition on the job, TATS can put together a small group of those who have gone through this to help you formulate a plan and, if you want, critique your presentation. Again, just give me a call at (713) 524-6349.

I did want to mention a few more things very quickly:

Please listen to and support our local radio station KPFT at 90.1 FM. We have a presence on Jimmy Carper's and Sarah DePalma's *Afterhours* transgender weekend. This can be heard on the second Saturday of each month from midnight to 3 a.m. I know that it is late but it is a good program covering our needs. In addition, each week on *Afterhours*, we are getting mentioned around 1:30 a.m. on the news segment with Big Roy and Michelle. As a minimum we cover the upcoming meetings for some of the transgendered groups in Houston. We are also giving out the TATS Line telephone number each week.

If you would like to volunteer some of your time to TATS, you can help in trying to formulate a plan of where we want to go with the TATS Library. We should be adding books, videos and other materials in addition to finishing up the cataloguing of the present

contents. This is a good and needed resource for the membership. It is a way that we can help each other get information that we need. Please let me know if you can help.

There will be a Board of Directors meeting on Sunday, February 15th at my apartment starting at 1:00 pm. Any and all members are invited to come and participate. The present board will have been in office almost a half of a year and we will be discussing what we wish to do for the remainder of the year. Any one wishing to suggest agenda items for discussion, please contact me. As the date gets closer, I will be mentioning what will be covered.

And in closing, you should be getting an insert in this issue of the Newsletter, advising you if your subscription has run out. The Newsletter is a quality effort and is now a regular and significant window on what is going on within our organization. Vanessa and many, many others have been putting in quite an effort and deserve all of our support. Remember that there is no membership fee to be a member of TATS. If you can not afford the newsletter fee, just let me know and we will work something out on a completely confidential basis. If you can afford the newsletter fee, it should be worth the \$10 per year to continue receiving your publication...The TATS Newsletter.

Wishing you love and knowledge...Michelle.



Book review 'The Rules' by Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider -- Warner Books ISBN 0-446-60274-4 \$5.99 1995 Reviewed by Terri Lynn

I had been wanting to purchase this book since I first heard of it. It's very enjoyable and I think can apply to any relationship. This book has been designed, however, with the viewpoint from the Woman's in a heterosexual relationship. It's subtitle is 'Time-tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right'. There are 35 rules with 12 extra-hints at the end. Perhaps the book can be best summed up with it's own words.

"The purpose of the Rules is to make Mr. Right obsessed with having you as his by making yourself seem unattainable. In plain language, we're talking about playing hard to get! Follow the Rules and he will not just marry you, but feel crazy about you, forever! What we're promising you is 'happily ever after'. A marriage truly made in Heaven."

And..."Always remember when you are shopping that you are unique, a creature unlike any other, a woman. Don't aspire to the unisex look. Buy feminine-looking clothes to wear on the weekends as well as during the workweek. Remember that you're dressing for men, not other women, so always strive to look feminine."

I really enjoyed this book, though I wish that there was a hardcover edition available, but if there is it wasn't at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore where I found this. I liked a lot of what these authors had to say. Their premise is predicated on the belief that you should always be at your best, that you should act unattainable and be always aware of your femininity. It's essence is in a desire for a woman to simply 'be a woman', expressing her femininity with poise and

grace. It proposes the idea that 'women of the 90's attitude' have 'missed the point', that they are not getting the men they want but 'settling' for something somewhat less, and that men love a challenge, so be one. It suggests that you put on a certain 'act' for your job and that you can do this with men to obtain that which woman most desire, a man who adores them and will do most anything for them, with a great marriage, great sex, and a lifelong friend. It fully realizes that in time you can be more yourself but that the 'act' is required to obtain what they say most women want. The book understands how 'feminists' will vehemently disagree with it's ideas and proposals but states they are not as happy as they would be if they only followed 'The Rules'.

'The Rules' offers up ideas that have been around for quite some time now. Rule #2 is 'Don't talk to a man first and don't ask him to dance'. Rule #3 is 'Don't stare at men or talk to much and rule #4 says 'Don't meet him halfway or go Dutch on a date. The Rules say "you don't have to be entertaining or have interesting conversation all the time. He will think you are trying too hard. Just be there! Remember, men fall in love with your essence, not with anything in particular you say". Basic tried and true ideas such as Rule # 7 state "Don't accept a Saturday date after Wednesday" have been the stock in trade of initial dates, though largely unspoken 'givens' for many years. 'The Rules' puts these unspoken dating ideas into writing and suggests why these ideas are so good, and why they work. Rule # 9 suggests ideas for dates

1, 2 and 3. It suggests that if you wish a long term relationship on 'your terms' then keep things simple...simple kisses on the cheek or a quick peck on the lips at the end of the date, no sexual intercourse...that 'Anyone can get a one-night stand'. Rule # 11 is 'Always end the date first'. The authors suggest this leaves the man wanting more, not less, that if he wants to see more of you he will most definitely call you in the next day or so. If you try to prolong the date yourself, rather than the man suggesting ways to extend the date then he may go along simply 'not to hurt your feelings', or just because he is only interested in a one night stand. Let the man suggest ways to extend the date, if he doesn't, then it was not meant to happen. Rule # 18 tells you not to expect to change a man or expect him to change. If he exhibits traits that you simply cannot live with, then leave him, he won't change.

Rule # 21 suggest ways to place a personals ad. The authors don't have a problem with personal ads and state it shouldn't suggest a desperate woman, they DO however think they should be done in certain ways. The Rules state 'as long as you don't outright lie, you needn't be honest to a fault either.' It gives you ideas on how to respond to an ad and even ideas on the photo to send him.

The 'extra hints' in the book simply reiterate and restate certain 'main rules. All things considered, I don't agree with the basic premises. From the perspective of a transsexual dating a man, and possibly someday dating other men, I have certain ideas and

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PARKER MAKES HISTORY

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office unsuccessfully twice before" and her being able to bring in a bloc of "25 to 30,000 votes" right off the bat (referring to the gay community vote). This was something he felt he couldn't match. Somehow he'd forgotten he was a Republican (a very large bloc of voters), as well as having the backing of the Hotze family's "Straight Slate" -- another large, and very active 'moral-majority' style bloc of votes -- which has had great success at stacking the courts with Republican judges. Apparently they were no match for the gay vote, according to Fitch's speech.

In contrast, the Parker camp was absolutely elated. In her victory speech interview for KTRK, Channel 13, Annise said, "I am very proud to represent the Gay, Lesbian and Transgendered community...but I am even more proud to represent all the residents of Houston!" Throughout the campaign, Annise pursued the position in a professional, non-activist manner. Also in businesslike fashion, she wasted no time in hiring a crack council staff to make a quick, trouble-free transition. Her staff includes: political insider Barbara Harville of Helen Huey's staff; as her bilingual staffer, former HCC dist. candidate Terrence O'Neill; campaign volunteer and wife of State Rep. Scott Hochberg, Kathy Elek (a former staffer of Judson Robinson III); and one of Annise's closest friends, Cicely Wynne, as her research assistant. Obviously being the first anything in city council, she'll work under a microscope as the city now scrutinizes the new electee to see if she passes muster -- especially to see if she plays favorites to 'her community.' She feels, and I agree, that she will do well under scrutiny. She was elected to represent the entire city, and a lot of those duties facing city council are mundane, nuts and bolts types of problems. As she stated it in an interview with KRIV, Channel 26, "Potholes and street repairs aren't Gay or Lesbian issues."

During the election victory party, Annise took time to thank all of the voters, and especially all of those who contributed money or time to the campaign. The volunteer effort was due to a wonderful cross-section of individuals coming together to form a team. Gay, Lesbian, Transgendered, Straight, Republican and Democrats all coalesced into a team that (thankfully) proved that grassroots efforts can actually win -- and this was a perfect example!

The election's success was due in no small part to transgendered participation! On behalf of Annise Parker and the entire Annise Parker Campaign, in my capacity as volunteer coordinator, we wish to thank all of those from the Transgender Community who voted for and participated in this successful



Annise Parker delights in victory at Riva's as Kathy Hubbard looks on.

effort. We had very good, and noticeable, participation from the TG community; and you should all be commended for your efforts. The following TATS members were some of the many stars in the Parker success story: Jenifer René (my buddy in the trenches at the polls), Sarah DePalma, Daniell McCleney, Katrina Rose, Sarah Eris Caffee, Jessica Wicks, Carey Porter, Arwen Schiesler, Katrina Ingram, Ann Villavecchia and the late Dee McKellar.

Also a special thanks to our visiting friends who took time out of their 'vacations' to volunteer as well: Sarah Fox PhD. (vice-president of Crystal Club) from Columbus, OH, Didi Strano from Philadelphia PA, and Denise Danté of Pensacola FL. It really says something when you can enlist someone to work in a campaign that means absolutely nothing to them from a personal standpoint -- they simply do so at their friends' urging. They all had no stake in this, yet they participated in meaningful ways to help our community get a trans-friendly person in our city council. Extra special thanks to Sarah Fox, who I mercilessly dragged (no pun intended) down to the campaign all four nights she stayed with me. She worked me into her schedule and put in long hours on numerous tasks at the campaign without a single complaint -- a very laudable effort indeed.

An exuberant Annise Parker addresses the victory party crowd at Riva's, Dec. 6



WAR IN THE TRENCHES:

A First Person Account Of The Election

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

Election Eve: The Anticipation

I made a point of getting to the campaign early knowing that it was likely to be a busy night. I remembered the havoc the night before the general election coordinating the sign posting assignments, and wanted to plan ahead a bit better to avoid a little stress this time. So much for planning....

Most of the afternoon and the earliest part of the evening was spent on the phone confirming sign postings. Some of the volunteers were unable to deliver signs or work the polls as promised, and others we weren't able to contact. Stress inches up a notch. At one point during the afternoon, the campaign received a piece of literature Parker's opponent was to use in the black community: a flyer saying "The Best Choice for Our Community" listing the names of Lee Brown and Don Fitch. Fitch knew if he were to win the election, he would have to capture a substantial portion of the black vote, and was pulling out all the stops. Stress ratcheted up a few more notches. Needless to say, Brown (a democrat) was a bit surprised at being grouped with republican Fitch, especially since they had not campaigned with Brown as Parker and other city council candidates had. I immediately got on the phone with TATS' Jenifer René -- a registered Republican -- and convinced her to call both the Harris County Republican Party and the Mosbacher campaign and read them the riot act as an indignant Republican.

After the flyer incident, we then heard a Fitch radio commercial being played on the black radio stations, stating bluntly that, "I am a father of two, and a grandfather... and my opponent Annise Parker is a lesbian activist." We were outraged. Again the stress notched up a few more. Based on this latest strategic salvo on Fitch's part, Annise and Grant held a press conference on City Hall steps with State Sen. John Whitmire denouncing the gay-baiting techniques used by her opponent.

I then decided to make copies of the flyer, and both the Republican Party scorecard and Fitch's article in the newspaper the day before where he stated that Parker was distorting his stand on affirmative action. In the article I highlighted Fitch's quote that, "[his] view on affirmative action is exactly the same [as Parker's]"; and a quote from the G.O.P. Party Chair who stated that Fitch's stand on affirmative action was "inconsistent" with his answer given for the Republican scorecard. I also highlighted Fitch's original answer to the Republican Party showing he was for eliminating affirmative action. I realized this would be great ammunition in the conservative precincts. If he wanted to play both sides of the issue, then we'll fight him with his own words.

Sometime after 5:00 the first sign deliverers arrived for their assignments. We had a system where where precinct numbers were printed on labels, and when the deliverers showed up, we'd peel the labels off and attach them to the assignment sheets. After this, I would outline the precinct on the wall map. Early on everything went smoothly. Then a few showed up who wanted apparently unassigned precincts, but no labels were to be found. Unbeknownst to me, one of the volunteers had taken the liberty of assigning sheets of the same precincts to the sign posters who worked the previous election. Unfortunately, a number of those sign volunteers were not working that evening, some wanted reduced numbers of precincts, others had yet to confirm, etc. In other words, the system was

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WAR IN THE TRENCHES

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compromised. Stress inched up a few more notches. Then paperwork started getting buried, things started getting misplaced, some of the sign postings were duplicated. Mass confusion. Again the stress jumped a few more notches.

When the TV news came on, we all watched and waited for the press conference Annise gave. It turned out to be a fruitless effort. The stations apparently didn't deem it newsworthy enough. Our only attempt at combatting Fitch's less-than-ethical campaign tactics fell short. At the headquarters, that took a little wind out of all of our sails. Stress moved up a couple more notches.

As sign delivery volunteers kept arriving, our stock of signs were dwindling a bit -- more worries. About the middle of the evening, Rick Carpenter & Lou Vanech (our sign-makers) arrived with the remainder of our signs. Cavalry to the rescue! Normally it would have been a stress reducing event, except it happened that I had a room full of sign deliverers waiting for their assignment, and I had to suddenly switch gears and unload signs while they all sat and waited. I was so afraid that our volunteers would get impatient and walk out without their sign assignments. Thankfully no one did (testimony to their dedication).

We continued plotting out sign posting assignments and sending them on their ways (thank you for being so patient Nasser!) I then helped Deborah Bell pass out the packages to the poll staffers, making sure the ones in conservative areas got copies of the newspaper article, GOP scorecard, and the Fitch/Brown flyer. Later in the evening the last of the flyers and the material for the large signs were brought in, and again we scurried around industriously...kinda like squirrels! Our mascots seemed to be rubbing off on us. Come to think of it, I'd been running on adrenalin all day and the only thing I'd eaten was pecans! Of course, that soon changed: campaign manager Grant Martin bought Star pizzas for the crew, and we all sat down for a well-deserved meal. It actually felt strange to sit down and not be actively doing something.

After pizza, Annise and Kathy toured one of the Montrose bars a couple blocks over, but forgot to bring buttons and put in a call to headquarters. I trotted over to the club, passing out buttons and flyers along the way, and managed to locate them in the dense Friday night crowd at Pacific Street. I'd initially intended to just drop off the buttons, but instead ended up campaigning...passing out flyers and buttons. Then it was a quick trot back to headquarters, again passing out flyers and the remaining buttons to passersby. No doubt the people at the bar and on the street thought I was insane. Here was this breathlessly urgent, sleep-deprived, incompletely coherent 'queen' or 'lesbian' (however they were reading me), pleading with them to vote the next day and to vote for Parker. I got a few looks. I didn't mind though, as long as they got the message....

Back at headquarters I saw it was past midnight -- damn that was one quick day! Time was flying, and there wasn't enough of it to do everything we wanted to begin with. Stress bumped up a notch or two. Then Grant sat down with us all and discussed strategy for the next day. The reality was finally sinking in, election day was here. No matter what we may have wanted to do, all we could do at this point was to staff the polls and hope for the best. The gravity of the task ahead felt like a black hole.

With the clock approaching 2:00 I looked at the sign assignments and saw a vast unoutlined space out west -- my assignment. Stress inches up another notch. I grabbed 18 locations and 40 signs and left the campaign headquarters. The next 2½ hours were spent pounding in signs at the 18 locations, plus two others I'd not seen assigned or targeted: Chancellor Elem. on Boone, and Heflin Elem.

around the corner from my house. I also managed to do my civic duty and rid the city right-of-ways of more than a dozen Fitch signs along the way. I arrived home at 4:15 and briefly toyed with the idea of staying awake all night, but decided my body needed a little recharge -- even if for just an hour and a half.

Election Day: The Battle

6:00 AM came way too early. The clock radio went off and I was up like a shot. It wasn't so much the radio as it was a dream I was having. I dreamt I was at my mother's old house with my siblings, watching an endless series of tornados drop from the sky and rip apart the neighborhood around us. Then the tornados were being hit by lightning and catching fire; not only blasting the homes, but catching the surrounding homes on fire. The fiery twisters passed by closer each time, and soon I realized we were surrounded by raging fires on all sides. Thankfully I woke up. Fiery tornados! That's what I get for eating cold pepperoni pizza before bedtime. I laid in bed, feeling too tired to get up, but finally peeled my carcass off the mattress and made my way to the shower...feeling a bit shaky.

Once in the shower, I stood wondering what the dream meant and whether it was a foreboding of the election itself. Strange dream. As I showered I started thinking of Fitch's last minute, sound-bite smear campaign. Personally I wanted to return fire, but was told 'no, we're just gonna stick with the issues.' I didn't want to be a loose cannon, so I refrained...but it wasn't easy. My faith was flagging severely that last week -- not faith in Annise, but faith in the voters' ability to see through the sound-bite tactics. I thought about our chances at the election, and all the dirty tricks Fitch's campaign had pulled, and how I was afraid that the election was pulling away from us that last week; I became despondent and even shakier. Then I puked.

Yep, right there in the shower I started heaving chunks. This was not a good sign (not to mention no fun to clean up afterwards). If this was a taste of what was to come, it was not gonna be an easy day. The more I thought, the more I became pissed that Fitch could buy and cheat his way into office, while we were left unable to fight back. The ire helped wake me up and get me moving. On the way in to the headquarters I let off a little steam by plucking 4 more Fitch signs from the medians.

If I would've thought to bring my flyers and handouts with me the night before, I wouldn't have needed to stop by the campaign office. Needless to say, I forgot. I arrived at headquarters at 7:30, about 45 minutes later than I should've. When I arrived, Grant was sweeping up the campaign office. I wondered how he could have this much energy so early until I saw his face -- he hadn't slept at all. He was doing busy work to keep himself from dozing off. Even the campaign manager was giving his last ounce of energy to the election! I downed a quick cup of coffee, grabbed my material and set off for my assignment -- Precinct 57: Reagan High School.

Arriving at Reagan the first thing I looked for were Parker signs and where they were placed. Something was wrong. There were no Parker signs anywhere; however, there were two Fitch signs placed prominently near the main gate and the second gate. Fitch strikes again! During the runoff campaign, Parker signs were disappearing and Fitch signs were magically appearing in their place -- including incidents where the people displaying the signs were Parker supporters! We were not amused, especially considering we were running low on signs. We in turn started plucking Fitch signs from medians, etc; however, we couldn't spare the signs to replace them with our own. So we just plucked them. This, however, was a little too blatant. I knew that Larry Broughton (a reliable volunteer) was assigned to post signs at Reagan and four other locations.

Immediately I returned to the headquarters, retrieved three signs, and sped back to Reagan.

After pounding my signs in, I noticed one of Fitch's signs was broken, but didn't pay much attention to it. I then took my place next to another pollworker at the main gate and bundled up against the chill. The other pollworker was a very sweet man named Carlton Taylor who was passing out flyers for Richard Johnson. As happened last time at the polls, we struck an immediate friendship. A little after I arrived, Carroll Robinson showed up and asked where his pollworker was. I told him that I was there on behalf of both he and Annise Parker, and he left me cards to push out (which in my haste I'd neglected to pick up that morning). Early in the day, Susan Alcorn showed up to vote on her way out to Dr. Cole's event in Galveston. It was nice to see a friend. I didn't realize until later in the day how welcome a friendly face would be.

About 9:30 a bearded fellow in a gray mini-van showed up and planted a couple Mosbacher signs in the ground. I didn't realize at the time how memorable a part he'd play in my day at the polls. After he left, a couple other guys drove up in a different mini-van, checked around and asked Taylor and I a couple of 'chit-chat' questions, mostly about voter turnout. They then went to the telephone poles closest to the main gate and nailed up huge blue signs that said 'Mosbacher.' "The Republicans [were] out in force today, and [wanted] their presence known," I mentioned to Taylor, and he nodded agreement. Then the two guys in the mini-van hopped in and drove off. Not an hour later a scuffier fellow in an unbuttoned flannel shirt and visibly dirty undershirt showed up and asked questions -- again mainly about voters, but also about Republican pollworkers. He then mentioned he was with the AFL-CIO, and gave his rather dim view of Republicans in general and Mosbacher in particular. He then proceeded to walk down to one of the telephone poles with a sign nailed on it, and punched the sign a few times until he knocked it loose from the pole. He then walked over in the other direction and yanked at least one Mosbacher sign from the ground, and continued walking towards the other signs near gates #2 and #3. Soon he too was gone. And so...it was war.

It wasn't long after that I realized that Fitch's other sign was leaning precariously, but still up. 'Serves him right' I thought considering what he'd done during the campaign. Not long after I saw the sign completely down, but thought little of it. Then my first bonafide Fitch supporter showed up to vote-- 'Mr. Huff.' As I met him coming across the courtyard from gate #2, I held up the Parker flyer and began my pitch. His brusque response was, "I wouldn't vote for her on a bet!" I then asked if he'd read his candidate's views on affirmative action and held up the copied newspaper article. His answer: "affirmative action isn't the only issue! There's other issues of hers that I don't agree with." I replied, "How do you know your candidate's stand on any issue if he changes it like this?" He was stumped, searching for a comeback; but all he could manage was, "Hey...you're not supposed to be up here anyway! You're too close!!!" I answered back, "Yes I can! Here's the sign!" pointing to the electioneering sign 10 feet in front of me. (One thing I was always conscious of in both elections was where the electioneering limit sign was!) Disgusted, he turned around and huffed inside to vote. After 'Mr. Huff' voted, I noticed he took pains to pound in the Fitch sign he'd apparently up-righted on his way in. No sweat for me.

A little later, one of Chris Bell's card pushers showed up, and I braced for any tension between him and Johnson's card pusher, Carlton, but nothing happened -- they got along quite well. After a while a couple young guys showed up and asked for Cantu's people (apparently a

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WAR IN THE TRENCHES

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candidate for an HCC district race), then left soon after. Lots of questions that day, but few actual workers.

The two Republican guys showed up and noticed their missing signs and asked us questions. A short time later, I had my second run-in. A crabby white-haired lady wheeled around at the gate after seeing the Parker flyer, and yelled, "NO WAY! I'd NEVER vote for no HOMO!" I then brought out 'the article' and said, "Have you seen what your candidate had to say about affirmative action? He said one thing in the Chronicle and another to the Republicans." This surprised her for a second or two, then she continued, "I don't care! She's a HOMOSEXUAL! I don't VOTE for no HOMOSEXUALS!!!" "Even though he contradicted what he said earlier--?" I answered. "I DON'T VOTE FOR NO HOMO!!! And SHE'S a HOMOSEXUAL, and I'D NEVER VOTE FOR HER!!!" Ms. White-Hair screamed. "FINE then! VOTE for the liar!" I shot back, turning my back to her. Still she continued, "It's a lot BETTER than voting for a HOMO!..." ad nauseum, before storming off.

I just looked at my two fellow card pushers and shook my head, and they looked back mostly sympathetically. I felt sheepish. I'd never mentioned Annise's sexuality to either of them, I merely played up her qualifications. If they didn't know her sexuality before, they certainly did now -- as did the GOP guys and other voters walking up as Ms. White-Hair finished her harangue. When I saw Ms. White-Hair coming back out, I turned my back toward her, hoping to avoid another 'scene' in front of the voters. Instead I had one of the inside election judges come to me to ask about my electioneering Ms. White-Hair! I never got more than two feet away from the front gate, far from the boundary signs. According to Ms. White-Hair, I allegedly followed her more than halfway up to the door harrassing her, and being aggressive. My response was that was ridiculous. The other pollworkers spoke up saying that I was out there at the gate with them, but the election judge seemed unimpressed. She mentioned that in the five years she'd been there, she'd never had to come out to talk with anyone, and I was her first. She cautioned me not to be aggressive with the voters, and told me to be mindful of the electioneering boundary. I reassured her I would.

A little later, the two GOP guys -- including one wearing a Mosbacher shirt -- came over to ask me what the precinct judge said. I related to them what she said, and one of the guys said, "Don't worry about it. I heard the whole thing. You were in the right. I'll go talk with her in a little bit and tell her what happened." Then he surprised me -- he flashed a badge! Apparently he was an election official (for who or what capacity I don't know), but he was more than just a vote-count taker. I was greatly relieved. I told the other two about the guy flashing the badge and added, "These Republicans sure don't mess around! They mean business!"

Not long after the GOP guys left, I noticed the Fitch sign at gate #2 had fallen down again. I then saw the bearded GOP guy drive by in his mini-van, without stopping. A little later another guy stopped to ask about Cantú pollworkers apparently assigned there. Taylor and I told him two others had stopped by and asked earlier, but nobody had pushed flyers. The guy then mentioned he had lunch for them, and asked if we wanted it. Taylor and I looked at each other and said sure. We ate some very good chorizo taquitos for an early lunch, compliments of Mr. Cantú's campaign! Not long after our snack, I noticed Fitch's sign was upright again. Strange sign...had a life of its own! About an hour later, another friendly face showed up to vote, Parker volunteer Cookie Davenport. She then offered to spell me for a little bit while I paid a visit to the ladies' room. After I got out, she stayed on to pass out flyers to

those at the #2 and #3 gates who crossed the courtyard. I finally had a little rest, I had some reinforcement to push cards, I'd just finished eating, and the weather was finally warming up enough to be cool but comfortable. All was going well...so I thought!

Not long after I returned from the ladies' room, I saw the bearded guy in the gray mini-van again. This time he stopped and walked over to the Fitch sign at gate #2 and plucked it out of the ground, then walked over and picked up the broken Fitch sign near the main gate. 'Strange' I thought. Either the Republicans had thrown in the towel on Fitch, or he'd sufficiently pissed them off with the Fitch/Brown flyer to cause them to withdraw support. While he picked up signs on the other side of the courtyard, I had my attention diverted by the folks coming to vote. A few minutes later, I was called over by the election judge for another conference. She informed me that I had a formal complaint lodged against me for knocking down both Fitch signs! I couldn't believe it! Taylor piped up that I hadn't even been down to the other gate all day, that I'd been there with him, but again she was unconvinced. She also mentioned I had a formal complaint of being aggressive with the voters. Apparently the bearded GOP guy had seen me running across the courtyard earlier to pass out fliers, and presumed me to be intimidating people and coercing to them vote for Annise! I laughed -- not the response the election judge wanted to hear. She reprimanded me for being aggressive, told me to watch my electioneering, and warned me that one more incident would cause her to remove me from the premises. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I was made out to be some election day thug! Welcome to Tammany Hall....

With the second reprimand in two hours, I really felt under the microscope. I knew I had to push the flyers, but felt hamstrung by the judge's scrutiny. Just after noon Cookie had to leave to run her errands, but promised she'd be back in a couple hours to help. Again I had to go back to fielding the courtyard for the 'stealth' voters -- those entering through gates 2 and 3 in order to sneak by the gauntlet of card pushers at the main gate (even though 'the gauntlet' was only three people!). Still, I was determined to get to the voters from all three gates. It was down to win or lose now, and I was gonna play to win; at least until they dragged me (wonderful term!) out of there kicking and screaming. The one reprimanding election judge and a second one stood at various times, sometimes together, watching me cross the courtyard to hand out flyers, and eyeing me at the main gate. My every move seemed to be scrutinized now, but I continued on anyway. I was never aggressive with voters, and in fact was becoming rather blithe about it. But I still wanted to talk to every voter possible. Not long after Cookie left, I noticed something -- or rather I didn't notice something! The Parker sign near gate #2 was nowhere to be seen. Curious, I walked to the gate. Sure enough, it had vanished! *Completely!* I then looked down toward gate #3 -- ditto! DAMMIT! That *Son-Of-A-Fitch* strikes again!

This time I was incensed! I walked back to the other pollworkers for Bell and Johnson and asked if they'd seen anything...nope. I wasn't happy about leaving my post, but this had to be addressed. I walked in and told the reprimanding election judge about our missing signs, and her response was, "I know...." *WHAT???* Apparently when the Fitch man came in to complain, she said he informed her that, "[Parker's people] weren't playing fair, and he was gonna pull up our two signs and their signs and call it even."

I was livid! "How do you consider that even?!! Even if I did knock his signs over, they were still here! They picked our signs out of the ground -- including one of his own signs -- and took our signs with him! They're not his property to take! He had no right to take our signs off of the premises!"

"I know," she continued. "there was nothing I could do about it. He told me when he filed the complaint." I was stunned. "He already picked up the signs, there wasn't anything I could do...." Then I remembered the guy sitting in the van near the main gate, waiting until the election judge walked out and started talking to me. Obviously she didn't *try* to do anything about it, didn't care. She also never informed me of our signs being yanked, and never would have had I not noticed it! I then informed her that I wanted to lodge a counter-complaint against them. She reminded me that I'd had a formal complaint against me (I suppose to indicate that I was less-than-credible...?), but I persisted, saying that she knew he'd taken my signs off the premises. She reverified that I wanted to file a formal complaint, and I responded "Yes!" She then said she would note it, but ended with a reminder that she didn't want any confrontations at her precinct -- directing it at me, of course. I was seething, but I was under control. I assured her that I would not be confronting anyone, and returned to the gate and told the others what happened.

Now my thoughts were 'when is Cookie gonna return?' I wanted to get more signs, especially important for the other two gates where an occasional unnoticed voter could slip by. But I also didn't dare leave my post without a replacement. A while later, a lady stopped by and asked for the Carroll Robinson cardpusher. I told her I was pushing cards, and she smiled and said, "Great! Well I've got lunch for you, and your friends -- fried chicken! I'm sure they're hungry, too!" The Bell worker was leaving soon, and Taylor (Johnson's cardpusher) had just finished eating a fried chicken lunch brought to him; so both declined. I told her I'd take one, but she insisted I take two...just in case someone gets hungry later. I told her it wasn't necessary, but she insisted, saying, "a lot of our card pushers didn't show up, so we've got a bunch of extra lunches. We're just happy we have someone here!" she said smiling at me. I went ahead and took both lunches, and got busy pushing flyers as voter traffic started picking up.

Later during a lull, after Bell's cardpusher had left, the two precinct judges came out and called me aside yet again. I was aware they'd watched me closely, but was puzzled why yet another conference. I'd behaved! The reprimanding judge started off reminding me not to be aggressive, which I assured her I wasn't. I knew she'd been watching. Then she said, "I've had to come out and talk to you twice now -- I've never had to talk to anyone before." I briefly protested, again reassuring her I was behaving. She continued, "I just wanna make sure we don't have any confrontations here at my precinct. This election is getting very tense, and people are losing tempers. I just don't want anything *erupting*," she emphasized erupting with her facial expression, "here at this precinct." I asked what she meant by that, and she responded, "I'm just saying I don't want any confrontations here, that's all. If the other people drive up, I don't want you saying anything to them. Just walk in and tell me what's happening and I'll take care of it. But I don't want you confronting them!" I assured her I had no intentions of confronting anyone, and she reiterated that she didn't want me confronting them -- to just walk inside and tell them. I agreed and walked back to the gate.

Taylor was talking with Mr. Cantú, the HCC dist. candidate who was looking for the missing pollworkers he'd paid to push cards there. When I returned, Taylor looked at me curiously, wondering what the latest talk was about. I related the message she gave, and told him, "It's sounds pretty ominous. I wonder what that's about?" While Cantú and Taylor continued talking, I walked across the courtyard (under the watchful eye of the precinct judge) to pass out a flyer to a lone voter. When I returned, Taylor and Mr. Cantú had disappeared. I presumed Taylor had just walked

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TG TV - GOOD AND BAD, BUT MOSTLY UGLY

By Katrina C. Rose

I'm not much into TV these days. Radio is more my style. In fact, I've occasionally graced the airwaves as a guest on KPFT's After Hours. However, episodes of two currently-trendy series have caught my eye. I am woman, hear me rant.

The Drew Carey Show - Wednesday, Nov. 19, 1997. Drew's brother is a crossdresser. That was the basic plot - and it was handled quite well. Some transphobic remarks were uttered, but by Drew's boss - who was definitely the bad guy in the episode. The brother was portrayed as 100% human. Drew did react with a bit of shock, but, most importantly, he did not abandon the brother. In fact, he did what he could do to help.

Unfortunately, while discussing the issue with the brother, Drew made a rather inaccurate statement about gay rights in the employment arena. Drew asks the brother if he's gay, mentioning in the same breath that there was federal employment protection for him if he was gay. I hate to be the one to burst everybody's bubble, but ENDA hasn't passed yet!

Oh...and if you're keeping score - the brother was not gay.

Ally McBeal - Monday, Dec. 1, 1997. "He's obviously not well." That was lawyer Ally McBeal's reaction to Stephanie, a transgendered client. As is all too common in television portrayals of TG folk, her client was a prostitute. Going one step further than her initial assessment, Ally decided to try an insanity defense - gender identity disorder - to get the kid off. With the professional involvement of a therapist as well as her own personal involvement of offering the kid a job at her law firm, Ally managed to get the kid deferred adjudication. That could have been that - but it wasn't. Stephanie kept her night job - her old line of work and ended up being killed by a customer who disapproved of her genitalia configuration.

I can't fault the show for the sympathetic portrayal of Stephanie's lot in life. For anyone who really paid attention, this episode of *Ally McBeal* should do more than a thousand (or did I hear somewhere that he's up to 1,200?) episodes of *Jerry Springer* to show the despair that all too many young transgendered people endure: being totally abandoned by family, being forced to turn to the illicit sex industry to put food on the table, and ultimately ending up dead because of it.

However, I *can* and *do* fault the show for leaving viewers with the impression that even when given an opportunity to (for lack of a better phrase) go legit, a young, cute transgendered kid will *still* turn tricks on the street. No doubt,

some will. But, the big difference between the Stephanies of the world and successful professionals who simply happen to be transgendered is that the Stephanies never get a chance to get an education before being abandoned by all of the bigots in their lives. Unfortunately, that's not what FOX decided to show the after-*Melrose Place* crowd about transgendered people. The show offered *no* explanation for why the kid went out hooking even after landing the job at Ally's law firm. I can only assume that the thought of having a recurring character who might be a positive role model for transgendered youth was too much for the show's producers - or perhaps Rupert Murdoch himself so they took the quick and easy way out. I forgot to look - was Jerry Springer the writer?

Okay now - what did these two shows have in common? Well, yes, transgendered characters, but something else as well. In another storyline on *Ally McBeal*, another attorney made a legal misstatement similar to the one that Drew did - stating that sexual orientation is a "suspect class." I could spend countless pages detailing the nuances of what that means, but in short, when a law draws a classification based on a suspect classification (generally, race or ethnicity), courts strictly scrutinize the constitutionality of the law. As yet, courts do not give such scrutiny to laws drawing lines based on sexual orientation (or gender identity for that matter.) When Candace Gingrich spoke at the Lesbians in Business meeting here in Houston a few weeks ago she mentioned a disturbing phenomenon. She has noticed that many people who feel that non-straight are seeking "special rights" feel that way because they are under a genuine misconception: that we already have "equal rights." I hope that I don't actually need to tell anyone reading this that we haven't gotten there yet.

Okay, that's the problem. The solution?

Well, to paraphrase one of the more unlikely friends of the queer community, Barry Goldwater, vigilance is not a vice. Be vigilant. Point out these inaccuracies anytime you can to anyone who'll listen. If you'll cause a ruckus, even a modest one, when you hear someone make a homophobic or transphobic remark, you ought to be willing to do the same about a benign remark that is likely to cause as much, or even more, damage than, say, a homophobic song from a popular Black gospel group.

A homophobic remark may annoy someone enough to fight homophobia. Statements that the war is over will cause people to stop fighting the fight.

Which is worse? You figure it out. Silence still equals death, folx.



HERE WE GO AGAIN

By Katrina C. Rose

I knew that FOX was going downhill when it cancelled *Married With Children*. So far this television season on FOX we've been treated to one of the most insulting treatments of a transgendered person that we've ever seen - the "Stephanie" episode of *Ally McBeal*. Now, it seems that we're going to be treated to *Tootsie: the Next Generation* in the form of a series called *Ask Harriet*. A helpful visitor to AOL's Gazebo chat room passed along this web page describing Harriet's show: <http://www2.dynomite.com.au/rewing/askharr.htm>. The following is the pertinent text gleaned from that site:

Description: (Taken from FOX press-release information). ASK HARRIET is a brash new half-hour comedy in the tradition of "Some Like It Hot," "Tootsie" and "Mrs. Doubtfire." New York's most popular advice column, "Ask Harriet," has always been written by a woman, until now! Super macho Jack Cody (Anthony Tyler Quinn), a notorious womanizer and hothead who wrote the tough, opinionated column "A Man's World," has been fired from most of the dailies in town and when a multi-million dollar harassment suit catches up with him, he's sent packing from the last respectable paper. He applies for the "Ask Harriet" job to take revenge on his editor and former flame, Melissa Peters (Lisa Waltz). And he is desperate for a job to keep his alimony up to date and his 10-year-old daughter Blair (Jamie Renee) in ballet lessons. With best buddy Ron (Willie Garson), a restaurant critic, in tow, Jack secretly applies for the position of writing the advice column on the death of the current "Harriet," confident that there's nobody better to tell women what they should do when faced with jerks like him. He thinks he can write the column from home, until Melissa insists on meeting the new "Harriet," so Jack goes to work transforming himself into one helluva good-looking woman. Billy Riback ("Home Improvement") and

Jonathan Prince are executive producers for Columbia TriStar Television in association with Bris Entertainment.

I've seen a few commercials for this show and they do not make me feel good at all. I'm absolutely horrified at the thought of the judge who will be asked to approve my name and gender change watching this show the day prior to my anticipated court date this May. Thanks a lot, FOX. You've really brightened up my holidays.



My doctor said "I've got good news and I've got bad news. The good news is you don't have PMS. The bad news is - you're a bitch!"

A Random thought from Marsha Warfield
(Submitted off the net by Lauren Robison)

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around the corner to his car, but as the minutes passed, and the last lone voter walked off, I became more curious. I sat down on my folding chair next to the sidewalk, with my back to the street, wondering where Taylor was. I knew he said he was gonna be there all day...strange that he'd just take off suddenly. I didn't see the precinct judges watching either. Just some peaceful time to sit, listen to the sounds of the neighborhood, and think....

What exactly did that precinct judge mean? "Confrontation"..."Erupting"..."Just walk inside" if anything happens...it all sounded pretty foreboding. I thought of the vaguely ominous guy from the AFL-CIO knocking down the Mosbacher sign and ranting, the Republican judge who flashed his badge at me, the angry Fitch supporters, "These Republicans sure don't mess around..." I was sure ready for someone to come up to vote, but everything was quiet. Too quiet. I started thinking about the standing joke in the campaign -- a reference to voting in Chicago. My mind started thinking about violence at the polls...Tammany Hall riots...Fitch's last minute 'damn the torpedos -- anything to win' campaign tactics, Mosbacher's rewards for witnesses to voter fraud, and the understandable response from the minority community. I mulled over the ominous talk with the precinct judge, "This election is getting very tense...people are losing tempers." Nervously, I looked around to search for voters, or even the precinct judges -- not a soul around. And very quiet. Way too deserted for mid-afternoon, I thought. Rod Serling-esque, even. No neighbors out in their yards, no voters, nobody driving by, no watchful precinct judges, no Taylor -- where the hell was he anyway???

Suddenly a mini-van pulled up to one corner, stopped briefly, and rounded the corner, speeding in my direction. I looked around and felt my gut clench, and my calves seize up. There were no cars to duck behind (my truck was across the street), no trees close enough to hide behind, no cover whatsoever. My mind raced wondering where to jump and roll to. I had a pretty good run before I could find something to hide behind in case the bullets flew. I felt like a deer in a spotlight, frozen by sudden fear, watching the mini-van speed towards me and waiting for them to make a move before I reacted. It took a few seconds before I realized it was dark green mini-van, not dark gray, and relaxed slightly. 'This election biz is getting too much like Chicago' I thought. Maybe I've been around the streets too long, but I wasn't gonna go down in a drive-by for any election. I told myself I was blowing this out of proportion, letting my imagination run away with me. But I looked around and there was still not another soul around. Even though my legs were tiring, I decided to stand for the rest of the day; facing the incoming traffic. I sure wished Cookie Davenport would return. At least I'd have a witness if I got shot....

Briefly I considered asking the precinct judges to come out and watch me because it was too quiet, but overruled it. They already thought I was aggressive -- if they thought I was cracking up, too...no telling what they'd do! After a few more agonizingly long, peaceful minutes, voters finally started showing up. I was never so relieved to be busy again! I still couldn't wait for Cookie to return -- I had to relate what had happened here to the campaign. Later on, Taylor showed up -- he'd asked Mr. Cantu to take him to buy a jacket to keep warm. Around 3:00 the vote-counters dropped by and told us we'd had 485 voters -- about 85% of the voters from the general election. I wasn't too happy at the news, from what I could tell from those leaving, Parker was leading slightly. Yet this was a Parker-friendly precinct, and if voter turnout had dropped, I wondered how the rest of the city was voting. A little after 4:00 Cookie showed up to help push flyers, and I told her I needed her to stand in

while I ran to headquarters for signs. She replied that she had a couple at home, and that she would run over and grab them instead. I gave her one of my two chicken lunches from Carroll Robinson (it did come in handy after all!), then she left and returned a half hour later with the signs. Cookie pounded the signs in while I used her cell phone to call the campaign and relate what was going on.

Christine Fusco answered the phone and I told my story to her. Then Chrissie dropped some bad news on me: the Brown campaign had called up to say that the conservative westside precincts were voting about 3 to 1 of their general election turnout, while the other precincts were voting at about, or slightly lower, than the general election. This was backed up by the turnout at Reagan High -- about 85% of the last vote. As campaign field director Deborah Bell yelled out in the background, Chrissie repeated: since I had someone at my precinct to pass out flyers, they wanted to pull me and send me to a precinct on the westside. She then told me to call back in ten minutes. My heart sunk. I couldn't see Annise winning much of the vote in the heart of conservative country, especially those dyed-in-the-wool 'straight-slate' moralists. I couldn't believe all this hard work had been for nought. Our precincts weren't turning out, but Hotze's arch-conservatives were reliably voting en masse. I nervously picked up the pace, trotting across the courtyard and back to catch all the voters. I *really didn't* want to leave that precinct. It had a pretty decent turnout, and more importantly, it was comfortable...it was winnable...it was the Heights -- second only to the Montrose in Parker support.

But Memorial, Tanglewood, the Galleria area, that was another story altogether. We had no realistic hope of carrying those types of strongly Republican areas. Sending pollworkers out to stump for a Democrat in those areas was deemed not essential, thus we focused our primary energies elsewhere...someplace winnable. As a result, there were vast westside precincts that had no Parker pushers. When I called back to the campaign, hoping they had decided against moving me, Chrissie answered, "Just stay where you're at." For a second or two I was very relieved...until she corrected herself and said 'no, they *did* want me to go to another precinct in the Tanglewood/Galleria area.' I was reluctant to leave, but there was no time to think about it. I turned my cards over to Cookie, thanked her so much for her help and wished her luck. Then I hugged and said my goodbyes to both her and Taylor and headed back to the campaign headquarters. I hated leaving, I really wanted to stay. I felt like I was being sent to battle...being sent off to the front lines. It was war. I needed some makeup.

Being in the Heights I hadn't worried about going sans makeup, it's a fairly liberal, somewhat bohemian area. Obviously that look wouldn't play in Tanglewood. So once back at the campaign, I borrowed some mascara, dabbed on a little makeup and tucked in my Parker T-shirt. I was still rather casual, but much more acceptable now. While there, I loaded up on literature to pass out: the Fitch article and contradicting Rep. party scorecard answer, and the Brown/Fitch flyer copies. I also took time to listen to the latest from Deborah and Chrissie. I heard about the turnout on the westside, the response by the Brown campaign to the voter turnout results, and Deborah sending out a truck with loudspeakers that afternoon through the Montrose bar area to tell people about the conservative turnout and to get out and vote. Even Annise deemed it important enough to switch gears and move to a Galleria area precinct as well. So I collected my new assignment -- Precinct 435...Rogers Middle School...Tanglewood...very conservative.

As I drove out Memorial Dr. to my next assignment, I wondered what I would find. I thought about Jenifer Ren's alter-ego, Ted, and wondered how his day had gone. I had visions of angry silver-haired conservatives ganging up on Ted, perhaps preaching scripture. It was 5:15 when I ar-

rived at Rogers, the sun was setting. How fitting I thought. I circled the school a couple minutes, looking for where the voting location was before finding it. When I walked up, I was relieved to see only one other pollworker -- a Mosbacher backer named Suzanne Feather. So I immediately sidled up and began chatting with her. I asked her about the turnout, which at 5:00 was 853 (my heart sunk, that was almost twice what Reagan had produced). Then I asked about other candidates' card pushers, and she mentioned that Fitch had two different people through most of the day -- the last leaving at about 3:30. Not good news. To my surprise though, she knew a bit about Annise and spoke quite fondly of her abilities and her mind. She then leaned forward conspiratorially and said, "For the record, I voted for her." I felt much better! Maybe all wasn't totally lost.

As the evening went on, and darkness fell, I stood next to the Mosbacher backer and handed out Parker literature as well as the damaging Fitch info. Most everyone accepted what I passed out, showing no reaction. A couple of voters came back and told me they voted for Annise -- hopes rose a bit. I even had a couple women who were studying the Fitch handouts I gave them as they went in to vote. When they returned, as an afterthought one turned around and called over to me. "Hey! Thank you!" while holding aloft the article and GOP scorecard printouts. Score another two! After darkness, the outside lights hadn't come on, so Suzanne started her car and left it idling with the lights on next to the voting entrance. I was really relieved to have some pleasant, non-antagonistic company there. Finally a little after 6:30, she decided she'd had enough and left me to fend for my own the last twenty minutes or so.

I will say this about the conservative precinct voters: they keep a pretty good poker face. It was really hard to gauge how they voted, other than those who came out and told me. I started thinking about the turnout, and about Annise's chances there at Rogers and the other conservative areas. My spirits start flagging. With sundown, the night turned chilly rather quickly. And since I'd lost Suzanne to chat with, and the cold was getting to me, I started walking around and meeting voters further down the breezeway to keep warm. I walked out to meet one guy striding in at a quick pace: a yuppie-looking, type-A Republican. As I began my spiel about Annise and held up the flyer, he stiff-armed my hand almost back to my face, and said, "Get it away from me! I don't want to see it!" I kept my composure and continued, "Well, would you please consider voting--" "NO!" he continued, striding away from me. "She's NOT a Republican, and I'M not voting for her! I don't vote for ANYONE that's not a REPUBLICAN!"

"Well okay. But you did see what you candidate said about affirmative action--" at this the Yuppie GOPper stopped and wheeled around glaring at me with weaselly eyes. "I don't care WHAT it says! They're trying to DISTORT his RECORD! It's DIRTY POLITICS!" This got my hackles up, especially considering what we'd been through! "WAIT a minute! He told the Republican Party he wanted to get RID of affirmative action, and told the Chronicle his views were the SAME as ANNISE'S!" "HE didn't SAY THAT!" he shot back. I countered "It's right here in print--" "THAT'S BULLSHIT! You're trying to run INTERFERENCE so your candidate can win by DECEPTION!!!" He turned to the breezeway leading to the voting location, "She's NOT a REPUBLICAN, and I DON'T VOTE FOR ANYONE who's NOT a REPUBLICAN!!!"

My temperature started rising ... I wasn't cold anymore! I shot back, "DAMN GOOD THING SADDAM HUSSEIN didn't win the Republican primary!!!" The Yuppie GOPper again stopped, wheeled around and laughing derisively, sneered, "You stupid f*ck#ng c*nt! There IS no primary! It's a nonpartisan RACE! Sure shows what YOU know!" I

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WAR IN THE TRENCHES
(Continued from Page 8)

replied "Whatever! I was just saying--" "LOOK, you're not even supposed to be up here TALKING to me! YOU'RE TOO CLOSE!" Yuppie GOPper interrupted. I told him I was not electioneering and showed him the sign by hitting it with my hand after turning to hand out another flyer to a voter. "Well I'm gonna have them COME OUT and TALK to you!!! YOU'RE not SUPPOSED to be here DOING THIS!!! I'll have THEM KICK YOU OFF THE PROPERTY!!!" he yelled as the other voter passed by him giving him a wide berth. "You can't do that! I'M in back of the LINE!" I yelled back. "DOESN'T MATTER! I'LL have them come OUT and TALK to you ANYWAY! YOU'RE OUTTA here!!!" Yuppie GOPper screamed. "FINE, then!!! Go ahead...ASSHOLE!!!" I screamed back. He yelled his reiterated threat to get me kicked off the property as I stood with my back to him, watching cars pull in.

I had to calm down quickly. I could hear Yuppie GOPper yelling his story to someone behind me, and was waiting for the other shoe to fall. As I passed out flyers to the next bunch of voters walking in I could see from the corner of my eye a security guard walking in my direction. 'Here it comes,' I thought. As I finished passing out flyers to the last voters going in, the man asked to talk with me. I looked at his shoulder and saw a Houston Police Dept. patch on the jacket. My heart sank like a rock. My mind also raced momentarily, 'I didn't do anything to get arrested, did I? What a fitting end to a hellacious day -- getting escorted off the premises by the police! Bracing for the inevitable, the officer -- an African-American -- started, "I saw what was going on and heard y'all talking to each other..." "Talking? Oh well here it comes" I thought. "...And I just wanted to say that you were all right." He then told me that even though Yuppie GOPper was past the line, he was instigating it. "I just wanted to let you know that if the lady comes out to talk to you, I'll back you up on your story." He then told me the election judge was a stickler, so she might actually come out and reprimand me. I wasn't out of the woods, but I felt much better about knowing the HPD guard was on my side. When the Yuppie walked back out, he apparently wasn't pleased. He turned back and made a face at me as he strode off. Sheesh! Use a couple bucks and buy some maturity!

The last ten minutes were uneventful, but busy enough to keep my mind occupied. When the police guard came out to yank down the electioneering signs and mention to me the polls had officially closed, I felt numb. I couldn't believe it was all over. I wanted the polls to stay open at least another hour, so we could have more of a fair chance. But it was over and I felt impotent. When I asked the guard what the turnout was, he answered it was over a thousand. I started wondering how the vote went for Cookie at Reagan, if I could've won more votes over there. I yanked up our signs on the street, and got in my truck to drive back. I remembered wondering aloud if I should work a conservative precinct the entire day with the Fitch data in hand, instead of my initial assignment at Reagan. They told me 'no, let's just go with our original plans.' I remember wanting to plant Fitch signs in River Oaks and Memorial front yards to piss off his support base, but was told 'no, let's continue hammering on the issues.' I couldn't believe I had a brief crack in my composure at the end. I thought if it was this rough for me, it had to have been worse elsewhere. It didn't bode well. Regardless of all my second guessing, it was all over but the counting. Looking at the lights atop the Galleria area highrises, I began thinking how sad it was now that there was nothing else we could do. I continued wrestling with my second guessing on the drive back. I felt so empty.

Election Night: The Culmination.

I pulled into the parking lot at the campaign headquarters. I turned off the truck, and reached down for the flyers, stopped a second to look at Annise's face on the flyer and continued my second guessing game. I started chastising myself for not staying up later the previous nights posting signs, or preparing for the day before, or for getting to my location 45 minutes late -- how many votes did I lose there? I remembered the final days' tactics by Fitch and how incensed I was. Through all of this, I was powerless to do anything about it now. Briefly I wondered whether those who dropped out or curtailed their involvement in the campaign before the election weren't the smart ones. In case of a loss, they didn't have quite the emotional investment. It would disappoint them, but not crush them. I was too emotionally involved. The prospects of an impending loss crushed me. Finally the composure broke, and emotions took over. I sat in my truck and cried for about ten minutes. As Annise pulled in the parking lot and rushed in the back door, I ducked down to keep her from noticing me. I was too scared to even go in and get the results. I worried that I'd puke again.

Finally, I worked up the courage and headed inside. The staff was bubbling over, but I was in a daze. I had to remain stoic and quell any emotions in case of a loss; I couldn't let others see the sadness. I sat next to Annise and glanced at her -- she was smiling, happy, but with an underlying tentativeness. Hopeful but tense. She put on a positive face, though. Chrissie announced that the exit polls indicated that Annise won with 57% of the vote. Hearing premature celebrations really bothered me. Exit polls could easily be wrong and certainly weren't accurate last time. Political analysts predicted Parker winning the general election, but she struggled just to make the runoffs finishing 8% behind Fitch. I wouldn't be satisfied until I heard the vote count showing Annise ahead with nearly all of the vote counted. After the news from Chrissie, Annise hurried out to walk her dog, Dancer, and watch the results at home. I decided to get busy with something to take my mind off of things. Grabbing up all of the Parker signs, I walked a block over to the site of the victory party, Riva's.

Some of the other volunteers began trickling in; some congratulatory, all in an upbeat mood. I felt like the only person alive in a serious mood. Taking out my frustrations, I pounded the Parker signs in front of Riva's. While pounding one of the signs, a couple of guys passed by, and one made a comment "Annise Parker -- f*ck her!" I wasn't sure if I'd heard him correctly, and glanced at Cynthia Miller's assistant who was watching me pound signs. He glanced at me and shrugged. So I decided I'd see exactly what he said. Then he repeated it, stating he was a regular customer at Riva's and was mad that he wasn't allowed to order and was kicked out of the restaurant. I was teetering on edge, but maintained composure; stating calmly that the victory had been planned for quite some time. He replied that nobody informed him, and that he'd even voted for Annise, but he was never gonna vote for her again. I was back to seething again! It was all I could do to keep from rushing the car and beaming him with the hammer. His lover was trying to smooth things over with us both, so I just turned and walked away, fuming. Cynthia's assistant stood staring at me wide-eyed as I returned and started vigorously pounding signs in again. To add salt to the wound, the jerk drove out to the end of the driveway, rolled down the car window and repeated his previous performance. He sat there and taunted me. It was all I could do to keep things merely to a cussing match without running out there with the hammer and pounding away on him! Had it not been for Cynthia Miller's assistant watching the whole scene, I likely would've done something stupid; especially after the day I'd had!

After finishing the sign pounding at Riva's I walked back to the campaign, hammer in hand. Just before reaching the campaign office, a carload of teenaged yahoos drove by. The front passenger leaned out the window and yelled, "FAGGOT!" I ran out to the curb, brandishing the hammer, and screamed "F*ck YOU! COME BACK HERE AND SAY THAT!" And at the time, I wish they would've! I'd just about had it! I wasn't putting up with any more abuse! Thomas Paine said, "there are times try men's souls." Well this was one of those days for this girl. Maybe my old side was coming out again -- not a very good sign. My thoughts churned for the rest of the evening. I couldn't relinquish the fight. Keeping to myself once back at the victory party, I watched everyone celebrate around me while I kept a vigil on the vote count. Even with over 50% of the vote tallied, I found it hard to let my guard down. Something could always happen to change the outcome. The teams I always pulled for or played on always finished a close second. I found it impossible to celebrate until I knew it was certain.

Finally Annise showed up and the crowd erupted. Vote counts tallied 76% of the precincts, it looked great with Annise's lead up to 56% to 44%. After a bit Channel 13 came in for a victory interview. As I chatted with Grant while watching Annise talk to the reporters, it finally started seeping in. My mood loosened, the fight was ending. I was so happy to see Annise's speech to the crowd and the city via television. Still I kept searching for the final totals, I couldn't relax without seeing them. It was a long time in coming, but when the final tallies were in, and Annise had 58% of the vote, I finally released the tension. The burden lifted. Annise told us to stay the course, to continue hammering on the issues. I lost faith that last week, not in Annise but in the voters. From LBJ to Reagan to Bob Lanier, sound bite smear tactics had worked time and again. But I continued nevertheless, as did the entire campaign. For once, it worked! Annise took the high road, and won! More importantly for me, it restored my faith. Streams of people came up to congratulate me. I felt like I was getting more accolades than Annise and kinda felt guilty. But it was all right. Mass ebullience was the order of the evening.

Later Annise got up onstage to address all attending the victory party. She thanked everyone who helped to make it a successful election, and especially her volunteers. And I was never so proud as when I was mentioned, along with Deborah Bell and Patrick McIvain, as one of the key volunteers who helped make it happen. Finally the three of us, and campaign manager Grant Martin joined councilmember-elect Annise Parker for a Team Parker photo. It was victory, and it was sweet...and I was part of the winning team! Finally!



BOOK REVIEW: THE RULES
(Continued from Page 3)

ideals left over from the days of being a man, dating women. My basic problem is that I really think dating and even life in general is so much tougher for men than it is for women. I've always thought that the big edge women have over men is the fortune of not having to worry about sex. That is, not having to worry if it's gonna happen or not. Women are the sexual object of desire and are relieved of the necessity of wondering with whom and even if sexual intimacy will occur or not. Woman simply have to decide IF they will, and with WHOM they wish to be, intimate and at what level of intimacy. Woman are the chased and men are the chasers. As a transsexual I had always resented the biological fact that I was required to be the sexual aggressor when dating as a man, to always be

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Enchanted Forest

By Marti Bennett

Hello, my name is Marti, I am one of the newest members of T.A.T.S. having joined the group in December. I am not going to tell about my life, for that you can go to my Home Page at www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/6468, if you are really interested. Rather, I would like to talk about things that I encounter as I make this trip through the enchanted forest of gender.

At this time I have had only one meeting with a gender specialist and that one has led me to setting an appointment with a psychologist for an initial visit. My greatest hope is to be able to quietly and peacefully transition in my personal and professional life with little notice from the world in general (this is really likely to happen...smile). From what the others who are traveling this same road tell me, there are a lot of rocks and potholes in the road in front of me. All of this started about a year ago, when I came to the realization that I couldn't keep living a lie. The lie I could no longer deal with was that the apparent gender that had been subscribed to me from birth was wrong. I knew who I was and what I was, the problem was that it wasn't apparent who and what I am.

With this in the forefront I came to the decision that I have to be who I am all the time and not on an occasional or hidden basis. This led me to look for others who were like me, and solicit their advice and friendship. As I started my computer-based search for information, I had no idea as to where to go or how to find resources, but I do know how to do computer-based searches. So, I went to search engines and punched up relevant topics, these in turn led me to Home Pages which led to chat rooms, in these I found a world of creatures, witches, trolls, and wonderful helpful people who led me, directed me and enlightened me. Some of the nicest people I know are the dear friends that I originally met on the net. A wonderful lady which I met there is named Billye, she put me in touch with an organization called HCDA (Helping Cross-dressers Anonymous) and the helpful friends that I made there helped me to get in touch with TATS, (and that is all the background that you will be subjected to). That being the bare bones of how I happened to be here, writing this, I hope that as I walk through the Enchanted Forest and talk with the inhabitants along the way I may bring a smile, a laugh, or maybe a tear as I journey, on the other hand I may come up with a bit of information which might make your journey through the Enchanted Forest a better one.

I want to mention a few of the many very admirable and helpful people that I have met already: Brenda Thomas Founder of HCDA and a dear friend, Jewel the owner/driving force behind Jewels Boutique, Michelle Myers who made me feel welcome at TATS, Julie and Stephanie dear friends and a source of joy and support, Billye who is always on my side and understands the path that is right for me along with what I expect to go through, Brandi who is kind and understanding, Vanessa who is friendly, helpful, and so involved. Ginger the girl who helped me put pictures of myself on my Home Page for the world to see. This is far from all who have helped me, and I will be mentioning others as I wander the Enchanted Forest. I am writing this as if it will be published, and while that would be nice, I really don't care if it is or not. I am going to post it as a monthly update at my web-site (or as I prefer to call it my cyber-home). I don't expect much to come from these thoughts and musings (which is probably good) but, I haven't seen much written by a TS starting early in the transition process and written on a regular basis, (the idea isn't original -- I stole it from Melanie Ann Phillips. See Heart-corps.com for her site, and it is a good one.) Hugs, Marti.



BOOK REVIEW 'THE RULES'

(Continued from Page 3)

able to 'perform' as it were. Dating a man now I don't really like the idea and I am not comfortable with requiring this of the man I like. It's tough enough for men, I'm acutely aware of this, and acutely aware of how much easier so many little things are for me now, and I would rather be comfortable and make my date comfortable, from the get-go. Though there are many good ideas contained in 'The Rules' that I will remember and do agree with, I'm more of the opinion that I would rather not make things so difficult for my date...of course I want to be treated as a feminine woman and of course I want my date paid for by the man, and of course I want to be caressed and protected by the man I am with, but I don't think I need to follow somebody else's 'rules' of behavior. I can read the book, use what I like, consider what the authors are saying, integrate some of their ideas, and make it work for the person I am as an individual. 'The Rules' is a fun book to read but I think to follow it religiously may very well be a mistake. We are all individuals and in addition, being transsexual, have had experiences that genetically born women can never understand. Being a transsexual allows us to see and experience quite unique aspects of the 'gender' issues that many can never know, and I think that is absolutely kewl! Hugs, Terri Lynn..

"A friend of mine confused her valium with her birth control pills - she had 14 kids, but she didn't give a shit..."

a random thought from Marsha Warfield

Submitted off the net by Holly Foster Wilson

It's New Years, time to reflect on the past and adjust things for a better year. It's the time a lot of us make New Years' resolutions, and one of the more popular of them is to stop drinking. Just in case you're not sure if this is something you need to modify, a little test for you...

SIGNS THAT YOU DRINK TOO MUCH

Your doctor finds traces of blood in your alcohol stream.
Your twin sons are named Barley and Hops.
Your job is interfering with your drinking.
Your career won't progress beyond Senator from Massachusetts.
The whole bar says 'Hi' when you come in....
You think the Four Basic Food Groups are Caffeine, Nicotine, Alcohol, and [Women or Men].
Your idea of cutting back is less salt.
Two hands and just one mouth...now *that's* a drinking problem!
Don't recognize the wife unless seen through the bottom of the glass .
24 hours in a day, 24 beers in a case - coincidence?? I think not!
"Hey, 5 beers has just as many calories as a burger, screw dinner!"



SIGNS THAT YOU ARE TOO DRUNK:

You have to hold onto the lawn to keep from falling off the earth.
You can focus better with one eye closed.
You sincerely believe alcohol to be the elusive 5th food group.
At AA meetings you begin: "Hi, my name is... uh..."
That damned pink elephant followed you home again.
You wake up in the bedroom, your underwear is on the front porch, your shoes are in the toilet, your closet smells strange, hmm....
You wake up screaming "TORO TORO TORO!" in the middle of the night.
Every night you're beginning to find your roommate's cat more and more attractive.
The parking lot seems to have moved while you were in the bar.
Mosquitoes catch a buzz after attacking you
Roseanne looks good.
Senators Kennedy and Packwood shake their heads when they walk past you.
You're as jobber as a sudge.
The shrubbery's drunk from too frequent watering.
Your vision's so fuzzy that eggs have fur.
You lose arguments with inanimate objects.
The back of your head keeps getting hit by the toilet seat.
You fall off the floor...

TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

- Note to all TATS members...there will be a semi-annual board meeting at Michelle Myers' home on Sunday, February 15 at 1:00 PM. All TATS officers and board members are expected to attend, but any member may attend. This will be the first of the two annual meetings to discuss the agenda for the group over the upcoming months.
- News Flash! Member Daniell McCleney is driving! That's right, our VP finally got her driver's license AND immediately went out and purchased a Mazda Protege! Can you believe it??? After nearly 29 years, Daniell's on the road. As for Houston's other drivers...heaven help us all! (jus' jokin' Dani....)
- Another local item of note, member Jessica Wicks tied the not with Crystal Erwin (yes, TCF's OnQCrystal) on December 27, 1997. The beautiful ceremony (from photos I saw -- I was out of town) was held at Marie Denise Gallagher's home and was well attended. On behalf of the group, I wish to extend best wishes and bountiful blessings to the lovely couple on their affirmed life partnership.
- National leader steps down...during the December meeting of the board of AEGIS, Dallas Denny announced her intention to resign as Executive Director, effective at the beginning of April. The Board reluctantly accepted Ms. Denny's resignation.
- Applications for a new Executive Director are being accepted by Marisa Richmond, the Chair of the AEGIS Board (P.O. Box 92335, Nashville, TN 37209) and Gianna Israel, the Vice Chair of the AEGIS Board (P.O. Box 424447, San Francisco, CA 94142).
- From the mayoral inauguration address...newly sworn-in Mayor Lee Brown mentioned, among many other subjects, that he is indeed serious about representing the entire population of Houston. In his speech he reiterated his desire for every citizen of Houston to have an equal shot at achieving their dream. Maybe a good time to push for GLBT rights...? We certainly have the right people in place!
- For the many TATS members who participated as volunteers in the Annise Parker campaign, there will be a volunteer appreciation party in the very near future. Keep your ears open, and watch those mailboxes. This one's for you!
- GCTC's newly elected officers also took office Jan. 1, and in unprecedented fashion. Every officer and board member belong to more than one TG group here in town. Board members Jessica Wicks and Michelle Myers also belong to TATS, and Julie Jordan belongs to Tri-Ess, HCDA and HCSC. Editor Audrey Dyke belongs to Tri-Ess, Secretary/Treasurer Jenifer René belongs to Tri-Ess & TATS, Vice President Katrina Rose belongs to TATS, and as President, yours truly is a member of TATS & Tri-Ess as well. This is the first time that GCTC's hierarchy all held joint memberships. Quite a commentary on the Houston TG community's communication and cooperation....

Scenes from the Annise Parker Victory Party

(All L-R) At right Jenifer René and Parker campaign consultant Cynthia Miller of the Miller Group vamp for the camera. Center Left: Annise Parker and Katrina Rose share smiles of relief. Center Right: Annise Parker and volunteer coordinator Vanessa Edwards-Foster beam with pride as Annise points to the 'winning team T-shirt.'



Photo at top right and center right courtesy of Christine Fusco, remainder courtesy of Katrina C. Rose.



Bottom Left: field director Deborah Bell effervesces while Vanessa Edwards-Foster and Sara Lee share a hug and a smile of relief. Bottom Right: as the crowd celebrates the TV election results, Jenifer René and Vanessa Edwards-Foster (right side of picture) swap stories of our day 'out in the trenches' working at the polls.

AND THE YEAR'S BEST HEADLINES ARE ...

(submitted off the net by Sarah Fox, Ph.D.)

- Include Your Children when Baking Cookies
- Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says
- Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
- Safety Experts Say School Bus Passengers Should Be Belted
- Drunk Gets Nine Months in Violin Case
- Survivor of Siamese Twins Joins Parents
- Iraqi Head Seeks Arms
- Prostitutes Appeal to Pope
- Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over
- British Left Waffles on Falkland Islands
- Lung Cancer in Women Mushrooms
- Eye Drops Off Shelf
- Teacher Strikes Idle Kids
- Clinton Wins on Budget, But More Lies Ahead
- Enraged Cow Injures Farmer With Ax
- Plane Too Close to Ground, Crash Probe Told
- Miners Refuse to Work after Death

- Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant
- Stolen Painting Found by Tree
- Two Sisters Reunited After 18 Years in Checkout Counter
- Killer Sentenced to Die for Second Time in 10 Years
- Never Withhold Herpes Infection from Loved One
- War Dims Hope for Peace
- If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last a While
- Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures
- Deer Kill 17,000
- Enfields Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide
- Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges
- Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead
- Man Struck By Lightning Faces Battery Charge
- New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group
- Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft
- Kids Make Nutritious Snacks
- Chef Throws His Heart into Helping Feed Needy
- Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half
- Hospitals are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors

Services, etc.



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TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 6, Issue 2

Houston, Texas

February, 1998

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.

TRANSGENDERS AND ROMANCE: IS IT POSSIBLE?

LOVE AND LONELINESS

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Valentine's Day is around the corner -- the day that conjures up images of Cupid, and sweethearts in love romantic dinners or excursions and so on. For many this is one of the (if not the most) romantic day of the year. For others it's a irritating reminder of what they don't have: love...romance...a relationship. Nothing points this up as much as a day that's almost a national holiday...a day the marketing gods of Madison Ave. deem special enough to plaster every store window with advertisements reminding us, and many a store aisle with displays offering candy or cards, and parking lots with revival style tents full of flowers and roses on virtually every major intersection. Even the media -- both print and live alike -- force you to notice the occasion. Like Christmas, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Easter; Valentine's Day is practically impossible to ignore.

Romance itself is difficult enough for the general population -- many are the lovelorn in straight society. Add to that being transgendered and the chances for romance wane even more. It's a sad fact, but the majority of TG-folk are lonely. Societal stereotypes, if anything, are even more magnified with transgenders and romance. The image of the lustful, sex-driven drag queen is still far too prevalent. It's hard enough to get them to see TG's as people, it's even harder to get them to see we're human and have the same human needs and desires -- needs and desires that most often go unfulfilled. Indeed, romance is a formidable challenge for any transgender.

(Continued on Page 4)

ATTRACTING ROMANCE AS A TRANSGENDER

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The accompanying article mentioned the difficulties all transgenders face while seeking romance. Loneliness is not the only option, though. A determined few have managed to reach a goal seldom realized by most TG's -- open transgenderism and a relationship. In this, the first of a two installment article, we'll ask couples how they were attracted to each other, and advice on finding romantic possibilities. The second article will focus on how the couples keep their romances successful and vibrant.

In an attempt to find out how our transsexual counterparts attract romance, I interviewed a variety of trans couples. Two of the couples who've had the longest running relationships were interviewed in this article -- both couples being married well before the discovery of one mate's transgenderism by the spouse. Marie Denise & Patty Gallagher have been married for over 14 years and Phyllis & Trish Frye have been married for over 25 years. Another couple interviewed, Jessica Wicks and Crystal Erwin, had just recently tied the knot Dec. 27 and had special circumstances -- Jessica had lost her long-time husband less than a year earlier. Chris Crochet and his SO Valerie represent the only F2M viewpoint interviewed for this article. Jori Draper and her mate Kim Hofeling are both M2F members of TATS who discovered an attraction to each other and moved in together last year. Lastly radio host Sarah DePalma and her former dominatrix turned lifemate Lori Rice also shared their views for this article.

When asked what attracted the couples
(Continued on Page 4)



TATS members and lovers Kim Hofeling (L) and Jori Draper (R)

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| February 14 | Social Meeting at:
Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM |
| February 15 | Board Meeting at:
Michelle Myers' @ 1:00 PM |
| February 28 | Un-Meeting at
Stephanie Brooks' @ 7:00 PM |
| March 14 | Social Meeting at:
Stephanie Brooks' @ 3:00 PM |
| March 28 | Un-Meeting at
Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM |

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Vice President

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Newsletter Editor

TATS Board Members

Monica Roberts

Katrina C. Rose

Jessica Wicks



EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Before I get started, apologies are in order. As I'm sure you've noticed, last month's newsletters arrived a bit late. All right, they arrived a lot late! Especially for those who receive them by mail, I was not on my regular schedule for getting the last issue out and in members' hands. Since I was so tardy in getting the newsletter printed and ready to mail (Thurs. Jan. 8), I made an executive decision to hold them all until the meeting Saturday Jan. 10. My reasoning was that you'd not receive them before Saturday and would surely be asking what happened to the newsletter at the meeting. This way I could save a little postage, and expedite the newsletter's delivery to the members.



It worked well for those who attended the meeting...unfortunately it meant a longer wait still for those who'd not managed to attend (a lesson about attending meetings is in there somewhere...). My intent was to buy stamps and mail them out the following Monday, but as fate would have it, I walked out the door at 3:00 and found a very flat rear tire on my truck. After struggling to change the tire (hormones have really depleted my strength! I almost never got that last lug nut off!), and put the spare on that frustratingly difficult spare carrier underneath the pickup, the post office had closed. The tire shop repaired the flat, but mentioned the tire was in serious need of replacing and would likely not hold air. I had them put it under the truck as a spare and went on. I'd just mail the newsletters the next day.

As I left early the next afternoon to go to the post office, I noticed what looked like a water spot under my truck. Assuming it was from a brief rain shower, I left to go to the post office. Less than a mile from my house I noticed my truck was knocking and looked down to see the radiator was way too warm for such a short trip. I stopped and looked under the hood -- a busted radiator hose! I promptly turned around and went to the nearest garage (thank goodness there's one around the corner from the house), and had them order the hose and install it. The newsletters had to wait again!

Finally on Wednesday I had a truck that was functioning and all the time in the world. I spent most of the morning and afternoon talking long-distance with a friend going through a crisis in her club. After two calls, and much counseling and consoling, I went out and took care of some errands. After returning from my errands, I noticed something...the unstamped, unmailed newsletters were sitting on my dining room table. Duh! (Another thing about the hormones...I think I'm turning blonde. I really become ditzy sometimes....) Again I'd have to wait to mail them another day!

Finally on Thursday everything was in order, I mailed out the newsletters, and even managed to drop a couple of them off personally...one to city councilmember Annise Parker's office. After chatting with them a few minutes, I walked back over to where I parked my truck. As I got in, I noticed a little green envelope under my windshield wiper. Curious, I grabbed it and looked inside -- a parking ticket! Even though I'd parked legally, and dutifully fed the meter with plenty of coin, I couldn't figure out what happened. The note said parked in a tow-away zone after 4:00. It was barely ten minutes after 4:00 when I got there, but too late! I couldn't see any signs anywhere, and then I noticed them -- stickers on the parking meter poles that stated the allowed times to park. I always look for signs, I'd never even bothered to pay attention to the meters. Besides, when you park in a pickup, you can't even see the stickers anyway, unless you're walking back to the truck. Too late then. There went a quick \$50! I'd have been better off parking in one of those 'high-dollar' lots. So much for going downtown!

The moral of the story: attend the meetings - you never know what you might miss. And also, this is starting out to be an expensive year....



A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

Michelle Myers

Phyllis Frye

Katrina C. Rose

Mary Ann Harris, of the Crystal Club
Columbus OH

for submitting humor

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for submitting humor

Lauren Robison, suburban Baltimore MD

Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV

Hilary Foster

for submitting photo & scanning

Katrina C. Rose

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) 827-5913 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

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:
http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/

Our Advertising Rates Are:

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Michelle's Musings - This is My Desk

By Michelle Myers

I hope everyone has recovered from the rush of the holidays, I finally have.

Sarah C. should be back from Canada by now and I am sure she would like to hear a friendly voice or get a helpful visit.

A reminder that the officers and board will meet on Sunday, February 15th at my place to discuss a full range of topics about the business of TATS. Any member wishing to join in is more than welcome. If you are interested in seeing the topics that we will be discussing just call me or pick up the proposed agenda at the next meeting on February 14th

I would like to congratulate Stephanie B. on her recent change of name and sex on her identification. She went through the process on her own. She has been kind enough to donate the forms, references and samples of what she did to successfully accomplish this, to the TATS Library. If anyone is thinking of going this route on their own and wants help, after looking over the library materials, either Stephanie or I would be more than willing to further expand on what is in the information she has donated.

Stephanie B. has also been kind enough to offer us the use of her apartment for the meetings on the second Saturday of the month. This new arrangement will start with the March 14th meeting. I have reached the point where having the meeting at my place is very stressful and is also in very cramped quarters. So Stephanie has volunteered to help. Please note that she will also be hosting the fourth Saturday meeting on February 28th in place of Vanessa. I will have maps at the February 14th meeting.

I also wanted to mention that the Montrose Clinic and Montrose Counseling Center have announced the formation of the Lesbian Health

Outreach Project (LHOP). This project is funded by the Susan G. Komen Cancer Foundation and the Hollyfield Foundation. Barbara Walker and Deborah Bell are the outreach workers on this project and they are very interested in having the transsexual community participate. Both MTF's and FTM's may be at a particular risk that has not yet been fully explored by the medical community. The program is designed to educate individuals about self-care, risk factors and warning signs of breast cancer. Well-women exams, routine mammograms and support services are available to all women with or without insurance, at little or no cost (sliding scale fees are available based on the individual's ability to pay.) For more information I have some brochures and you can call Deborah Bell at (713) 529-0037 or Barbara Walker at (713) 830-3000.

And now, for my last topic, I have an apology to make. The other day I "outed" a member of TATS in front of several people. Once I realized what I had done, I made an attempt to acknowledge my mistake.

No matter what the circumstances, "outing" this individual was a breach of trust and inexcusable, and the way I which I tried to acknowledge my mistake was totally inadequate. I have apologized to this individual in writing. I also feel that I should apologize to the membership for my inappropriate behavior.

There are several lessons that we should all be able to learn from this mistake. Even though this incident occurred in front of people from the gay community, we should never presume to make the judgments that it is all right to provide personal information about one member of TATS to any other member of TATS or anyone

who is not a member of TATS. This includes even identifying someone as a member. This is the prerogative only of the member.

Some of us are "out", some are only partially "out", some are in the closet and others are "woodworking". Where an individual finds themselves at a particular time is their business, is valid by definition and is to be respected by the rest of us. So, when in doubt, we should keep our mouths shut.

As far as the TATS officers are concerned, I would also like to point out that there is a special trust and responsibility in terms of information concerning the membership list. The membership list is private and confidential information and should be handled accordingly. The membership list has a statement to that effect on it. It is not to be given to anyone who is not a TATS officer and is provided for each of us to perform our elected functions. Also, none of the information on it is to be given to anyone, including other members, without the express permission of that individual.

Having said all the above, I do want everyone to understand, that as far as I am concerned, I may be identified as a member and President of TATS and my phone number ((713) 524-6349) may be given to anyone that a member judges needs the services and support of TATS. I have made this statement several times and wanted to make sure you all understood that this is still the case. Wishing you love and knowledge, Michelle Myers



About My Father's Death:

By Phyllis Frye

I just got word today that my father died yesterday. I've called several aunts, uncles and cousins. They have consoled me as best as they could. During these calls, I have cried a lot.

I did not cry over his death, because he chose to "die to me" over twenty two years ago when I became Phyllis, and he refused to budge even though it meant the loss of his grandchild and his great-granddaughter. I have mourned this "death" for twenty-two years, and the announcement that he died found me mostly numb to it all. My tears were mostly for myself since I have feared that he would take his hatred of me with him to his grave -- and he did. Feeling the

strength of his hatred will be hard for me to carry for a long time to come. For those of you who saw the episode of "Ellen" several weeks ago about the death of her lover's father, that pretty much spelled it out.

I called my kids in Fort Worth. My son is working, and the baby is at day care. Daughter (we do *not* call her "-in-law") is scheduled to begin her new job in about ten more days. She was so good at consoling me as I lost it again and started crying. Such a good daughter. She will probably come to San Antonio with me to the funeral.

My spouse, Trish, does not know at this writing. She will be home in about 90 minutes.

I'm not sure what she will do since she has been angry over the way I've been abused by him for almost all of our married life.

I had a long chat (and another cry) with my closest cousin (from my mother's side). She said that over the last week lots of family were called so they could make it in to the hospital and his bedside in time to say a good bye to Dad. But Mom and Don (my brother) and LaNell (my sister) did *not* call me, and still have NOT called me, and damn it, I am crying again.....

Why our parents, sisters and brothers can hate us so much that they will take it to the grave is simply beyond me.

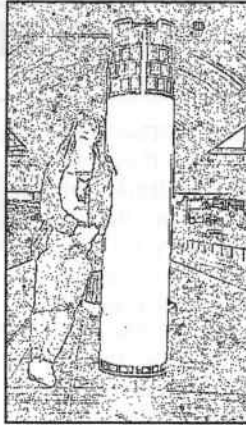
LOVE AND LONELINESS

(Continued from Page 1)

This is where, normally, I should offer words of advice of what to do to attract a love interest. Unfortunately, I can't speak on that subject with any authority: I, too, am one of the chronic love-lorn. Like the majority of the TG community, I was perpetually lonely well before even coming to the realization that I was transgendered. My hard luck stories were phenomenal -- a great source of humor for my friends, frustrating and endlessly painful for me. Periodically this was enough to cast me into the throes of deep depression. Without a lot of detail, all my efforts at ending loneliness in my previous incarnation fell woefully short. There had to be a way to break out of the loneliness / depression cycle.

One might think making a change would help, and oftentimes it does. Making a change of gender identity is admittedly a fairly radical change. One might also think that making such a substantial change might improve one's romantic potential. On occasion that might occur, but far too often it does not. True, being my 'true self' has made me a more open person and has opened up a broad vista of new friendships. Though this has vastly increased the social aspects of my life, it has done virtually nothing for the romantic aspects.

Many transgenders place great emphasis on a relationship -- some so much emphasis as to overshadow the other aspects of their lives. Thus the success or failure of a romantic overture can affect more than their psyche; it can tinge their temperament, friendships, family relations, jobs, and even future attempts at romance. Emotional pain is like a loose cannon on a ship at sea: difficult to get a handle on, unpredictable, and potentially damaging to yourself or others at any given moment. In other words, it's



It's also passion, and passions sometimes flare. Growing up in a contentious household left its impression on me at a young age. There are bad relationships. My only relationship with a girl was a bad relationship. Love is no automatic panacea. If one is to end up in a good relationship, one must wait for the right one. There are no quick fixes -- infinite patience is the key. In the meantime, there's the rest of your life to live....

Putting your life in perspective, or more accurately, putting a proper perspective on your life brings focus to what's truly important. Something I realized when I started thinking about it: I had fun when I was with my friends-- something I couldn't say about most of the dates I've been on. Realizing that love (or the pursuit of it) tended to dominate my time at the expense of my friends, I decided to place more emphasis on my friendships...or more importantly, just going out and having fun. Being without a relationship wasn't the worst thing in the world, being miserable in a bad relationship was worse still. As long as I was having fun, who cares if I didn't have a love? Madison Ave. and corporate America? Marketing and advertising be

not something to take lightly.

There are ways to deal with loneliness. During one bout of major depression, I realized I was overemphasizing the importance of a relationship. One thing I realized was that love is not always hearts and romance, billing and cooing, intimacy and togetherness.

damned, the only way they can dictate to me how to live my life is if I allow them. Gossipy acquaintances who might judge me on their standard of 'what fulfillment is?' Getting into a 'wrong' relationship just to keep up appearances is a recipe for failure.

You might find friendship isn't the only thing more important than love. Pursuing dreams -- dreams of travel, dreams of success, dreams of notoriety or fame -- can also supplant love as a dominating force in your life. Another thing I've always enjoyed was new experiences. Going new places, meeting new people, trying new foods, immersing yourself in a different culture, attempting new things -- these are things that keep the mind fresh and hungry for more. The more diversions you have to keep your mind off of loneliness, the better off you are. Strangely enough, love usually falls in your lap when you're not even thinking about it. I suppose by being more than one-dimensional, and developing yourself into a multi-faceted, well-rounded 'whole' person, you then make yourself more intriguing and subsequently attract those around you. If you focus winning at love, especially those starved for such companionship, your total conscious is focused on attaining love. This comes at the expense of developing your personality and creative potential. Life is more than just one subject.

Even if I do have to live my life without love, I certainly won't be the only person to ever have to live such a life. There's no law that says I have to dwell on it or make myself miserable either. One can choose to live in misery, or one can choose not to. Just place the appropriate emphasis on all of the various aspects of your life. It's a matter of perspective.



ATTRACTING ROMANCE....

(Continued from Page 1)

together initially, the couples mentioned two qualities most often. "Honesty" was mentioned by both Valerie and Lori Rice as qualities appealing to them. Trish Frye, Valerie and Lori Rice also inferred that "sense of humor" were also important attractions for them as well. Sometimes unexpected little quirks or features were found attractive as well. Lori Rice mentioned her mate's special quality: "Sarah purrs." For Valerie it was "definitely his feet!" Excerpts of the attractions to each other are as follows:

PATTY: "She didn't act like the other guys [when they first met].... She wasn't one of these macho guys"

MARIE: "She started pursuing me and started asking me out. So by default I started going

out with her. And I liked her -- she was nice to be around."

JESSICA: "When we first talked to each other it was online.... At first it was nothing other than a growing friendship. What really happened...is when we saw each other...it was like a thing that happened with the eyes. I talk about it as being a soul connection. What do you call it...?"

CRYSTAL: "What do I call it? I don't call it anything!... I call it kismet. It was just an energy that two people share at a moment. Your eyes lock and you get that... non-verbal conversation going.

PHYLLIS: "We didn't fall in love first, we became friends first. She wasn't interested in getting married, and I was freshly divorced, and I wasn't interested in getting married. So we just became friends and we saved one night

a week for each other, and the rest of the nights of the week we'd date other people...."

TRISH: We just had a good time together. We shared a similar sense of humor, and we were just easy to talk to with each other. As she said, at first she was dating somebody else, and so was I. [So] there were no games to play -- just get together for dinner once a week.

VALERIE: His honesty. He's so honest. And his eyes... he's such a nice person. Oh, and definitely his feet! I loved his feet in his sandals! (Laughs) But just that he's so honest and I haven't had that with my family, so it was a nice change. And definitely [his sense of humor].

CHRIS: She was working at Godfather's, and I met her when Justin and I were working there. The first day I started working there... Valerie

(Continued on Page 6)

Big Answers from Little Kids About Love and Romance

Submitted off the net by: Holly Foster Wilson

Questions about love, marriage and sex were posed to kids ages 5 to 10. Their answers below are enlightening:

WHAT IS THE PROPER AGE TO GET MARRIED?

"Eighty-four! Because at that age, you don't have to work anymore, and you can spend all your time loving each other in your bedroom." (Judy, 8)

"Once I'm done with kindergarten, I'm going to find me a wife!" (Tom, 5)

WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE DO ON A DATE?

"On the first date, they just tell each other lies, and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date." (Mike, 10)

WHEN IS IT OKAY TO KISS SOMEONE?

"You should never kiss a girl unless you have enough bucks to buy her a big ring and her own VCR, 'cause she'll want to have videos of the wedding." (Jim, 10)

"Never kiss in front of other people. It's a big embarrassing thing if anybody sees you. But if nobody sees you, I might be willing to try it with a handsome boy, but just for a few hours." (Kally, 9)

THE GREAT DEBATE: IS IT BETTER TO BE SINGLE OR MARRIED?

"It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need somebody to clean up after them!" (Lynette, 9)

"It gives me a headache to think about that stuff. I'm just a kid. I don't need that kind of trouble." (Kenny, 7)

HOW DOES LOVE HAPPEN BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE?

"No one is sure why it happens, but I heard it has something to do with how you smell. That's why perfume and deodorant are so popular." (Jan, 9)

"I think you're supposed to get shot with an arrow or something, but the rest of it isn't supposed to be so painful." (Harlen, 8)

WHAT IS FALLING IN LOVE LIKE?

"Like an avalanche where you have to run for your life." (Roger, 9)

"If falling in love is anything like learning how to spell, I don't want to do it. It takes too long." (Leo, 7)

DO YOU HAVE TO BE GOOD LOOKING TO FALL IN LOVE?

"If you want to be loved by somebody who isn't already in your family, it doesn't hurt to be beautiful." (Jeanne, 8)

"It isn't always just how you look. Look at me. I'm handsome like anything and I haven't got anybody to marry me yet." (Gary, 7)

"Beauty is skin deep. But how rich you are can last a long time." (Christine, 9)

WHY DO LOVERS OFTEN HOLD HANDS?

"They want to make sure their rings don't fall off because they paid good money for them." (Dave, 8)

WHAT ARE YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT LOVE?

"I'm in favor of love as long as it doesn't happen when 'The Simpsons' is on television." (Anita, 6)

"Love will find you, even if you are trying to hide from it. I have been trying to hide from it since I was five, but the girls keep finding me." (Bobby, 8)

"I'm not rushing into being in love. I'm finding fourth grade hard enough." (Regina, 10)

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A GOOD LOVER?

"One of you should know how to write a check. Because, even if you have tons of love, there is still going to be a lot of bills." (Ava, 8)

WHAT'S A SUREFIRE WAY TO MAKE A PERSON FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU?

"Tell them that you own a whole bunch of candy stores." (Del, 6)

"Don't do things like have smelly, green sneakers. You might get attention, but attention ain't the same thing as love." (Alonzo, 9)

"One way is to take the girl out to eat. Make sure it's something she likes to eat. French fries usually works for me." (Bart, 9)

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF TWO ADULTS EATING DINNER AT A RESTAURANT ARE IN LOVE?

"Just see if the man picks up the check. That's how you can tell if he's in love." (John, 9)

"Lovers will just be staring at each other and their food will get cold. Other people care more about the food." (Brad, 8)

"It's love if they order one of those desserts that are on fire. They like to order those because it's just like how their hearts are...on fire." (Christine, 9)

WHAT ARE MOST PEOPLE THINKING WHEN THEY SAY "I LOVE YOU"?

"The person is thinking: Yeah, I really do love him. But I hope he showers at least once a day." (Michelle, 9)

HOW DOES SOMEONE LEARN TO KISS?

"You learn it right on the spot when the gooshy feelings get the best of you." (Doug, 7)

"It might help to watch soap operas all day." (Carin, 9)

WHEN IS IT OKAY TO KISS SOMEONE?

"It's never okay to kiss a boy. They always slobber all over you...That's why I stopped doing it." (Jean, 10)

HOW DO YOU MAKE LOVE LAST?

"Spend most of your time loving instead of going to work." (Tom, 7)

"Don't forget your wife's name...That will mess up the love." (Roger, 8)

"Be a good kisser. It might make your wife forget that you never take out the trash." (Randy, 8)



The Loss of a Friend - A Friend I Never Met (or Goodbye, Broopy - from TexKatrina)

By Katrina C. Rose

I feel awkward in making an announcement about this in the TATS newsletter. We have suffered far too many losses over the past year, and an obit for someone that most folk in TATS probably never met might be a bit much. However, I feel the need to pass this along - not only for the TATS members who are AOL-ers, but for all of us - and for several reasons.

Broopy died.

You're probably asking who Broopy was. Broopy was a frequent visitor to the Gazebo - the TG chat room on AOL. Her non-cyber name was Kimmie, but I'll use Broopy in this piece because that's how I knew her.

I forget when I first saw Broopy in the Gazebo. It must have been over a year ago. There are a lot of people who pop into the Gazebo who I never notice until they address me directly. After all, the room can get a bit busy (if you do the AOL thang, you know what I mean.) I noticed Broopy immediately - specifically because of the name. From the goofy, playful nature of the screenname, I knew that the person behind it had to be either a snert (a troublemaker) or someone fun. Broopy was the latter. She was a joy to chat with - both in the main chat room and via instant message.

She was born Dec. 20, 1952 died Jan. 20, 1998 at the age of 45, and was buried next to her father. She served in the military - winning several medals. She had five children - 1 boy and 4 girls (Joe, Carol, Sandy, Sue, and Dona) - and four granddaughters (Kayla, Aura, Sammie, and Dani.) In addition to her children and grandchildren, she is survived by her mother and one brother. She is also survived by her soulmate of ten years, Donna Bolton. They had been planning to get married on June 7 - and Broopy was buried in the wedding dress that she had planned to wear.

I choose to put this in the newsletter because of something that a friend of Broopy's (MTBOY000, another AOL-er) shared with me. Much as some of us had the unpleasant task of going through Dee McKellar's belongings in the days after she died, this person was sorting through Broopy's things and found some of her writings. This person told me that Broopy thoroughly enjoyed chatting with me - that the folks she chatted with from the Gazebo were a big part of her life. In fact, he told me that Broopy especially enjoyed chatting with me - that she thought I was one of the sweetest ones there.

(Continued on Page 8)

ATTRACTING ROMANCE....

(Continued from Page 6)

walks out, and I'm like, 'Wow, who is that?!' [After sitting down talking one night] we just made this connection besides just working with each other.

JORI: [My attraction was] how sincere [Kim] was about things that were important to her.

KIM: At first I can't say I was attracted to Jori or in love with Jori, because I wasn't.

JORI: I wasn't really attracted to her right off. I saw...that she was sincere, and I saw a lot of the truth.... But...she seemed like a person I could be a good friend with.

KIM: As I got to know Jori more and more, I started liking her more and more.... I fell in love with Jori in a short period of time... it wasn't that I was knocked off my feet the first time I met Jori.

LORI: Sarah & I met at an S & M party I held.... I knew when I first [met] Sarah that she belonged with me. The way we acted with each other.

SARAH: Actually we started from that point of view -- we started from the S & M world -- and it just... became a relationship afterwards. [My attraction to Lori was] her honesty. The thing that makes her different than anybody I know is that she has a wonderful childlike quality. And I envy her, because I never really felt like I had a childhood. That, more than anything, attracted me to her first -- that childlike quality that she had.

LORI: Her intensity, and her honesty also. Her intensity at whatever she does -- it's 110%, she doesn't go halfway. Whether it's in play...or in politicking. Also her intelligence. [Another] one of the things that attracted me is she purrs. She purrs and she giggles.

SARAH: That's a side that nobody ever gets to see of me.

Advice on how to attract a love interest varied, but predictably mirrored the things that attracted the couples to each other. Patty & Marie Gallagher, and Kim Hofeling all mentioned finding someone with common interests. Both Chris Crochet and Valerie, Sarah DePalma and Lori Rice, as well as Jori Draper all mentioned honesty as a keystone to finding a true love. By far though, the most common advice was to be yourself. Crystal Erwin and mate Jessica Wicks, Valerie and Jori Draper all said as much. Even Phyllis Frye -- who mentioned being the kind of person you'd want to attract -- and Lori Rice -- who inferred as much by advising not to hide oneself -- indirectly confirmed that sentiment. Regarding advice to the lovelemon the interviewees had the following advice:

MARIE: Stop marrying for lust.

PATTY: It helps, to start with, if you have a

mutual admiration.... We...say 'I don't understand what you see in me.' We can't believe each other sees so much in the other. If you have a lot in common it won't take much effort.

MARIE: But don't have everything in common, because then you get bored and tired with each other. You have to have outside interests too. You have to be whole people. If you're not whole people you can't make one person.

CRYSTAL: It's the kind of energy that people put out. People who are desperate put out desperate energy. People read that and they'll steer clear of it. If you're self-assured, just...back off and relax and just let yourself be yourself.

JESSICA: Let it happen. Number one: you have to be around people. There were 2 people who were born to connect. It's just being out there and doing it until that happens. We just have to be available and ready for it when it happens.

PHYLLIS: I think that you should be the kind of person that you would be attracted to. In other words, would a negative person turn you off? Then don't be negative. Would a rude and assuming person turn you off? If so, then don't be a rude and assuming person. Be considerate of others. It sounds golden rule-ish, but that's essentially what it boils down to. Would you be attracted to somebody who's negative and complaining all the time?

VALERIE: Be honest and be yourself, right up front.

CHRIS: It's a lot different when you're transgendered and you're looking for a relationship, and it's very difficult. I think the biggest thing is to get over being transgendered. If you speak out, if you're honest with it, then...maybe the other person you're attracted to will just go, 'Wow, maybe it's not such a big deal.' But if it's something you're trying to hide, then the other person will pick up [on it and think] 'okay, maybe this isn't a good thing because [he/she] is trying to hide it.' The biggest thing is honesty, and getting rid of all of your preconceptions of what you think a relationship should be. It's different for people who are transgendered, and I feel really bad. Sometimes I actually feel guilty for being in a relationship because I see so many people out there who aren't.

JORI: Be yourself. It's simple and it's honest to be yourself.

KIM: Find somebody that you're compatible with, somebody that you can put up with and tolerate. No one's perfect. People are gonna have faults. In the transgender community we're gonna have faults. We go through a lot of stress, a lot of emotional trauma...and it's wise to be understanding what you're other

(Continued on Page 7)

ICTLEP ELECTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Phyllis Frye

The Transgender Law Conference (ICTLEP) announced that it has elected Sharon Stuart/Thomas Heitz as its new Executive Director. Stuart/Heitz, a bi-gendered activist of long standing, was an original Director of ICTLEP when it formed in 1991 and has her Juris Doctorate from the University of Kansas Law School. Her new position begins on March 15, 1998.

Stuart/Heitz sees her job as providing a year-long transition from a "founder-driven" organization (which began in 1991 when its founder was the only, totally out and totally active, TG lawyer in the United States) to one with

more structure and a deeper organizational base. "Today, with so many TG lawyers and TG law students being out or coming out, there is a growing pool of folks who can take on the myriad of bar association-styled committee work that needs to be done," states Stuart/Heitz.

Out-going Executive Director and founder, Phyllis Randolph Frye, told her Board three weeks ago that she had had enough. "Being an activist for over two decades is one thing, but being on the point for all of those two-plus decades is more than enough. And six years as Executive Director of this organization with six annual conferences and six annual, bound Pro-

ceedings was also enough." Frye was asked by Stuart/Heitz to remain as a Director in order to provide historical perspective and continuity, and she agreed.

Stuart/Heitz asks, "If you are a legal professional, won't you please contact me and see how you can help to take TG legal work from this plateau into the next? My Directors and Moderators need you!" To contact Stuart/Heitz write PO Drawer 1010; Cooperstown, NY 13326 or phone: 607-547-4118. You may also reach her via Email at: ictlephdq@aol.com



The Holocaust: Could It Happen In America?

By Mary Ann Harris

In a recent exchange in Dear Abby, someone reminded us of the horrors of the Holocaust, where millions of Jews and other minorities were killed. Abby gave thanks that "We are living in a country where people will never encounter the horror that was faced" during the Holocaust.

Another letter pointed out that "apathy and denial by the populace led to the actions of the Nazis. Some in our society preach the same hatred, and there is profound apathy in this country toward those who engage in such activities. We all hope that we will never 'encounter such horror,' but only an informed, vigilant society can prevent such a horror from ever happening again." Abby agreed, and suggested that one way to protect our freedom is to exercise our right to vote to the fullest.

The second letter makes a poignant argument. Are those same forces that propelled Hitler to power alive and well in America today? Just what was the idea that Hitler used to gain power?

The Nazis had a simple message. They said that people just like them were better than people who were different. They proceeded to take away basic human rights from those who were different. It started with registration, then loss of the right to work, to own property, and to liberty. Eventually they took away their right to live.

Much money is raised today in the name of God or Jesus. Some of that money goes to support true mainstream Jewish/Christian values: loving your neighbor, helping those in need, spreading the word of the Lord that, by accepting Jesus as savior [so that] your sins can be forgiven.

Other money is raised in God's name to withhold basic rights from those who are differ-

ent than the fundraisers. These fundraisers would have us have laws that bar some people from the right to work, to marry, to buy housing, to use public restrooms, to medical care, even to medical advice. Women, gays, and the transgendered are to be denied rights, to be domesticated, subcultured, or even eradicated.

Every day we all receive mail asking for donations. Which kind of organizations are asking you for money in today's mail?

Apparently whipping the masses into a frenzy that "we might be asked to treat *those* people as equals, God forbid!" is a powerful fundraising technique. The money keeps flowing in, and the hate campaigns escalate. There are enough people in this country who support the denial of basic human rights to fund fancy new buildings in Colorado for many far-right organizations. The people of this country are not bad, nor were the people of Germany. But good people can be misled by clever hateful leaders.

There is more than one way to exercise your right to vote. In this country, you can vote with your money. Take that money you were requested to send to someone promoting hate, or a small donation of your own, and send it to someone who promotes love, equality, and human rights. Send a donation to the National Organization for Women, P.O. Box 96824, Washington, D.C. 20090-6824; the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2320 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009-2702; and/or to my favorite, the International Foundation for Gender Education, P.O. Box 376, Wayland, MA, 01778, or to your own favorite non-hate organization.

Show that a message of love is more powerful than a message of hate.



ATTRACTING ROMANCE....

(Continued from Page 6)

partner's going through. And be supportive...being there for each other and supporting each other. And a kind word carries you sometimes through the whole day. Words of encouragement are like apples of gold on plates of silver -- they're beautiful to behold.

SARAH: In one word: honesty. Don't ever lie.

LORI: Don't hide and say "Gee, I'm transgendered. I can't go out and not meet people because they'll know."

SARAH: Well, I've seen far more relationships destroyed due to dishonesty than it was transgenderism. I've seen so many relationships where if they just were honest, they probably would've worked it out. But in the end, it wasn't their transgenderism that was the issue. It was their dishonesty. That was the problem.

LORI: How can you get a relationship going if you don't meet them in the first place?

SARAH: That's a good question. I don't have that answer.

LORI: If it's gonna be serious, you have to be honest.



Life has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking together in the same direction.

from *Terre des Hommes* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

To fear love is to fear life, and those who fear life are already three parts dead.

from *Marriage and Morals* by Bertrand Russell

Love doesn't exist in a vacuum. *Thank God!* The thought of some desperate fool taking an Electrolux® to bed with him is a visual I'd rather not see....

VEF

CAYMANS TO GAYS: 'STAY AWAY'

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The Cayman Islands has recently come out and stated officially that they will no longer welcome gay and lesbian tourists.

In a story first reported in the Washington Post, Cayman officials have put a stop to allowing gay cruises to dock in Cayman ports.

While there have been other Caribbean tourist spots that have put gay travelers at arm's length, the Cayman Islands is the first to come out and officially state that they are rolling up and pulling in the welcome mat. Over the course of the past decade, many Cayman shopkeepers would abruptly close in protest when gay cruise lines arrived in port.

In December the island's government banned a cruise ship run by Atlantis Events from stopping in the Caymans. "Careful research and prior experience has led us to conclude that we cannot count on this group to uphold the standards of appropriate behavior expected of visitors to the Cayman Islands, so we regrettably cannot offer our hospitality," stated Cayman's Minister of Tourism, Thomas Jefferson in a letter to one cruise line.

"This is just plain, old-fashioned discrimination," stated Atlantis Event's president, Rich Campbell. This is the first ban the company has ever experienced. Though this has piqued concern from many gay and lesbian tourists about the Caribbean as a travel destination, the anti-gay sentiment by the Caymans is viewed as an aberration. Many other islands, including Trinidad, St. Bart's, St. Thomas, St. Maarten and others still welcome gay visitors.

The Human Rights Campaign in Washington has formally protested the action by the Cayman government. "The Cayman Islands has effectively said that travelers are not welcome here if they are gay," said HRC spokesman David M. Smith. "We condemn this decision and are exploring further action on this matter." They have not ruled out a potential boycott of the island.

Editors for Out & About -- a monthly gay travel newsletter -- have already called for a boycott. Stated publisher David Alport, "Gay travelers tend not to go to the Caribbean to find gay venues. They do go for the sun or for recreation, such as scuba diving."

While the official Cayman policy only stated gay and lesbian visitors were unwelcome, we as transgenders need to realize this includes us as well. In the eyes of the uninformed, we -- gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgenders, and intersexed -- are all grouped in the same category. We should join the HRC in condemning the Caymans' actions.

GOODBYE BROOPY....

(Continued from Page 6)

I had been trying to avoid crying, but at that point I gave up the fight.

Broopy had begun the gender-change process about 15 years ago. In one of our chats, Broopy had mentioned her heart problem - and that it would probably prevent her from ever having SRS. Ultimately, it took her life.

I am glad that I knew her.

Many people bad-mouth the internet (chat rooms, specifically) for making people less social. The argument is that people stay at home and talk with their computers instead of with "real" people. I'm sure that most of those who are reading this don't but that Luddite line, but, in case you do, I'm here to counteract it.

Chat rooms have not shut me off from the "real" world. Far from it - it has opened up the real world to me. 99% of the people who read this who have met me would never have met me had it not been for the net. Likewise, I've initially met some of my dearest non-cyber friends online. These are people who I would have never been able to meet via any other mode of interaction. Yes, there are, carrying on with the overused "information superhighway" motif, cyber-carjackers on the net - and you do need to watch out for such people. However, there are equally dangerous people at school, work or church. I'll end this thought by bastardizing another over-used phrase. The net doesn't kill people; people kill people.

Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to meet Broopy face-to-face. However, I will never say that I didn't meet her in "real-life."

Goodbye, Broopy.



Girl In A Bar By Hilary Foster

A guy met this girl in a bar and asked, "May I buy you a drink?"

"Okay. But it won't do you any good."

A little later, he asks, "May I buy you another drink?"

"Okay. But it won't do you any good."

He invites her up to his apartment and she replies, "Okay. But it won't do you any good."

They get to his apartment and he says,

"You are the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. I want you for my wife."

She says, "Oh, that's different. Send her in."

(Submitted off the net by Lauren Robison)

AEGIS, ITA Initiate Merger Negotiations

AEGIS Internet News -- 16 January, 1998

(Submitted off the net by Gary Bowen and Gwen E. Smith)

WASHINGTON, DC and ATLANTA, GA -- The Boards of Directors of two national transgender organizations, the American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc. (AEGIS) and It's Time, America! (ITA) are pleased to announce that they have initiated serious discussions in pursuit of a merger of the two groups, with the intention of creating a new organization designed to meet the changing educational and advocacy needs of the transsexual, transgender, and other gender-different communities.

The boards recently approved mission and values statements and are working to develop goals and projects to meet the community's needs. To better determine these needs, AEGIS and ITA have developed a survey form which solicits input from all interested persons and care providers. The respective boards hope to reach agreement on this merger in the near future, but in the interim, the independent operations of both organizations will continue.

"I think it's a great idea," replied former ITA president Sarah DePalma when asked by this reporter for comment. "AEGIS and It's Time make a good combination." DePalma also expressed mild surprise at the Dallas Denny's earlier decision to agree to step down, but also commented that Denny had been "disappointed" in the national scene for some time.

The American Educational Gender Information Service has provided a variety of educational resources for professionals, transsexuals, and other persons since 1990. It's Time, America! has advocated on behalf of transgendered and other gender-variant persons through state-level chapters since 1994.

AEGIS Internet News is a service of the American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc.

Pinocchio's Solution

(Submitted by Holly Foster Wilson)

Pinocchio had a human girlfriend who would sometimes complain about splinters whenever they had sex. Pinocchio, therefore, went to visit Gepetto to see if he could help.

Gepetto suggested he try a little sandpaper wherever indicated and Pinocchio skipped away enlightened.

A couple of weeks later, Gepetto saw Pinocchio bouncing happily through town and asked him, "How's the girlfriend?"

Pinocchio replied, "Who needs a girlfriend?"

TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- One last reminder to all TATS members, board members and officers...the semi-annual board meeting will be held at Michelle Myers' place on Sunday, February 15 at 1:00 PM. All TATS officers and board members are expected to attend. However, any members not elected to the board may also attend, it is open to all TATS members. This will be the first of the two meetings for this term year to discuss the agenda for the group for the remainder of the term.
- **February 28 TATS MEETING LOCATION CHANGE....** The fourth Saturday meeting will not be held at my home as usual, but instead will be held at Stephanie Brooks' apartment. Schedule conflicts require me to represent GCTC at a Texas T Party function in San Antonio that evening. The March schedule will then return to what will be the normal schedule of Stephanie's place on the 2nd weekend, and my house on the 4th weekend of the month.
- Speaking of the Texas T Party, it will be taking place Feb. 26 through March 1 at San Antonio's Airport Hilton. It's open to all trans-folk and their spouses / S.O.'s, etc. If you plan on attending, time is short to get those reservations in. Contact Texas T Party at P O Box 17, Bulverde, TX 78163 or Email them at: TXTP@aol.com. Anyone for T...?
- And on the subject of trans conventions...True Spirit Conference kicks off on February 20. The three day conference, hosted by American Boyz, is for all gender variants in the F2M spectrum and their S.O.'s, family and friends. Being held at the Best Western-Maryland Inn in Laurel, MD, the conference will feature numerous speakers and programs focused on F2M issues. Contact American Boyz/True Spirit Conf., P O Box 1118, Elkton, MD, 21922-1118 or Email them at: Transman@netgsi.com.
- Another reminder...MCCR hosts a support group meeting every third Tuesday of the month. Empowerment for Living is a weekly program that has expanded their third Tuesday program to feature a transgender support group, among others. The schedule includes discussions, pot luck dinners, and frequently brings in guest speakers. In fact, if a participant wants to bring in their own guest speaker, they may do so. One need not be a member of MCCR to attend. Jessica Wicks is the organizer for the transgender support group. For more info, contact her via Email at: JessicaW3@aol.com.
- Lucent Technologies Protects Transgendered Employees...It's Time, Ohio! is pleased to announce that Lucent Technologies has adopted an Equal Employment Opportunity policy statement that includes protection for transgendered and intersex employees. In the EEO policy statement, Rich McGinn, president and CEO of Lucent Technologies, said "Demonstrated commitment to equal opportunity is an investment in our people and our future growth. Consequently, a company that attracts, selects, develops

and retains the best will remain the industry leader. Lucent's ongoing efforts in this direction will provide us with a critical, competitive advantage in the marketplace."

The policy's new wording protects transsexuals ('gender identity'), intersexed ('gender characteristics') and crossdressers ('gender expression'.) as well as protecting people whose gender presentation is nontraditional, including masculine women and feminine men. Lucent's policy is to "...prohibit unlawful discrimination or harassment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, citizenship, sex, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, one's status as a special disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era, or because of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity characteristics or expression, in any employment decision or in the administration of any personnel policy." Kudos to Crystal Club member Mary Ann Harris of Columbus, OH who single-handedly instigated and succeeded in changing Lucent's employment policy nationwide.

• **F2M May Sue For Custody...** In November a superior court judge in Orange County, CA ruled that new man, Joshua Vecchione, may fight for custody of his child. Vecchione's estranged wife, Kristie, had sued for sole custody on the grounds that, since her husband was once a woman, under California law (which doesn't recognize same-sex marriage) the marriage was invalid and should be annulled.

Judge Gary P. Ryan ruled that Joshua was indeed a man under California law, which recognizes the new gender of all transsexual persons. Joshua, (who had surgery 20 years ago) and Kristie were married in Laguna Hills, CA three years after meeting at a sign-language class. Their daughter was conceived via artificial insemination with sperm donated by Joshua's brother. In a statement from Mr. Vecchione, issued by the ACLU, he was "thrilled" by the ruling. "I feel like a person now." Ms. Vecchione is considering her options, which could include an appeal before the custody case goes to trial.

• **Transsexual sues over sex change....**In a story culled from Renaissance News & Views, Rebecca Luther (formerly known as Joseph Luther) won a suit against his therapists for allowing him to obtain SRS. A Delaware County, PA jury awarded the plaintiff only \$4,612 in damages however, deciding that part of the blame lied with Luther who never completed her RLT (living at least a year full-time as a female).

Luther's lawyer argued that her therapists should have never have counseled Luther (since they were not trained to deal with gender identity disorders. Furthermore they argued they should never have recommended Luther for SRS, and should have warned her surgeon that Luther was sometimes suicidal. "This is a very sad case," said Carol Cobb-Nettleton, a GID specialist who testified she had attempted to dissuade Luther from undergoing surgery. "It's a tragedy."

• Spring is here and the 1998 Unity Banquet is just around the corner. Planning is in the preliminary stages, but the consensus taken by the host organi-

zation, GCTC, has determined that this year's banquet will be sometime in May and will be held somewhere inside the Loop. More details to come....

• Forwarded by Dana Priesing of GenderPAC in Washington DC....Preliminary plans have been made to hold this year's GenderPAC lobbying event April 19-21. Instead of one or two specific items, numerous items are being considered with less of a lobbying approach and more of a 'Capitol Hill education' approach. Additionally plans are to meet with student activists from DC area universities to try to include them in our education and lobbying efforts. For details contact Dana via Email: Dpriesin@earthlink.net.

• ICTLEP welcomes their newest Director, Dana Turner of New York City. She is the attorney who produced the "Legal Issues for Transgender People of Color" at our 5th and 6th ICTLEP Conferences. Dana's portfolio will be "Development Director"....

• Forwarded from Phyllis Frye....A new P-FLAG booklet regarding transgressors is out and for sale. The 14 page booklet from P-FLAG entitled "Our Trans Children is a publication of the Transgender Special Outreach Network (T-SON) of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) It was written by Jessica Xavier, Nancy Sharp and Mary Boenke. These are good folks and know this issue well. For more info, contact Mary Boenke, 180 Bailey Blvd, Hardy, VA 24101 (540-890-3957, or Email her at: maryboenke@aol.com.

• It's only Rock and Roll...and Pluck, and tuck and.... Mick Jagger's in drag again. The ever- animated vocalist took time from the Rolling Stones recent tour to play the role of a crossdressing homosexual in Nazi Germany in a movie currently being filmed. Kinda sounds like a remake of 'Cabaret'. I must admit, he'd do a better job in that part than Joel Grey. But who'd play Liza Minelli's part? How 'bout punker Nina Hagen...?


When asked how he like his part in the still- unnamed movie, Jagger replied, "I always like dressing up like a girl." While not an earth-shattering revelation, he's certainly not denying it either. Bravo!

• Sarah Eris Caffee has had her SRS and it was successful. According to Kristin Ingram, who spoke with her by phone, she was in good spirits and had her mother and sister up in Montreal with her. Our newest 'Menard-girl' should be back in town about now. When you get a chance, give her a call of congratulations, or just to see if she might need anything. I'm sure she'd appreciate it.

• Ray Hill, perennial gay activist, KPFT radio host and longtime friend of the TG community, is in the hospital. He's currently awaiting heart bypass surgery. Our thoughts go out to him for a successful surgery and good health.

• As mentioned last month, the Annise Parker campaign volunteers' appreciation party will be held soon. No definite plans have been made yet, but my sources tell me that the most probable location will be the Lovett Inn just down Lovett Blvd from KPFT. So all you volunteers keep an eye on your mail!

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 M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Texas A & M University 1971
 Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
 Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
 Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
 Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

Areas of Legal Practice:

- Criminal Defense ---
 - Transgender Issues and Documents ---
 - Divorce and Family Issues ---
 - Wills, Power of Atty, "Living" Wills ---
- Although licensed since 1981, I have not taken additional testing, therefore the State Bar requires that I state that I am "Not Certified by the Board of Legal Specialization"

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TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support



Volume 6, Issue 3

Houston, Texas

March, 1998

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.

MAYOR PROCLAIMS EQUALITY IN CITY HIRING ANNISE PARKER PUSHES FOR TG INCLUSION ON HISTORY-MAKING BILL

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

During the February 11 city council meeting, mayor Lee Brown put forth a groundbreaking proclamation stating that city hiring shall not discriminate on the basis of one's sexual orientation. As far as city hiring is concerned, the proclamation was welcome news to the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities. After the mayor made his proclamation public, councilmember Annise Parker asked for an addition to the proclamation to include transgenders as well.

Obviously the GLBT communities are elated at the actions by both mayor Brown and also councilmember Parker. As expected, the

conservatives on city council voiced their displeasure with the measure. Even though this was an executive order -- which does not require a vote; conservative city councilmembers discussed having the issue placed on a referendum for a vote in the next election. Expectedly, their argument was that by having this policy, the city is granting 'special rights' to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. The mayor, however, surprised the council by moving uncharacteristically quickly on the issue. The executive order was drafted by his legal staff and signed into order on Monday, February 16.

There was some initial concern by both councilmember Parker's office, and especially

the local transgender community, as to whether the order would include gender identity protection in its language. Thankfully it did. Though not mentioning gender identity specifically, the text of the order stated no discrimination against those of variant sexual identity, or 'perceived to be' of said sexual identity. The term 'perceived' sexual identity does indeed cover us. Perception is a very broad definition, and covers us in the same way the Minnesota state law covers transgenders. Since most all uninformed heteros group gays and transgenders together, we are similarly protected by that same presumption because of the wording 'perceived to be....'

(Continued on Page 5)

OUT AND ABOUT WITH THE TENNESSEE VALS

By Katrina C. Rose

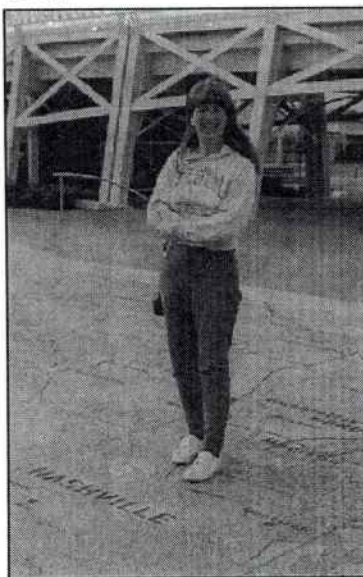
Phyllis Frye and I took a weekend jaunt up to the soon-to-be home of the Oilers. Ostensibly it was for a board meeting of the National Lesbian & Gay Law Association - the Lavender Law folk. And, for Phyllis more so than for myself, it was -- she seemed quite upbeat about what was accomplished. NLGLA is very T-inclusive and that shows no signs of changing.

I could go on about the legal stuff, but I shant. I'd rather talk about people -- specifically, the people we met in Music City. No, we didn't meet up with Grandpa Jones and the remnants of the cast of Hee Haw (although it might have been nice if we'd seen ol' Grandpa -- he died yesterday.) Well, first of all, Phyllis and I met up with another ICTLEP-oid: Melinda Whiteway, who had flown in from California for the law gettogether. But, we all made some new acquaintances as well: our hostesses for the weekend -- members of

the Tennessee Vals, central Tennessee's gender group.

Melinda and I stayed with Jennileigh Love and her two adorable cats (just call us the Catwomen) while Phyllis eschewed the meow-

(Continued on Page 5)



^ Katrina Rose in front of the Bicentennial Mall in Nashville.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- March 14 Social Meeting at: Stephanie Brooks' @ 3:00 PM
- March 28 Un-Meeting at Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM
- April 11 Social Meeting at: Stephanie Brooks' @ 3:00 PM
- April 25 Un-Meeting at Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 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) 827-5913 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

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:
http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

We are truly living in special times. The city seems to be approaching boom status again and, in fact, the national economy is going great guns. Our national deficit is decreasing as a result of the increased economic action. Wages are rising, while inflation and interest rates are flat or are even decreasing slightly. It's enough to make you pinch yourself.



Unfortunately some of us were pinching ourselves only to find this was all a dream...a dream only being shared by the non-transgendered of society. Until recently, I was one of the number not sharing in that dream. The economy is so good though, that even TG's are finding work -- including myself. Had it not been for a good economy, where would we be right now? Chances are, right where we were previously -- in pretty tenuous circumstances. While some companies (such as Lucent Technologies mentioned in last month's issue) are moving forward in their policies regarding the GLBT community, it is unfortunately still the exception rather than the rule.

The lead story in this issue detailed the mayor's executive order to end discrimination in the city's hiring practices. This, of course, is a monumental occasion for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. While this is limited only to municipal employment, and has certainly not been written into a public ordinance, it is far and away better than anything we have ever had before. This is an excellent first step in (hopefully) an eventual citywide ordinance similar to what a few other localities around the nation have already enacted.

Mayor Lee Brown and (especially for the transgender community) councilmember Annise Parker both came through for our community. They both should be highly commended on their courageous stand for what is right over what might be viewed more politically expedient.

As I listened to Mayor Brown's acceptance speech on inauguration day, I paid particular attention to his promise to give all Houstonians the chance to share in the dream. I wanted to see

whether he would make good on his promise, or let it conveniently fade from memory. During her campaign, Annise also made no secret of the fact she was going to represent the gay, lesbian and transgendered communities. As we all know, political rhetoric is easy -- putting it into action is quite another matter. Many a politico -- even our current 'liberal' president -- have made campaign promises, only to recoil from them when the heat became too intense.

To be sure, there was the obligatory heat from the opposition. The day after the mayor's announcement, the conservative ideologues from talk radio ridiculed the move. Talk radio's Dan Patrick and Jon Matthews blasted their myopic views over KPRC, taking particular aim at Annise Parker's support for TG's. Dan Patrick said it was bad enough to have a measure to protect gays, but Annise had to add in protection for us "men in dresses." Jon Matthews continued with his tirade the next day, defining transgendered to his audience as "those men who take hormones to grow breasts." It's obvious that these two would oppose anti-discrimination -- they don't even know what discrimination is, except for something they can enforce upon others at their leisure. You can bet your last dollar neither of these two have ever been on the receiving end of severe, much less economic, discrimination.

Mayor Lee Brown and councilmember Annise Parker both put doing what's right over taking the path of least resistance. Few in political office ever take a stand that might jeopardize a reelection. For the most part, our political representatives are all gutless wonders whose primary concern is protecting their own self interest. What the mayor and Annise did is indeed *true integrity* -- more than any of their critics could ever muster. Let their critics wag tongues: Integrity always outshines rhetoric!

(Continued on Page 7)

A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

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Michelle's Musings - This is My Desk *by Michelle Myers*

The board meeting occurred on February 15, 1998. I thought you might be interested in a summary of what was discussed. As you all should be aware, we run the board meetings on the basis of consensus. Therefore, there was no voting on any particular items, just a affirmation that we were all in general agreement on where we thought TATS should be expending the energy of its membership. The following is not necessarily the order in which we discussed each item; I have attempted to group items into some reasonable order to make the reading a bit more understandable.

The **overall direction** that we see TATS heading in the near future is to continue trying to retain the feeling and intimacy of a small group of individuals while at the same recognizing that we are and want to continue growing in numbers. This will be a real balancing act and will take the efforts of the entire membership. First and foremost we should make every effort to continue the exchange of experiences and helpful suggestions within the membership. We should pay particular attention to new or prospective members and the family and friends and significant others of our membership.

Support efforts for the membership is the primary mission of TATS. For family, friends and significant others we are trying to employ the expertise of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). Although TATS can do a lot to make family and friends feel welcome to participate in and become informed about the path we are individually on, there is only so much that we can do ourselves. PFLAG has been of working in this area for years. Paula S. and I are setting up the first meeting with the Houston chapter of PFLAG and anyone interested in joining us can contact either me or Paula.

As most of you are aware, TATS has done and will continue to do **sensitivity training** for employers who are interested in learning more about "What is a

Transsexual?."

We discussed the feedback on the **meetings content**. I am pleased that we are moving to the larger venue of Stephanie's apartment. That, coupled with Vanessa's home, will allow more diversity of activities during a given meeting. We may also wish to provide selected information or educational exchange sessions within a meeting. These are your meetings, and except for the few minutes that we spend conducting needed business, it is up to each of the membership to initiate those activities that they wish to see.

The **TATS Library** is still in need of cataloging. We have begun this effort but are a long way from being finished. The intent is to have a list that is available to all members so that they know what is and is not in the library. If published material would help a member or the membership in general we plan to make several modest purchases for the library this year. At the present time there are approximately 7 people who have things out on loan from the library. It is encouraging that some of you are using the TATS Library.

Outreach is also a vital effort to attract new members and a diverse membership. We are now participating with GCTC in their **ULTRA Meetings** on the first and third Thursday of each month. This participation is via members who belong to both GCTC and TATS. We are also working with the other gender groups in the community with a particular emphasis on HCDA (Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous). HCDA runs a discussion group on gender issues and the personal feelings associated with them. HCDA meets every Tuesday between 7 and 9 PM at Susanne Anderson's which is located at 239 Westheimer. TATS continues to be mentioned every Saturday on **Afterhours** during the "News with Big Roy and Michelle" segment at approximately 1:30 AM on your community radio station **KPFT - 90.1 FM**.

We continue to run TATS information in several of the national magazines like **Transgender** (formerly *Tapestry*). In addition, we are in **Out Smart** and a few other local publications. In the next few months we will get into the **Houston Voice** and **Lesbian and Gay Voices** community calendars. We have also decided to have TATS in the **Gay Pride Parade Calendar of Events** for this year.

Alexandra is maintaining the **TATS Line** (Voice Mail). This continues to be an important contact point for the community. Those who call and can be taken care of right away, Alexandra takes care of on the spot. For those who need more information or directions to a meeting or face-to-face discussion, Alexandra is passing them on to other members, primarily officers and board members.

The **TATS Newsletter** continues to be the primary means of keeping our organization in front of the community. It is a quality publication and tries to reflect the thoughts, feeling and dreams of the membership. If you would like to see a change in the content or tone of the Newsletter, that is easy to accomplish; just submit an article. We have agreed to continue publishing all articles submitted by the members on as timely a basis as possible. We are currently running 10 or 12 pages per month and will pay the incremental \$23 per month that this size takes in postage. We have a production run of 140 copies per month. Approximately 70 of these are to members, advertisers and supporters who contribute to the Newsletter via the Newsletter fee. Approximately 15 are sent as complementary copies to various people in the community and another 30 are exchanged with other organization that have newsletters or other information that may be a benefit to the membership. The remaining 25 are used by me and several others in our outreach efforts.



THE JOB HUNT *By Stephanie Brooks*

Well, I have never submitted an article to the newsletter, so I thought that I might contribute this month. I have gone through one of the most difficult times of this entire process, the true transition. I thought being part-time / full-time was great -- wow!!! There is no comparison. Anyway, I started looking for a new position when my old employer suggested that I might be better off at some other company, because I seemed so unhappy. Funny, I didn't think he cared. What a surprise.

So I started looking for a new job with an old name. After about three months I realized that that was not going to work. Would you believe people think TS's are not normal? So I got my name change, quite a great story in itself. I don't need to elaborate on that as I'm sure that I

have told everyone who would listen. So now I was legally a female (Wow, I still can't believe it) and did not have to tell anyone. My decree was signed Jan. 5th, on the following Sunday I went through the paper, located about 100 possible positions and faxed my resume to them all by Sunday night. I wanted to be first in line. On Monday I called the companies to find out who the human resources manager was. On Tuesday I would call and ask for that person to follow up and verify that they had received my resume. While on the phone, I would ask specifics and ask when I could interview with them (most of them liked my enthusiasm and gave me an appointment on the spot.) I scheduled all of my interviews for Thursday and took the day off. The perfect suit, a notepad, and a big smile and too many interviews later here I am at my desk typing this. Life can be awesome!!!

I spent a lot of time looking for a job and learned more than I cared to know about it, but here are a few suggestions that I was told:

Get your name change. Create a unique resume, create a very professional fax cover letter. Find a fax that you can access on Sunday, you need to be first. I was told that for most ads a company may receive more than 100 resumes by Monday morning. Follow up. I can't stress this one enough, they want enthusiasm. And smile, smile, smile, because life will get better! I promise. Best of luck...Stephanie



KEEPING A ROMANCE AS A TRANSGENDER

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The previous installment of this article studied how to attract a romance as a transsexual individual. In this article we will explore the ways that relationships with transsexual partners keep their specific romances vibrant.

Before I go much further, I want to make sure that folks realize that there are still problems even in TG relationships. Nowhere is this more true than when a spouse or significant other begins a partnership unknowing of the 'other person' hidden inside the person they grew to love. Once that revelation occurs, the dynamics of the relationship change ... sometimes drastically.

Symbiotic relationships such as TG and non-TG pairings aren't always easy to find, much less keep. This is true for both TG's attracted to the opposite sex *or* the same sex of their own at birth. It's also oftentimes hard to find anyone outside the realm of transgenderdom who can truly relate to our condition. Small wonder then that a noticeable number of trans-folk find comfort and companionship in the arms of another transgender.

For the couples interviewed who began in 'traditional' relationships, there were occasional problems in the beginning getting over the transgender issue. Trish Frye mentioned that there were problems in their marriage early on -- especially before Phyllis confided in Trish. Phyllis was not an easy person to live with days before before transition. Patty Gallagher said that there were problems that nearly broke apart their marriage after the initial transition. "I didn't know anything about the crossdressing until ten years into our marriage" she stated. "As [Marie] got closer to the idea of transitioning, it got more difficult -- which was a process that lasted for about 4 years. The reason I was considering divorce is because I was worried about pressure from the rest of society and I was worried about having to live this very...unconventional lifestyle." Getting by the turbulent phase was attributed to being "best friends" according to Marie. "And we kept talking... It helped that we loved each other...for non-sexual reasons. Sexuality was not really a large part of our relationship." Added Patty, "I always loved her as a person."

Some of the relationships had no problems concerning the transgender issue. Valerie "didn't find it difficult, because I really don't judge people on that level. When he told me, it was like, 'Okay...'" Her mate Chris concurred, saying, "I was very honest with her right up front. She knew about me before there was any

interaction, because if I was going to...be in a relationship, then I felt that would be the most important thing. And what is the basis of any relationship? It's honesty and trust."

"I knew Sarah was transsexual when I met her," stated Lori Rice who, regardless of others' questions about her 'lesbianism' with Sarah, never considered it an issue. "I don't think of Sarah as transgendered, I don't think of Sarah as anything but Sarah. And she's mine." Along the same lines, Crystal Erwin related, "I don't see genders. I see people for people. Falling in love with somebody is not falling in love with a gender, whether the person be male, female, transgendered, polygendered, or whatever. It doesn't matter. It's what a person's spirit is that attracts me to a person -- a person's energy. The essence of the person is what I find attractive." Punctuating that thought, Kim Hofeling added a quote from her friend Alexandra D. Lerma, "Love has no gender."

Responses on how they keep their current relationships vibrant -- and their romance ever-kindled -- varied as one might expect:

PATTY: We still don't know physically how its gonna play out... I've been saying to Marie ... [that] after surgery 'I don't know how I'm gonna react to this.' So we're experimenting physically. [But] the attraction between us is almost like a partnership. People compared us...to brother and sister. I don't even question that the marriage would break up.

CRYSTAL: You've gotta keep spontaneity in the relationship. You don't let it become mundane.... You have to interject something often. We'll do things out of the clear blue sky for each other without rhyme or reason. She may come home some night [to] candlelight and music.... Just something to keep it from being routine.

JESSICA: We talk a lot. When we have things we've get past, we get past them, whatever it is. We pull to that energy, that force that holds us together...and that is the liveliest energy in the world. When you can just tap into the love energy, it happens. It's a beautiful thing.

PHYLLIS: We're always hugging, we're always kissing.

TRISH: And we pick on each other a lot.

PHYLLIS: And we pick on each other....

TRISH: In a good way -- not in a bad way. And we fluff each other up. That's very important -- to say, 'You're special...you're neat,'....

PHYLLIS: We never put [each other] down.

TRISH: No, never. Ever.

PHYLLIS: And ... we don't let the other person put themselves down.

TRISH: Even if you're negative and you only say you're teasing, the underlying current is still there.

PHYLLIS: On a daily basis we always build each other up. We always accentuate the good features....

TRISH: That's not to say we don't disagree, but when we do disagree it's, 'I don't agree with what you're saying.' But it's not nag, nag, nag or whine, whine, whine. It's 'We need to have a talk. Sit down, I've got something to say to you.'

PHYLLIS: We kiss a lot. We never leave the house without giving the other one a kiss.

TRISH: We always see each other off too. We never take each other for granted -- even after all this many years.

PHYLLIS: We always snuggle, and we won't go to bed mad at each other. We just won't do it.

CHRIS: [It] is a very natural thing if you're very intimate. We take a lot of baths together. There's not any one part where we set aside where we're intimate. Because intimacy is not sex. Sex is an expression of intimacy, but it goes way beyond that. Just washing dishes together, or doing little ... things together, to me that's very intimate. Talking, conversation, laying in bed, holding each other, taking a bubble bath.

VALERIE: Talking a lot. I love it when we take baths together and... talk.

CHRIS: And shopping. You love to shop. (Laughs)

VALERIE: We have our rough spots too. Sometimes we need space. And I do too, but for me it was hard to understand that. I wanted to cling, and grab, hold.... And he was kinda like, 'I need space....' We'll take like a few minutes and walk away, and then we'll come back and we'll talk about it.

CHRIS: At least we don't have to argue about it. If I've got nothing good to say -- I don't want to talk. Why throw my trash mouth, whatever, out there? If there's love there, and you feel the love is strong, you've just got to get past that turbulent part. Which is something that was not at all [present] in the first part of our relationship. All of a sudden you've got all these emotions... running around rampant, and you don't know how to put a handle on them. But then you stop and think about it, 'what's most important here...?'

(Continued on Page 6)

UNITY BANQUET PLANS SET

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

As president and official spokesperson for the Gulf Coast Transgender Community, I hereby announce final plans for the 1998 Unity Banquet. This year's event -- hosted by GCTC -- will be held Saturday, May 9 at 6:30 PM. The location this year will be Riva's Restaurant at 1117 Missouri @ Yoakum in the Montrose. (Riva's is located one block west of Montrose Blvd. and two streets north of Westheimer Rd.) Many of you who were involved in the Annise Parker campaign will remember this as the site of the Victory Party on election night.

Ticket prices are \$14 each for advance-purchase tickets which are available now through April 25 (see Michelle Myers or Arwen Schiesler for tickets.) After April 25, ticket prices will be \$21 each and available only through GCTC or purchased at the door the night of May 9.

The menu this year will feature Italian cuisine, including penné pasta with a pink shrimp sauce, lasagna, cheese ravioli (for the vegetarians among us), a rice & vegetable dish, Italian salad, garlic bread and soft drinks. There is also a cash bar on premises for those who care to partake. Riva's is very trans-friendly, and manager Mike Sibouyeh is an absolute sweetheart. He and his staff will strive to make this a wonderful night for all. We look forward to seeing you all May 9 at Riva's! *Mangia!*

OUT AND ABOUT....

(Continued from Page 1)

ing and enjoyed the hospitality of Marissa Richmond, who has no cats but does have a rather large library of gender-related materials (hmmm...the cats don't help me in the way of research, but the books don't purr -- twas a tough choice, but I did have to go with the purrballs.)

I spent most of my time wandering around the campus of Vanderbilt University (the law conference was being held at the Vandy law school.) It was too cold (upper 20's but no snow -- I wanted to see some snow sooooooo bad!) for me to worry about possible reactions of college students to lil' ol' me. In fact, maybe I've completely turned the corner on this issue - I was actually disappointed by the NON-reaction of the one person I bumped into who found me out. I choose those words carefully - 'found me out' as opposed to 'read me.' Upon purchasing some stuff at the Vandy bookstore with my credit card, I had to show an ID. Well, I have no femme ID yet, so this pimply-faced kid -- probably a freshman -- gets to see a pic of the old me -- REALLY ancient, as in circa 1990. He didn't even blink -- just "thank you ma'am." As oblivious as this kid was to everything, what I'm most disappointed at is the fact that his voice didn't sound like the one teenager that seems to work at every Krusty Burger in The Simpsons' universe. Had if he had, the scene would have been complete. Oh well.

As I said, I won't delve into the details of the legal stufh, but I will highlight a lunch that I had with a bunch of the NLGLA folk other than Phyllis and Melinda. Twas at a place about two blocks from Vandy called Nashville (yes, thats the correct spelling), an 'authentic' New York, Jewish deli -- only in Nashville. Poor Nashville -- they weren't expecting this: a dozen-plus lesbigratr lawyers / law students, all of whom but me were either Jewish or from New York (or

both.) As for 'authentic'? Well, the accents of the waiters were definitely Nashville, not Nashville (in fairness, though, the food was pretty good.)

On Saturday night (following a wonderful homecooked spaghetti dinner at Marissa's) we all went to a big shindig at the Botannical Hall at Cheekwood (the Nashville equivalent of the River Oaks country club) benefitting The Center, a GLBT meeting place. As you might imagine from 'benefitting,' this was a fundraiser and there were various activities designed to accomplish that. One was a bacheloe / bachelorette auction. No, I didn't get auctioned (like anyone would buy me; if you buy me you get my student loan debt along with me -- I ain't worth it) but Jennileigh was bachelorette No. 5. This was conducted via silent auction and Jennileigh did say that she'd gotten a few bids, but I haven't gotten an update as to what she ultimately went for.

The Cheekwood shindig was not a cheap affair -- the hefty ticket price served double duty: helping The Center and giving you access to an endless array of sweet stuff -- a sampling of the best cakes and pies that nashville had to offer (I OD'd on a piece of chocolate cake.) However, as visiting TG dignitaries the Vals got us in for free. Thanks again, Vals. Y'all were wonderful. Once again, being a part of the T community has allowed me to meet some wonderful folx who I would have NEVER met otherwise. the 'family values' crowd should take a lesson here -- but they won't; they're too busy stealing our rights.

Oops -- there's that pesky soapbox again. With that, I'll close with a simple MEOW!

EQUALITY IN CITY HIRING....

(Continued from Page 1)

This is a history-making event for our community. Only once have gays and lesbians here been extended rights, just to have it taken away shortly after in a referendum vote. Even worse, transgenders have never even been considered worthy of extending any rights before. Now we stand on the cusp of a new era. While these rights are not guaranteed to remain permantly, we can at least take comfort in the fact that we've been given that first brick upon which to build. We need to make sure to protect what gains we've received, and continue our progress towards full acceptance.



WASHINGTON REVERSES LANGUAGE ON TYRA HUNTER SUIT

WASHINGTON DC -- In January the D.C. Corporation Counsel (Washington's city attorneys) agreed to withdraw language that the city's Fire Department is exempt from the D.C. Human Rights Act, which bans discrimination based on sexual orientation, personal appearance, and other classifications. But D.C. Corporation Counsel John Ferren declined to drop language from the brief that contends that a city emergency medical technician had a "First Amendment right" to shout derogatory names at the victim, Tyra Hunter, in a 1995 car crash in Northeast D.C. after he discovered the victim was a man dressed in women's clothes.

Ferren's office filed the legal brief last December as part of the city's response to a \$10 million wrongful death lawsuit brought by the mother of Tyrone "Tyra" Hunter, a 26-year-old transsexual who was killed in the car crash. Margie Hunter, charges in her suit that her son suffered damages in two separate incidents related to the car crash -- discriminatory treatment by the emergency medical technician at the scene of the accident and faulty medical treatment at D.C. General Hospital. Ms. Hunter's suit asserts that it was the faulty and negligent treatment at the hospital that actually led to her son's death.

At a press conference Wednesday, Jan. 28, representatives of local Gay and transgender groups said they are concerned that the city has decided to allocate funds to contest the Hunter lawsuit rather than agree to an out-of-court settlement. Darren Buckner, president of the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals, said the language in the court brief came at a time when the Fire Department has yet to fulfill a longstanding promise to provide Gay and transgender sensitivity training for all firefighters and emergency medical technicians. Buckner noted that activists believe the emergency medical technicians mistreated Gays in at least one other case involving a Dupont Circle assault against a Gay man.



KEEPING ROMANCE AS A TG

(Continued from Page 4)

You can't be full of pride -- not that pride isn't a very good thing. But when you move into the ego, and you're only serving yourself and satisfying oneself, then that's what kills a relationship. And not just a relationship with your partner or spouse, but a relationship with everyone else. You can't be so self-centered that you lose...your ability to care for others.

VALERIE: And we've been together for a year and a half. But we've come such a long way.

CHRIS: And now we can use our intuition and our similarities to our advantage. We can pick up on when something's wrong, instead of attacking each other....

KIM: We do things together and we have time apart. Our jobs kinda keep us apart a lot. As the old saying goes 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder.'

JORI: If we have disagreements, try not to go to bed mad at each other.

KIM: That's the biggest thing, is not being mad at each other and not letting it come between each other.

JORI: Don't be afraid to talk about it if you feel something's not right. Before it gets outta hand, you don't talk about it...and before long you've got so many issues to deal with....

KIM: Also... just little things that you do to let the other partner know you think about them, and care about them, and that you love them. Maybe a phone call in the afternoon from work...it doesn't have to be something spectacular.

SARAH: We laugh a lot. It's the truth, we have a lot of fun. Lori's sense of humor is really kind of 'off the wall.' That's probably the prime thing. If you can't laugh, you're in trouble.

LORI: And I have to say that teddy bears are a big part of it.

SARAH: Yeah. Any relationship has to have teddy bears in it.

SARAH: The two things that have gotten us through is #1 a sense of humor and #2 be honest. The best things about Lori is I never have to wonder, "what does she mean, really? what does she think?" Lori is just straightforward, no pretense. She says what she means and she means what she says. A lot of people can't take that.

LORI: I think love and cuddling and surprises are important too...sometimes Sarah drags me out for a slow dance out here in the hallway. A lot of touching and holding. And we hold hands a lot. We just show a lot of love....

In general, the primary characteristics that attract and keep others seem to be very basic: honesty, understanding, spontaneity, affection, a need for intimacy at times -- and at others a

need for space, relaxing and being your true self, and open communication. These traits are truisms even for non-transgenders -- they're universal. While many times we're frustrated at our inability to find a 'true love,' as often as not it's due to our past experience which jades us towards romance. We can oftentimes be our own worst enemy. If there is a way to find a path to romantic bliss, it is likely found in the words of our interviewees. Though none of those interviewed are counselors, the wisdom of experience always outshines professional advice. Just be patient, and be open to whenever and wherever love takes you.

A lot of components go together to make a successful relationship or romance. There's no one particular way to succeed, in fact it's subjective to the individuals involved: what works with one person may not work at all with another. It ultimately takes trial and error -- don't overly fret when you err, but (as it says in the root of the word 'trial') ... *try*.

WASHINGTON STATE BANS GAY MARRIAGE

Submitted off the net by Lauren Robison

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) -- Washington lawmakers have banned gay marriage in a choreographed action that included a quick veto by Democratic Gov. Gary Locke and an override by bipartisan super-majorities in both houses. Even longtime backers of gay rights pronounced themselves satisfied with the result, since it avoids a potentially divisive November referendum. Gay Rep. Ed Murray said he and other foes will turn to the courts. Washington is now the 27th state with such a ban. The bill defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman and says the state will refuse to recognize any same-gender marriages performed elsewhere.

Little Red Riding Hood - Revisited

Submitted off the net by Holly Foster Wilson

Little Red Riding Hood was walking through the woods when suddenly the Big Bad Wolf jumped out from behind a tree and, holding a machete to her throat, said, "Red, I'm going to screw your brains out!"

To that, Little Red Riding Hood calmly reached into her picnic basket and pulled out a .45 magnum and pointed it at him and said, "No you're not! You're going to eat me, just like it says in the book!"

Quotes On Marriage....

"Many a man owes his success to his first wife, and his second wife to his success."

- Jim Backus

"I recently read that love is entirely a matter of chemistry. That must be why my wife treats me like toxic waste."

- David Bissonette

"I've sometimes thought of marrying, and then I've thought again."

- Noel Coward, 1956

"A man is incomplete until he is married. After that, he is finished."

- Zsa Zsa Gabor

"I'm an excellent housekeeper. Every time I get a divorce, I keep the house."

- Zsa Zsa Gabor

"When a man steals your wife, there is no better revenge than to let him keep her."

- Sacha Guitry

"Marriage is like pi -- natural, irrational, and very important."

- Lisa Hoffman

"She's a lovely person. She deserves a good husband. Marry her before she finds one."

- Oscar Levant to Harpo Marx upon meeting Harpo's fiancée

"Eighty percent of married men cheat in America. The rest cheat in Europe."

- Jackie Mason

"Marriage is like a cage; one sees the birds outside desperate to get in, and those inside desperate to get out."

- Montaigne

"After marriage, husband and wife become two sides of a coin; they just can't face each other, but still they stay together."

-- Hemant Joshi

"By all means marry. If you get a good wife, you'll be happy. If you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher...and that is a good thing for any man."

- Socrates

"A successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend. A successful woman is one who can find such a man."

- Lana Turner

"Marriage is a great institution, but I'm not ready for an institution."

- Mae West





ENCHANTED FOREST

... By Marti Bennett

Hello again, this is Marti back with a new set of thoughts and observations about walking the trails of the Enchanted Forest. The first thing which I would like to say is that I am sorry that my column for last months newsletter didn't make it into Vanessa's e-mail box in time to be printed, in fact, it never showed up there at all. I know that this is probably the lamest sounding thing that you have heard in a long time, which just goes to prove that the truth can be the strangest story of them all. About the twentieth of last month I wrote my submission and e-mailed it away and it was never heard from again. By the time that I got wind that it hadn't got there it was too late to submit another copy. See, I told you that it was going to sound lame and strange. That is unless you have experienced the whims of the Internet, in that case it will sound perfectly reasonable.

Now to what is happening in my world. In a week or so I have another appointment with my Doctor and I hope that he will give me clearance to start on HRT when I see him. If not on this visit I feel fairly sure that I will get his blessing

on the next one. It seems so strange that something that I have yearned for and denied that I wanted for all of my life is nearly at hand. What I am starting is the most scary thing that I have ever dealt with, I want it desperately and it scares the devil out of me at the same time. As a much better writer than I will ever be once wrote "We must make a Leap of Faith" (Melanie Ann Phillips) to come through this and I think that it is the thinking of that leap that scares me. Being afraid doesn't change my thoughts on what is to come even a little. I have spent too many years afraid and miserable to let a bit of fear deter me at this juncture. I know now that if I persist in what I am doing and where I am going then I will one of these days come down on the other side after the leap of faith.

Most of the news that I have heard is going to be old news by the time that I can talk about it so I am going to limit the news to reporting that Jennifer Rene won the Bustier contest at the Palm Beach Club on 2/14/98 by beating all the other girls there in a costume competition which was put on for the Ladies. One of the funniest

things was when a man made the comment afterward that the contest was for girls and one of our supporters there replied that if there had been any girls there who looked better then they would have won. He said "Maybe I should have worn a bustier" and she shot back "If you could have looked that good, you should have".

Having done my bit for local news coverage I would now like to discuss the world of business. Lucent Technologies has recently announced that they are altering their employment practices to forbid discrimination based on all the standard criteria, however, nestled in among them is Gender Identity. This is a radical new direction for one of the leaders in communication to go. To me it points to the crying need for quality employees with computer skills to fill the high tech jobs that major corporations have begging. Fortunately, a good percentage of the gender gifted community has excellent computer skills and it seems that the employment picture is improving.

Comments, suggestions, or criticisms can be sent to db810@pdq.net.

Women's Health Fair, March 7

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The Lesbian Health Initiative will be sponsoring the third annual Lesbian Health Fair on Saturday, March 7. The Health Fair, open to all women -- including those who self-identify as women, will be held at the city's Multi-Purpose Community Center at 1475 W. Gray (across from the River Oaks Plaza in the Montrose.) Beginning at 9:00 AM and continuing until 5:00 PM, the fair will feature pap smears, mammograms, vision tests and HIV screening.

The Health Fair will also feature programs of interest to women, as well as entertainment. One highlight will be Christine Fusco setting up one booth featuring various spiritual readings, including: tarot cards, astrology, crystal readings, vision readings and energy readings. The cost will be a mere \$10 for a 15 minute session. TATS member Jenifer René will also be there as hostess at Chrissie's booth. Though I wasn't able to confirm at press-time, I believe Deborah Bell will also be at the fair as well, staffing the booth for the Montrose Counseling Center's women's wellness program.

The Lesbian Health Initiative welcomes you all out for a day of education and enlightenment Sat, March 7 for a day at the fair...*Health Fair* that is. Call 713-603-0023 for further information.

EDITOR'S RANT

(Continued from Page 2)

Of course I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Annise's staff for their help on our behalf. Cecily Wynne meticulously compiled all of the research material used, which acted as a trump card to counter any attempts to dissuade the mayor from signing the order. Most especially Kathy Elek, who listened to my urgent pleas the day after the initial press release and who spent quite a bit of time with the mayor's legal staff to educate them about us and ensure we were included in the text of the final draft.

The day after the executive order was signed, I attended the city council meeting along with over a hundred others to speak in favor of, and thank the mayor and Annise for, the non-discrimination policy. The gay and lesbian community showed up in force to show support; however, I was one of only two transgenders to attend the meeting (Leslie Perez-Ayres -- the lone dissenting speaker -- was the other.) Though I was proud to represent the TG community in thanking city council, it would be a much better still if they heard thanks from more than just one person. Please let them know how much we all appreciate their consideration. Take this opportunity to write city hall, or make an appointment to speak as I did. Let them see how many of us support their decision, and how much we care!

My Feelings Inside

By Dianne Boucher

*I once told a friend
"I feel like a woman inside."
She replied with the question
"So how does a woman feel?"*

*I had no answer immediately,
so I started a journey, a mental ride,
exploring my feelings that are so real inside.*

*I did find some answers, though some incomplete.
I soon came to realize each person is different,
each soul is unique.*

*Most things that I like and the way that I am
are thought of by many as quite feminine.*

*I express my emotions and cry easily,
I care about life and most living things,
I love all my family and closest of friends,
I hurt when they hurt, a real pain in my heart,
I cry uncontrollably when a life comes to end.*

*I adore pretty things like ribbons and bows and flowers and lace
and feminine things all over the place,
I enjoy dressing up all pretty and fem,
releasing the chains that hold me within.*

*So I think women feel more compassion and love,
and appreciate life from God up above.
She is mostly caring and usually sharing
and strong when she needs to be.
And she wants to be loved for all that she is!*



My Father's Secret . . . By Donna McCann's daughter

(The following piece speaks for itself. Some of you may know Donna from the meetings at Galveston or from one of the TATS meetings. This is printed with Donna's permission -- Michelle)

It was 11:48 on a Tuesday night in June. I was dazed from staring at the computer screen for hours, alone in Dad's study while everyone slept. I had finished reading the lyrics to a Counting Crow's song -- "Anna Begins" -- when I chanced to look up at a row of books lining the wall shelf. I'm not sure why I read the titles of these books. They had been among the collection of Dad's science fiction, religious literature, and the recently purchased philosophy books for months or, perhaps, years. True Selves, Gender Outlaw, My Husband Wears My Clothes. What strange titles they were. Why hadn't I noticed them before? As I pulled My Husband Wears My Clothes from its place, I touched 2 videos hidden behind it. One of them had a naked woman on the cover, but it wasn't pornographic. It was an educational video to learn how to talk like a woman.

Ashamed shock burned my face. I gripped the edge of the desk to keep from falling as my mind numbed and the lights dimmed. I could no longer here the hum of the Macintosh. Seconds later, the computer clock beeped. It was midnight and the beginning of a glimpse into my father's secret.

It all made sense now: the shoulder length hair that he had paid so much attention to, his assertions that he loved to cook and to clean

(stereotypical women's duties), the blue bag that he carried with his brush and wallet tucked neatly inside, his other log-in name on the internet -- Donna, monthly trips to Galveston. I had thought the long hair to be a mid-life crisis, not this, whatever it was.

This couldn't happen to me, I thought. I had the perfect family: A brother, a sister, both parents, who loved each other dearly, a great house, a dog, and a cat. My mother was a housewife who had cared for us while Dad worked. He'd never been maternal to us in any way, and his mind was intensely analytical, scientific and critical. I saw absolutely no sign of female emotion in him.

My discover seemed like a nightmare at first, but I soon became curious. What exactly was this disease, if it could even be called that, that had made my father act as he did? I began to ignore him because of the apprehension I felt towards this well-kept secret. I had always admired him more than any other individual because of his intelligence. How could an intelligent human being let this happen to himself? Why didn't he tell me? I felt violated and lost all trust in my father.

My younger sister, who was also suspicious, soon made the same connection as I had, and

my own concerns became secondary to her own, as she would have to live with my father for four more years and needed my support. She became my aid in figuring him out by reading the journal he had kept for the past two years on a tiny laptop computer that he'd brought home from work to occupy the corner of his study, despite the presence of a Macintosh on a desk three feet away. For my own part, I found the Estinol he had been taking and did research. To my horror, Estinol was a derivative of estrogen (as I had suspected), and its effects were irreversible after a year. He had been taking the hormone for four months.

According to my father's journal, he thought he suffered from gender dysphoria, and that he was meant to be a woman. According to one of the numerous books he'd read on the subject to diagnose himself, such a mind-set could be caused if a pregnant woman had experienced some type of trauma at a crucial point in the pregnancy. Grandma's first child died while my father was in the womb. He was able to label a lifetime of mental distress, feeling one thing and being another. He was a transsexual and wanted desperately not to just dress like a woman, by to become one.

(Continued on Page 12)

TG THAI KICKBOXER DEBUTS

By Jiraporn Wongpaithoon

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) -- He dresses like a woman and fights like a demon. Pirinya Kaibusaba, a transgendered kickboxer who powders his nose during training, is a big hit.

Before a sellout crowd of 10,000 and despite a cut over his left eye, the 16-year-old sensation convincingly won his Bangkok debut on Tuesday night. He wore makeup and pink nail polish to the weigh-in, where he broke down in tears. Then he went on to pummel Oven So Boonya over five rounds at Lumpini Stadium, the nation's mecca of Muay Thai, or Thai kickboxing.

Pirinya is from Lamphun, about 350 miles north of Bangkok. Before his appearance in the capital, the young welterweight had already compiled a professional record of 20 wins, 2 losses and 17 knockouts in a sport where brutal kicks and elbows to the head are common.

He kissed his opponent after the decision was announced in what appeared sweet revenge for a teasing embrace delivered by Oven just before the fight. Pirinya is prim to a fault, but

the prospect of a cut eye, broken nose or cauliflower ear doesn't faze him. "If I was afraid about my face, I wouldn't fight," he said. Pirinya's medium-length hair is dyed to a reddish tint -- as is fashionable now among Thais of both sexes -- and neatly tied back, about to the nape of the neck.

The weigh-in, where he was 140 pounds, presented Pirinya with his toughest test as a kickboxer. The fighters at Lumpini Stadium must step on the scale completely nude. When ordered to strip in front of a phalanx of Thai and foreign reporters and cameramen, Pirinya dissolved in sobs. Lumpini officials, who are all in the Thai military, eventually showed mercy and let him wear his black jockey shorts.

Although Thai boxers are generally tattooed tough guys from poor farming country or Bangkok slums with a strong sense of machismo, many readily accept Pirinya. "I thought it was strange when I heard there was a transvestite boxer, but I like to see people who like boxing - I don't care who they are," said Pong Sudsaeng, who was also scheduled to fight Tuesday night at Lumpini.

Most Thais, in fact, accept transgenders. Lo-

cally they are called 'katoeys' and are regarded as the third sex. Others have competed in sports successfully. The two best players on Thailand's men's volleyball team were katoeys. However, the volleyball association tossed them off the team in 1996, fearing the response at international matches. Many Thais were surprised to learn not everyone is tolerant of cross-dressing.

Thai kickboxers often take up the sport at 10 or 12 years old, and some headliners at Lumpini are Pirinya's age. Most fight until their late 20s. While children's rights activists decry the violence of kickboxing, none has protested to boxing officials or the government. Officials already have their hands full fighting rampant child labor and trying to free the 300,000 children the United Nations Children's Fund estimates are prisoners in Thai brothels.

As for Pirinya, he isn't dreaming of championships or fame. He says he fights because he likes the "strange feeling" he gets in the ring. "I don't think I'm fighting to be famous. I'd rather have a quiet life," he said. "I'll fight until I get bored with it."

(Submitted off the net by K. Lessing)

PARKER HONORS TATS MEMBER VOLUNTEERS

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Annise Parker held her volunteer appreciation party Sunday, Feb. 22 at the Lovett Inn to say thank you to all of the many individuals involved in making her run for office victorious. The atmosphere was lively as all attending enjoyed the reunion with their campaign family. TATS' Jenifer René and Christine Fusco from Hubbard Financial really went all out in coordinating the affair. Many Montrose-area restaurants and businesses donated the party supplies -- Niko Niko's really went overboard, donating a full six trays of food for the volunteers! Yet another chance for all to, uh...gain a few more pounds - yipe!

The highlight came when Annise honored the top 25 volunteers of her campaign. Lo and behold, TATS members made up nearly 5 of the top volunteers. Annise played the entertaining emcee, quipping about the volunteers awarded that evening. Among the TATS honorees were Jenifer René ("...our 'Vanna White' this evening..."), Daniell McCleney ("...who was up at the campaign a lot -- I'm not exactly sure what she *did* there, but she was up there a lot!"), Katrina Rose -- who was instrumental in getting the bulk of us up there to volunteer in the first place, and myself ("...who practically lived up there...showed up often at first, then started showing up every day. Then finally we said 'Hey! We need to put you in charge....'")

It was a historic campaign not only because of who we helped elect, but also the effort put forth by the local transgender groups. By helping elect a TG friendly member to city council we now see the fruit of those efforts: the recent proclamation protecting the GLBT community. GCTC and TATS had very good representation in the campaign, and it showed during the awards ceremony. TATS especially should be proud of its members' efforts!

Cinderella Goes to the Ball

Cinderella wanted to go to the ball, but her wicked stepmother wouldn't let her. As Cinderella sat crying in the garden, her fairy godmother appeared, and promised to provide Cinderella with everything she needed to go to the ball, but only on two conditions. "First, you must wear a diaphragm." Cinderella agreed.

"What's the second condition?"

"You must be home by 2 a.m. Any later, and your diaphragm will turn into a pumpkin." Cinderella agreed to be home by 2 a.m.



Annise's TATS Team: (seated, L-R) Jenifer René, Annise Parker, Daniell Christian McCleney, Arwen Schiesler; (standing in back L-R) Carey Porter, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Katrina C. Rose and Sarah DePalma represent B of TATS' Parker volunteers.

Daniell McCleney mugs while Annise quips about her campaign efforts. "I'm not sure what she did ... but she was up there a lot!" Daniell was one of four TATS members to receive an honor as one of the Parker campaign's 'top volunteers.

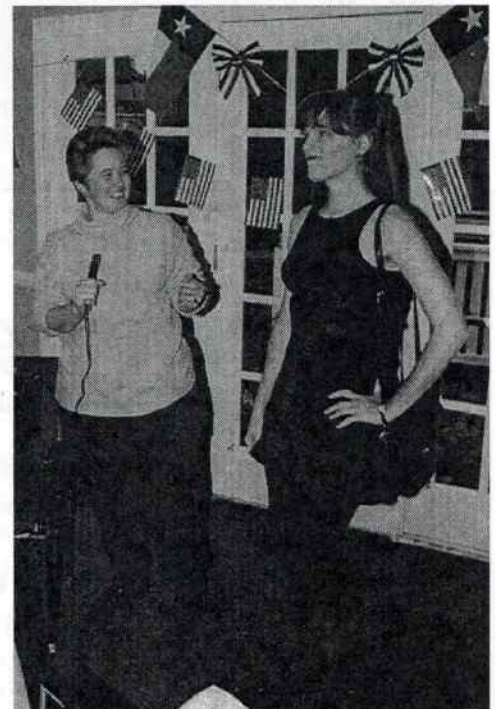
The appointed hour came and went, and Cinderella didn't show up. Finally, at 5 a.m., Cinderella showed up, looking love-struck and very satisfied.

"Where have you been?" demanded the fairy godmother. "Your diaphragm was supposed to turn into a pumpkin three hours ago!!!"

"I met a prince, Fairy Godmother. He took care of everything."

"I know of no prince with that kind of power! Tell me his name!"

"I can't remember, exactly ... Peter Peter, something or other"



"Hear about the woman who sent out five thousand perfumed Valentines signed 'Guess Who?' She's a divorce lawyer...."

Inspirational Advice

Submitted via internet by Holly Foster-Wilson

*Do not undermine your worth by comparing yourself
with others.
It is because we are different that each of us is special.*

*Do not set your goals by what other people deem
important.
Only you know what is best for you.*

*Do not take for granted the things closest to your
heart.
Cling to them as you would your life, for without them,
life is meaningless.*

*Do not let your life slip through your fingers by living in
the past nor for the future.
By living your life one day at a time, you live all the
days of your life.*

*Do not give up when you still have something to give.
Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.*

It is a fragile thread that binds us to each other.

*Do not be afraid to encounter risks.
It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.*

*Do not shut love out of your life by saying it is
impossible to find.
The quickest way to receive love is to give love;
The fastest way to lose love is to hold it too tightly;
The best way to keep love is to give it wings.*

*Do not dismiss your dreams.
To be without dreams is to be without hope;
To be without hope is to be without purpose.*

*Do not run through life so fast that you forget not only
where you have been, but also where you are going.
Life is not a race, but a journey to be savored each step
of the way.*



AN ORCHIECTOMY STORY

By Carey Porter & Phyllis Frye

Hi Friends and neighbors. I found an old E-mail, I received from Phyllis Frye after she had her orchiectomy. She said to feel free to print it in our newsletter, so I thought we might do that now. I have edited it just a tad, but mostly it is as written by Phyllis.

For those who may not be aware, it isn't advisable to stay on elevated doses of estrogen for too long. I believe 5 to 7 years is the most that is recommended. This surgery is an alternative to SRS surgery, but should not be done if SRS is your ultimate goal, because once the surgery has been performed, within a year or so, there won't be much material left to perform SRS with. The operation is basically a form of castration, without the creation of a neo-vagina. So without further ado, here is the operation as told by Phyllis:

"I had the surgery through Sam Axelrad at the Memorial Southwest Professional Bldg. The actual day surgery took place in a surgi-center, just a few blocks away. I made it plain that I did not want to be put under but wanted a spinal block. In the back of my mind was a screw up and waking up with a neo-vagina, and also I don't like to lose control.

"Everyone at the center was great, they had their pronouns correct and treated me and Trish with courtesy and professionalism. I arrived at 6:30 AM, they prepped me with clothing for the "OR," intravenous drip and a crotch shave. The anesthesiologist had to be reminded that I wanted a spinal. It went great, I felt nothing

from the waist down, just like a paraplegic. I chatted with one of the nurses during the surgery. At one point I felt a little pain and they took care of it.

"Dr. Sam made one small incision in the sac and removed both of the testicles. Evidently it is very complicated, because the nerves and the blood supply for them are high into your crotch. I walked out with help at 1:00 PM and went home to rest and recuperate. It was not a big deal for the most part, but at that stage the swelling was huge and the only way to pee was standing up, and leaning forward. It remained swollen for about 4 days. During this time there will also be some bruising. I would have been going on without much of a problem by the third day, except for a problem from the spinal, that I had not been warned about. The spinal can generate some powerful headaches. If you know what they are and take Excedrin, they are very controllable, but if you don't understand what is happening they can be debilitating. After the fourth day of horrible headaches, I called the anesthesiologist, who explained the problem and how to manage it.

"Looking back, I would still take the spinal for the reasons stated originally, but I wish I had started taking the Excedrin when the headaches first appeared. After about two weeks, there was still some minor swelling, but I was able to get around.

"I feel great now and am fully recovered, and as I was before, except I don't have those testosterone producers anymore and I now take only 0.02 mg of Estinyl a day. Total cost for the entire procedure was about \$3500.00."

Nature's Lesson

(The Struggle From Chrysalis To Imago)

Submitted off the net by Lauren Robison

A man found a cocoon of an emperor moth. He took it home so that he could watch the moth come out of the cocoon. On the day a small opening appeared, he sat and watched the moth for several hours as the moth struggled to force the body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no farther. It just seemed to be stuck. Then the man, in his kindness, decided to help the moth, so he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The moth then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the moth because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the little moth spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly. What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the moth to get through the tiny opening was the way of forcing fluid from the body of the moth into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Freedom and flight would only come after the struggle. By depriving the moth of a struggle, he deprived the moth of health. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If we were to go through our life without any obstacles, we would be crippled. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. Give every opportunity a chance, leave no room for regrets.



TATS Tidbits
By Vanessa Edwards Foster

MCCR's Empowerment for Living program has a very special speaker for their first Tuesday program -- Houston city councilmember Annise Parker! Our first 'out and proud' elected official will address the group the evening of Tuesday, March 3. The program begins with the usual pot luck dinner at 6:30 followed by the featured guest speaker at 7:00 PM. MCCR is located at, 1919 Decatur in the Sixth Ward (one street south of Washington.) Please make a point to be there to thank the TG community's best friend in city hall for her efforts to have us included in the most recent order on city hiring practices.

First documented transgendered feline....Bruce the tom cat was in for a routine exam when it was discovered that he had "lumps" on his chest: Each nipple was swollen and filled with milk! Seems Bruce had been given Progestagens to stop him from spraying urine to mark his territory a few months earlier. The progestagens, acting as estrogen would in male humans, feminized Bruce who was now a TG kitty.

The owner reported that Bruce had become more loving and wanted to be held more since the advent of the 'progestagen therapy.' His vet has since cut off his 'mones, so he should be back to his normal urine-spraying self in a few months. Talk about giving your pet a gender identity crisis!

In Athens, Greece, District Attorney Giorgos Sakellaropoulos was disbarred for having an extramarital affair with Jenny Hiloudaki, a high profile transsexual. A majority of Greeks seem to feel the disbarment was unfair. Of 20,000 responses to a television questionnaire, 82% were in support of Sakellaropoulos. The respondents felt that the court would have found things differently if his affair would have been with a genetic female.

Mistress-in-question Hiloudaki admitted to the affair and professed her love for the ousted DA. During a news interview on Athens television, she proposed marriage to Sakellaropoulos. No word on whether Sakellaropoulos accepted. Either way, it's good to see a society that doesn't allow a person's private sex life affect their view of how good a job he or she can do; unlike some countries we know of....

IRA prisoner escapes in drag. While republican prisoners from Maze Prison in Ireland and their families enjoyed a Christmas party, 32 year old IRA gunman Liam Averill walked out of prison unchecked while dressed as a woman. Some one had smuggled in clothing and he changed during the party.

New Haven CT: Gender Talk radio announced last December that a survey given to some 20,000 men showed that of the group over 40 years old, 80% had secretly dressed in woman's clothing at least once. The most common reason given was "to see how it felt...."

Did you know...That in 1955 and 1956 Dodge produced a car especially made for women? It was called the 'La Femme' and was painted pink and white with rosebud upholstery. It came factory equipped with a pink leather purse, pink umbrella, rain hat and rain coat. Between 300 and 1100 of these cars were produced (however, even company archives do not show the exact number made.) If it came with a convertible top, it would've been perfect for 'Too Wong Foo'....

My source at Southern Comfort, Terri Murphy, tells me that they're shooting for a second Southern Comfort conference to be held annually. It's still in the planning stage, but they plan on having the 2nd conference as early as 1999. The location for this 2nd conference? Orlando, Florida! Transgenders and Mickey Mouse...wonder who has the best falsetto?

Pride Parade is coming up the last weekend in June. This year's theme is "Electrified, Diversified, Unified." Being a night parade, you can figure what that means...lights, lights, and more lights.

The Texas Lesbian Conference will be at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel in San Antonio, May 29-31, with the theme of "Creating Balance." Lesbians (including transgenders) are invited to attend, and they are also invited to submit workshop proposals of 150-200 words *no later than 2-28-98*. Send proposals to: TLC '98 Workshop Committee, 5309 McCullough, San Antonio, TX 78212.

Services, etc.

PHYLLIS RANDOLPH FRYE
Attorney and Counselor, and
Licensed Professional Engineer

B.S. Civil Engineering, Texas A & M University 1970
M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Texas A & M University 1971
Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

Areas of Legal Practice:

- Criminal Defense ---
 - Transgender Issues and Documents ---
 - Divorce and Family Issues ---
 - Wills, Power of Atty, "Living" Wills ---
- Although licensed since 1981, I have not taken additional testing, therefore the State Bar requires that I state that I am "Not Certified by the Board of Legal Specialization"

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MY FATHER'S SECRET

(Continued from Page 8)

He told my mother his secret a year before anyone else knew and she was forced to suffer in silence. The next to know were his parents, whom he told three months after I had discovered his situation, and two months after Katie had done the same. He wasn't sure how they would react, as Grandpa is extremely conservative, but they accepted their only living son lovingly. They couldn't turn away their own son because he was the same person, and they understood that nothing could be done to reverse a mental disorder. The day they found out, I lingered in their house after finishing the spaghetti Grandma had boiled for lunch. Staring at the pinkness of my toes against the brown carpet, I casually tried to remark, "So now you know," but my voice cracked, and I cried for the first time in three and a half years as Grandma rocked me in her arms like a child.

I thought that as long as he didn't tell me that the problem didn't exist. He could be cured

because it was a silly game. It was hard for all of us to accept. Grandma blamed the internet, which truly contributed to building my father's confidence as he found others like him. Mom, a pious Catholic, blamed his lack of faith, and tried desperately to bring him back to the Church, any church, by reading aloud from her daily devotional book. I blamed my father. I hated him for threatening our way of life by putting his job in danger, hurting my mother, and being so different. I didn't feel secure anymore because a truth that I had come to believe in -- that my Dad was a typical father -- had been ripped away.

The time inevitably came for him to formally tell me face to face. Handing me a letter, he told me to read it, as an explanation in written form would be easier to comprehend than his own verbal one. As I read, all I could think to do was look for spelling and grammatical mistakes. It still didn't seem real, but when I looked up, Daddy was crying. I knew he had no control over this; that he was

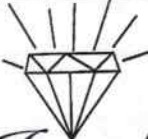
the same person he had always been. He answered my questions and hugged me. "I love you," he whispered. I had waited to hear those words for my entire life. "I love you, too," I said.

How could anyone sit in a motel room, waiting for her parents when they both put on make-up in the bathroom? How could anyone look up at the dinner table to see her father with both ears pierced and his hair neatly pulled back with a purple elastic? How could anyone keep this secret without talking about it to a friend? It's my Daddy, and I love him.

It's hard to judge another person when your father is radically different from other people, so different that only one person in ten thousand is thought to suffer from gender dysphoria. What's color or religion when compared to my father's transexuality? Although it hasn't been easy to accept my father, that's what unconditional love means.



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TATS Newsletter



the Texas Association for Transsexual Support



Volume 6, Issue 4

Houston, Texas

April, 1998

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 SPEAK BEFORE MED STUDENTS AT BAYLOR

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The students sat engrossed in the lecture room. There were precious few impassive faces as the discussion continued, many raised hands and even occasional laughter. Some were in their white lab coats, most in everyday wear not unlike any other campus or classroom; there was nothing to indicate that this class was different from any other class this day – except those seated at the table in the front of the room. The panel holding the discussion before these future physicians was comprised of transsexuals.

In what was a first for the TATS group – and to my knowledge, any transgendered group in Houston – we held our first ever panel discussion before the 'Human Sexuality' course at Baylor College of Medicine in the Medical Center. The panel was a representation of hierarchy in the two major local groups with TS members: TATS and GCTC. Seated on the panel were: Jennifer Lytwyn, a founding member of TATS and former member of GCTC; Katrina C. Rose, vice-president of

GCTC and board member of TATS; Daniell McCleney, vice-president of TATS; and moderating the discussion, myself (president of GCTC and editor of TATS). It turns out that historically we were in good company: our own city councilmember Annise Parker once spoke before a similar class there some years ago. The class, an elective for first year medical students, was begun to help sensitize and familiarize the students with the various dimensions of human sexuality in hopes of developing their their 'bedside manner' and increasing their compassion towards those who may someday be their patients.

(Continued on Page 7)



TATS panelists speaking before Dr. Basinger's class: (L-R) Jennifer Lytwyn, Katrina Rose, Daniell McCleney and moderator, Vanessa Edwards Foster

DON'T FORGET... UNITY BANQUET IS MAY 9!!!
TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT TATS FOR \$14 EACH

IT'S TIME, TEXAS! RETURNS TO POLITICAL ARENA.

By Sarah DePalma

Many people (especially in the Houston area) already know me. For those who may not be familiar with the name, please allow me a brief introduction:

My name is Sarah DePalma. I'm a founding member and former national director of It's Time, America!, a national civil rights organization working on behalf of transgendered people, their families and friends. In addition, I'm a proud former winner of the Transgender Pioneer Award from the Transgender Law Conference (ITCLEP), and the former state director of It's Time, Texas! I'm one of only three openly transgendered radio hosts in the United States. After a nearly two year hiatus, I've decided to bring It's Time, Texas! (ITT) back to the political arena and I'm

asking for your thoughts, ideas, and participation.

I'd like to start with a brief explanation of the word "transgendered" as it is used by the "It's Time" organization. Transgender is an inclusive word. No matter where you are on the gender continuum, you are welcome. Male, female, transsexual, cross dresser, ethnic minority, drag king or queen, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or what ever the case may be; if you are a gender outcast or just a friend of one and would like to get involved in our struggle for civil rights, you are welcome.

Many of you know that ITT had begun to make quite a political name for itself and had even begun to draw the attention of some

(Continued on Page 4)

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| April 11 | Social Meeting at:
Stephanie Brooks' @ 3:00 PM |
| April 25 | Un-Meeting at
Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM |
| May 9 | Social Meeting at:
Stephanie Brooks' @ 3:00 PM |
| May 9 | 1998 Unity Banquet at:
Riva's Restaurant @ 6:30 PM |
| May 23 | Un-Meeting at
Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM |

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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) 827-5913 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

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:
http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Pardon me if this month's editorial seems a bit rushed. It is. All in all, I can't complain because the root cause of my lack of spare time is work...too much of it! Compared to the alternative, I'll take it! It'll certainly help pay off the debt a bit sooner.



Back to TATS stuff – we've had a busy month, and there's more to come. I made arrangements to have Deborah Bell over to the Un-meeting at my place this past Saturday. It was TATS' first program in – well, I don't ever remember a program here before. It's been that long. But it was a very good and very informative meeting; and well attended as usual. Deb kept us entertained with stories of her experiences, and her little 'fun packs' with all the neat protective sex gear. Deb's information on male breast cancer locked our attention for the entire presentation – not easy in a room full of blondes and pseudo-blondes! We even turned off South Park to listen to the presentation! *'What the hell was that?!'*

We're also preparing for the upcoming TransGenderFest at DiverseWorks, with performances featuring TATS members Daniell McCleney, Jenifer René in a play written by Daniell and R. J. Schoubroek reading his original poetry. While Mariette Pathy Allen was in town, she even met with Laura Kellner to feel out the potential of a photo exhibit at their venue sometime in the future.

But by far the biggest buzz, and what occupied a lot of my spare time (whatever that is) was the panel discussion before the med students at Baylor. It was an excellent first step in a direction I hope the group will continue indefinitely. It was also a very valued experience.

Most valued was my getting to meet the class instructor, Dr. Scott Basinger, Ph.D. He's a very engaging individual with a disarming demeanor, and someone with whom I'm truly glad to have made acquaintance. He's got an excellent grasp on common sense, and retains that bit of questioning in his approach to anything – a good sign in a student or an instructor. In our initial meeting, I mentioned how impressed I was that he was not merely satisfied to adhere to a standard curriculum, but was ap-

proaching with an open mind, eager to learn.

Which points up another aspect that impressed me – his lack of self-importance based on his station in life. It would've been so easy for him to intimidate me, or gloss over anything I said because of his many years schooling and experience in a medical environment, and my complete lack of the same. But ironically it was he who was on a fact finding mission, and I who held the information. I was impressed with his diligent interest in learning about us. To be a good instructor, one must first be a good student...and he was an excellent student. As we left that day I mentioned my admiration for those who lead by example, as opposed to those who lead by decree; and he agreed with that sentiment. Dr. Basinger's style is to find out the facts first-hand – even if it requires him to spend time learning – rather than rely on what's more expedient – to use whatever text on the subject is available and declare it absolute fact. (especially regarding transgenderism – a subject usually not covered in academic circles.)

As for his proverbial 'bedside manner,' he did everything to make everyone on the panel feel at ease. How much better can you get? Considering my showing up late for a panel I was supposed to moderate, I was amazed he was as calm – much less accommodating – as he was. My reason for being late was a comedy of errors: getting called into a meeting right when I was planning to leave, massive lunch time traffic, getting lost in the Baylor parking garage, and again in the building itself. I was a basket case! But again it was Dr. Basinger's reassurance that was the calming presence that kept it all together. We couldn't have asked for a better environment or a better facilitator to make this happen. Presumptive as this may be, I think we've found a friend in Dr. Scott Basinger.

A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

Gary Bowen, President, American Boyz

Michelle Myers

Marissa Jan Carter

Katrina C. Rose

for forwarding articles

Phyllis Frye

for submitting poetry

Dianne Boucher

for submitting humor

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Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV

Deana L. O'Hara

for scanning photos

Katrina C. Rose, a great big thanks!!!

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Michelle's Musings - This is My Desk *By Michelle Myers*

The board meeting occurred on February 15, 1998 and most of what transpired was reported in the March Newsletter. However, we did manage to cut off the end of the board meeting report and so I thought I would tag it on the end of this month's *Musings*.

I would like to bring up several events that are in the future so you may get them on your calendar:

The Unity Banquet is Saturday, May 9, 1998 at Riva's and starts at 6:30 PM. I am sure you have all the details from Vanessa in last month's, this month's and next month's Newsletters. I just wanted to remind you that this is a good opportunity for TATS to show up with essentially its whole membership. Tickets can be purchased from me at \$14 each up to 9 PM on Saturday, April 25th. After that, the ticket price is \$21 each and available through GCTC or at the door. Anyone who wants to go but feels they can not afford the price, talk to me and we'll make some discrete arrangements.

Every year, the Rosenberg Clinic has a get together of past, present (and future) members of the Gender Program. I do not yet have a specific date of the gathering, but I do have a very good guess based on past events. So my crystal ball say this event will be on Saturday, June 13th. The doors will open approximately 10:30 AM with the start of activities scheduled to go from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. There is usually a \$5.00 charge at the door. It is also an excellent opportunity to bring a member of your family, if

you are so inclined. Again I must remind you that I am only looking through my crystal ball and I will let you know the specific details when Dr. Cole announces them. If this event is on June 13th as I expect, there will not be a 3:00 PM TATS meeting that day.

Saturday, June 27th is the evening of the Pride Parade. I believe it is a fantastic opportunity for the entire transgendered community to get out together and march in the parade. Last year we had about 25 people in the transgender contingent marching on Westheimer and it was exhilarating for all those who participated. Let's see if we can get that number up this year. Anyone wishing to participate or help out in organizing the Transgendered contingent just give me a call at (713) 524-6349. Be Unified, Diversified and Electrified this year. The sub-theme for the parade will be "Greek". This is an opportunity, for any of you who would like, to be a "Greek goddess". For those of you, like me, who are not big into costumes, everyday attire is more than acceptable.

Continuation of the board meeting report from last month:

As of the board meeting, the TATS Treasury contained a bit over \$500. The general philosophy that we are following is that we do not intend to expand our expenditures or fund raising activities in the near future. It is more important to spend our personal energy rather than money to accomplish our goals and mission.

We have put together an estimate of what

we expect in terms of income and expenses for the 1998 calendar year. This is an estimate that we will try to track against for reporting to the membership. It is shown balanced; that means the income and expenses for the year have been set to equal a net flow of zero into or out of the TATS Treasury. We will try to maintain a \$500 to \$800 balance in the TATS Treasury to handle emergencies. The breakdown of what we expect for 1998 is as follows:

	\$/Mo.	\$/yr.
Expenses		
Operating Costs	40	480
Newsletter	70	840
Outreach	5	60
Member Support	5	60
Library	5	60
Miscellaneous	10	120
Total Expenses	135	1620
Income		
Newsletter	75	900
Meeting Donations	30	360
Other Donations	30	360
Total Income	135	1620

I have a detailed breakdown of how we arrived at these figures for anyone who is interested. Just talk to me at one of the meetings or give me a call at (713) 524-6349.



CHALLENGES PRIVATE *By Marissa J. Carter*

Although I am a newcomer to the group, rather than just absorb the TATS newsletter month in month out like some lexicographical leech, I thought I'd contribute materially to its contents on a recurring basis, since writing is my alternate career.

I am a "ferner" in Texan parlance - for example, I still pronounce "schedule" with a soft sh, much to the consternation of my spouse and her family, so pardon me if I don't catch all the unintended. That is a sample of a rudimentary, but ongoing challenge.

Challenges are the spice of life, and without them one might as well be part of the scenery. The first I can remember at the age of fifteen years, was the laboratory I built in the garage using the financial proceeds from work in grocery warehouses. Of course, my parents promptly shut it down a year later when I broke a window after testing an experimental explosive. Fortunately, I went on to discover that people would actually pay a person for blowing up things, and that bigger and better laboratories

were there for the taking - with the right attitude.

Naturally, during this period of academic turmoil, many people assessed my career as never amounting to much. With perverse pleasure, I delighted in proving them wrong. Several advanced degrees later, armed with scores of patents and publications and a retraction in a well-known textbook by a Nobel-prize winning chemist, I awarded myself the Iron Cross, First Class. Little did I know that was only the beginning.

Concomitant with these Ivory Tower skirmishes I was also confronted with other challenges: emigration to the States, an alcoholic wife who contracted Grand Mal epilepsy and eventually became a vegetable after a vodka induced accident, the rampages of manic-depression and the supersecret black world of Ronald Reagan's Star Wars.

In the sobering years that followed, I survived a mass termination, a suicide attempt, a second wife who opened our marriage into a

domestic harem in the misguided notion that her husband needed instruction from other women to make him into a real man, several years of Prozac/lithium treatment for the manic-depression, a half-dozen corporate moves and major back surgery.

On the positive side, I wrote two novels (one of which was agented) and helped produce the pride and joy of my life, Tristan - who now unfortunately resides with my second wife in Alabama, a state which proves Einstein was correct in his theory of relativistic time.

Still, these were only preludes to a symphony.

On January 20, 1997, I had a near-fatal heart attack, found God, and proposed marriage to Tamara, now my third wife. In a sense, on that day, Stephen died and Marissa was truly born.

(Continued on Page 12)



Never Again

By Katrina C. Rose

Most people have heard of Christine Jorgensen. Though neither the first transsexual nor, now, even the most famous, she initially made headlines in 1952 and 1953 - popping up intermittently after that prior to her death in 1989. For most people, the transsexual historical timeline has a large gap between Christine Jorgensen in the 1950's and Renee Richards in the 1970's - a black hole with nothing in it: no names, no lives, no stories.

Of course, there were plenty of stories in between Christine and Renee. One is Charlotte McLeod's.

The story of how Charlotte emerged from Charles can be found in the March 8, 1954 issue of *Time*. The brief piece starts off by referring to sex reassignment surgery simply as "emasculating." Remember, this was 1954 - well before the enlightenment. Segregation was not only legal, but still considered by many to be a really cool idea.

The article stated that "Last April, after carefully reading the news of Christine's treatment by Danish surgeons, Charles took ship for Copenhagen. He found that the Danish Ministry of Justice had ordered doctors not to perform an emasculating operation on any more foreigners." This order was due to the immense press coverage of Jorgensen's surgery. "Charles told his troubles to a helpful taxicab driver, who took him to a quack. For a sizable fee, the quack performed a crude operation, using a kitchen table for an operating table." Hopefully, this was the same character who did the work on Jack Napier's face in the first Michael Keaton Batman movie. We all know what happened to that quack.

"Two weeks later, Charles dragged himself to Copenhagen's Bispebjerg Hospital, determined to complete the Christine treatment. Since his condition made him an emergency case, doctors gave him further surgery, and he received hormone injections." According to my research, SRS was actually illegal in the United States at the time - although the actual illegality centered on so-called mutilation of the sex organs.

Charles McLeod, a person who "was regarded as an efficient bookkeeper and typist" but could not hold a job "because of his effeminate ways," could not get legal treatment here - and, following the press sensationalism of Christine Jorgensen's transition, could not even get it in Denmark. He had to go to a butcher.

- Back-alley abortions.
- Back-alley gender reassignment.
- Kissin' cousins of repression.

When either is necessitated by backward laws, based on one particular religion, something is horribly wrong. Just because there is safe, legal SRS currently available in this country do not ever let down your guard. The U.S. Supreme Court stepped in on reproductivity issues. *Griswold v. Connecticut* stopped states from criminalizing condoms and *Roe v. Wade* allowed access to abortion treatment.

Those decisions have not stopped the radical religious right. They have been hammering away at all forms of the right to choose ever since.

There is no *Griswold* or *Roe* protecting the right to gender self-determination in the United States. When such biblically totalitarian groups as the Christian Coalition and the Promise Keepers gain major influence in the machinations of state governments, the danger is always there that some up-and-coming


young Newt-wannabe will manage to get an anti-gender treatment law passed as an obscure rider to a complex bill. Once a statute is enacted - any statute - repeal is extremely difficult. Politicians just don't like to muster up the energy to do such things.

If a law criminalizing gender treatment slithers into the criminal code, the likelihood of anyone who faces intermittent re-elections voting for anything that might be deemed "anti-family" - as anything connected with anything even remotely non-heterosexual is branded by the Pat Robertson cabal - is infinitesimal.

When the time approaches, I may go to Montreal for genital surgery. Or, I may not. However, I do not want to be forced to go to another country for treatment.

Charlotte McLeod's words still apply: "We are an army of people who live deeply depressed, under circumstances we cannot control." We can control more aspects of our existence now. My severe depression ended when I started venturing out of my shell. I have no intention of going back to that depression. I also have no desire to see our society go backward to the point where almost all transsexuals are put in Charlotte's predicament.

Some in the gender community are averse to politics. I am not insensitive to closets of necessity. Some of us can't be political, so others of us have to be. Otherwise, we'll all be booking reservations at the Copenhagen Quack Shack instead of the civilized gender clinics of America.

If I want quacks I know where to go. Come to think of it, it is a nice clear day. I think I'll go to the zoo and feed the quacks...er, ducks. 

IT'S TIME TEXAS RETURNS...

(Continued from Page 1)

political leaders on a state wide basis. Therefore there was some surprise and even some resentment at way ITT was brought to a sudden halt. I would be totally remiss in asking for your support again without first addressing that issue.

Quite honestly ITT shut down because I had not worked in nearly two years. Virtually every cent of what ITT produced came out of my pocket and the pocket of my life partner. When a job offer came along that held out the promise of a career I not only felt obligated to accept it, but as a financial matter I had to take it. Add in the facts that I was totally burned out and absolutely no one was willing to take the responsibility for keeping it running, and the demise of ITT was inevitable.

Since then the personal and financial picture has solidified and the local transgendered community has grown up. The amount of expertise and courage this community has to offer is astounding. Where once the number of people willing to work on behalf of their rights numbered around a half dozen (including Phyllis

Frye and myself), today that number would be much higher and growing all the time. To put it bluntly, I no longer feel the pressure exists that any progress we make as a community is contingent on my making every meeting, writing every article, and financing every last cent.

Ok, so why bring back ITT at this time? If there is a conservative sweep in the elections as has been widely projected, there will be many issues raised in the upcoming legislature that will impact directly on us. Issues of child custody rank at the top of that list and we need to be there to speak on our behalf. Past experience with the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas has proven they will not speak up for us and actually work against our best interests when they perceive we are "a political liability." It is vital we be heard and ITT is tool for being certain that is accomplished.

There is another reason however, that did not exist two years ago. The Houston transgender community has a level of maturity virtually unmatched anywhere else in the state. We have a golden opportunity to export this knowledge and experience in a way we have never had before and may never have again. ITT is an

ideal vehicle for accomplishing this goal. With your help it's goal that can become a reality.

I would like to have a meeting at my house on either April 19 or 26 with the idea of setting out a specific agenda for the broad outline I have just put forth. My goal is to make a state wide announcement of our return on May 1 and any help you can provide in spreading the word will be appreciated. Please reply by E-mail to: rhost@flash.net and let me know which of the dates I proposed will work for you. Thanks in advance for your help and support.

"When decorum becomes repression, the only dignity free people have is to speak out."

Abbie Hoffman

UNITY BANQUET
Tickets are still available...

Prices are \$14 each, until Apr. 25,

after which they'll be \$21 each!

Don't hesitate — it happens Sat, May 9
6:30 PM ... at Riva's Restaurant

WHY DO OUR LEADERS 'BURN OUT'?

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Leadership changes. There's nothing surprising about that. Recently though, an increasing number of leadership changes are taking place in the national TG community because of an unexpected cause: burning out. Call it fatigue, disgust with political infighting, or wanting to return to being a private citizen; this is a phenomenon that seems to be increasing these days, and one wonders where it will end up. Is this just a scenario where the leader (whether self-appointed, or elected by mandate) is stepping aside to make room for the groomed successor, or is it just a case where running the everyday tasks and responsibilities grind them down to the point of exhaustion? Often it's the latter.

About a year and a half ago, I was stunned to hear of Sarah DePalma's sudden retirement. I really didn't want to believe it, and assumed she was just having a bad month. But as the months went by, it sank in...she had really retired. It also made me wonder: why would someone like Sarah want to 'drop out,' so to speak? To be sure, I wasn't the only one in the national community to ask her that same question. Why...?

This was not the only instance of leaders willingly vacating their position. Late last year Alison Laing stepped down as head of IFGE; and this year in two consecutive months, long-time leaders Phyllis Frye stepped down at ICTLEP, and Dallas Denny did likewise from AEGIS. It's left the remaining national leaders a bit skittish...looking at each other to see if they can spot any stress cracks, wondering who else might follow suit and retire. There's concern of a potential leadership vacuum. With so much left to accomplish, why are our leaders suddenly tiring of the battle? What exactly is causing this leadership fatigue?

While accepting the mantle of leadership is done with pure intent, the act of taking the forefront on a local or especially a national level can make one a potential target. One of the problems is that we demand a lot of our leaders. Whether they be facilitators of local cross-dressing groups or the President of the United States; many of us expect to receive satisfaction upon demand. This almost guarantees a leader to receive at least some flak from the ranks. As the old saying goes, "you can't please everyone," and surely someone somewhere will come away disappointed. As a result, they're fighting a rear-guard battle. Ironically, most of the complaints come from those unwilling to do anything themselves - they're just there to be served. Others will do just the bare minimum, enough to justify their 'right' to complain or criticize. It's a truism that in any group, 10% of the people will do 90% of the work. The result is that the bulk of the unglamorous, behind-the-

scenes work is done by one or a few diligent people.

Another problem is that sometimes leaders of various groups are overtaken by ego. Often there is jostling for position within the community - occasionally even power struggles. Often other leaders will harangue each other if the other does not share their views or approach. Occasionally a leader will take over a group with problems and find the cards stacked against them from the onset. An example is IFGE's new leader, Nancy Nangeroni, who has been in an embattled position from day one. Additionally there are instances where groups have a long-standing dislike of each other. As an incoming leader of such a group soon finds out - once you're elected head of the Hatfield clan, you're expected to lead the battle against the McCoy's; and to disobey this is treason. It's sad, and counterproductive; but like most any group, we fight amongst ourselves as much as we fight against our enemies. This can drain a lot of energy.

For the national leaders, once the time comes to actually take on the political process, they're faced with arch-conservative ideologues and the others who are worried for their political careers. Neither of these two groups are likely to take a stand for us, and all battles are hard fought. Once our leaders make it this far, much of their energy is depleted. Then they face those who often are unwilling to meet with them, much less seriously consider backing their proposals for change. Faced with all this, it's small wonder that we haven't actually seen more burnout.

Speaking as the leader of a local group, I can personally testify that it's a rather thankless job. There's very little glamor and it's a lot of work - especially if you're involved with other projects outside of the group. Try to juggle all of these responsibilities with covering for whatever unplanned problems occur in the group; and do all of this while holding a full time job and keep up with your yardwork and housework and.... I'm pissing and moaning, but you get the general idea. It's a lot more than 'just a title.' It gives me pause to wonder how long I'll last before burnout.

Where does this leave the national TG community? It depends on the next generation of potential TG leaders. It's a very demanding task, but can be made easier by more active participation. Most importantly it will take at least one to pick up the torch and continue the race. It happened with me. Sarah's announcement to retire was the defining moment in my choice to become more 'active' in the TG community. In my mind, I wondered who would pick up where Sarah was leaving off, and was frustrated that

nobody else was around to pick up the fight. Finally, I looked in the mirror and realized who would continue the battle. It was unfair for me to expect that others would do for me when I wasn't willing to do for others. I had to do it.

If more of us can pick up a sense of participation, then the burden will be a lot easier for all in our struggle. But if we just show up merely to bask in the afterglow while watching one or two individuals do all the work, we're just counting the days until the next burnout. Eventually nobody will find it worthwhile to do the work needed. In that scenario, all that's left would be the indifferent and the disgusted. The resulting apathy would cause the organization or group to fail, or at least suffer noticeably. With more active participation, we might even cause a situation that feeds upon itself, regenerating even more participation. Maybe, with enough extra participation, this might convince some who've dropped out to drop back in. Sarah DePalma's article in this issue details her return to lead It's Time Texas! It ended up not being a 'burnout' after all - just a needed hiatus. There may be hope for us yet.



EUROCOURT TO HEAR TG CASE AGAINST BRITAIN

The European Court of Human Rights has begun deliberations as to whether the Human Rights Convention requires recognition of sexual identities after hearing arguments this week in the cases of two Britons born male and reassigned as female. The European Commission on Human Rights has already found 15 - 1 that Britain violates the Convention, but that ruling is not binding on the Court. Although Britain's socialized medicine supports reassignment surgery, the country will not issue new birth certificates showing the reassigned sex and changed name, making it unique among the European nations. This makes it impossible for transsexuals to legally marry someone of the sex opposite their reassigned one, as well as exposing them to discrimination whenever they show their birth certificates. Although Britain issues transsexuals new driver's licenses and passports, the government claims that birth certificates must reflect the historical record of the sex indicated at birth.

The 2 most common elements in the universe are hydrogen and stupidity.

Psychiatrists say that 1 of 4 people are mentally ill. Check three friends. If they're OK, you're it!

TATS MEMBERS FEATURED IN TRANSGENDERFEST

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

DiverseWorks will feature an exhibit this weekend featuring a diverse slice of transgendered culture. Laura Kellner of DiverseWorks is organizing this set of works to which will highlight the talents of "a complex fringe culture that is frightening and risky, and yet, filled with awakening humanity." The festival will kick off over a three day weekend beginning this Friday evening, April 3.

Friday's show, starting at 8 PM, will feature a slide show presentation from photographer Loren Cameron. Cameron, an FTM, will present a selection of his personal works entitled *Body Alchemy* - many from the book of the same

name. His compelling portraits will document the "traditional rite of passage from woman to man."

Smashing Assumptions is the title of the Saturday evening performance. Beginning at 8 PM, the event will offer a pastiche of poetry reading, video shorts and performances that will run no longer than 12 minutes apiece. Two of the performances will feature our own TATS members. Daniell Christian McCleney will star with Jenifer René in a one act play written by the ever-talented Ms. McCleney. This is a must-see for our members. I've seen the rehearsals and it looks to be good. TATS Member R. J.

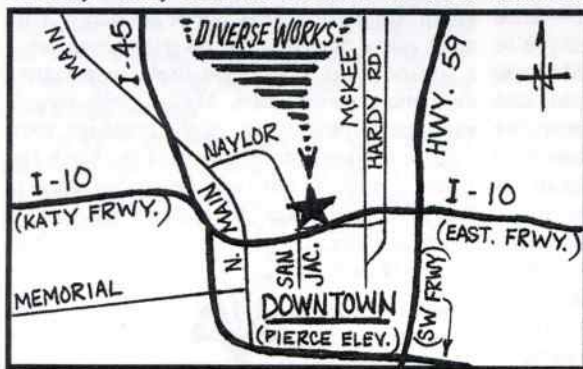
Schoubroek will also be reading some of his original poetry, and hopefully selling some of his new self-published books afterward. (Betcha didn't know we had an author and a publisher in our ranks!) Other performances on Saturday will feature locals Tee Sullivan and Lisa Jacobs, a very sweet TG girl named Rachel (aka Horatio 68) from Costa Rica, and Tom McKinney of Dallas.

The Sunday performance will

conclude with the award-winning documentary "You Don't Know Dick." Beginning at 7 PM Sunday evening, the film by Candace Schermerhorn and Bestor Cram is an intimate 75-minute look at the struggles of women who decide to become men, and the challenges and hardships they face as a result.

Admission at the door for Saturday's feature will be \$12, and the shows on both Friday and Sunday are \$10 each. However, passes for all three shows may be purchased for \$20. Try to make a point to attend, especially Saturday's performance. It's not often that we have performances by our very own members, and we should all encourage their efforts.

Diverse Works is located at 1117 East Frwy. in the Warehouse District, just north of downtown. It's located on the I-10 westbound feeder road between Hardy Rd. and N. Main. From the westside it can be accessed easily by taking the McKee / Hardy Rd. exit and making a left on the second street, crossing over the freeway and heading back out the feeder towards Main. An alternate way to access it is from Main St. just north of downtown, turning east on Naylor. For more information, contact DiverseWorks at (713) 228-0914.



The Transgender Coterie - at Diverse Works This Weekend

By Katrina C. Rose

Recently, *60 Minutes* featured a segment about college-based Queer Studies programs. This was remarkable by itself. However, Mike Wallace actually said the dreaded 'T' word - transgender - not once, but twice.

One of the programs mentioned in the piece was a recent conference at the University of California at Santa Cruz put on by its Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Student Association. The conference featured an exhibit of photographs by female-to-male transsexual Loren Cameron, who will lead off TransGenderFest at Diverse Works the weekend of April 3-5. The three-day event is designed to bridge the gap between what is popularly perceived as a fringe culture and those unfamiliar with it, offering a better understanding of transgendered people. Cameron has said that through his photographs he hopes that the world will "see us, I mean, really see us."

Cameron's presentation, on Friday, will be a slide show based on his book, *Body Alchemy*, a collection of intimate portraits a transformational rite of passage. Cameron has stated that, "I think it's really important to demystify the transsexual experience so we can stop being seen as the 'other.'" Several of Cameron's

photos popped up in the *60 Minutes* piece. They have also been exhibited in several cities around the country and have appeared in many books and magazines, including Leslie Feinberg's *Transgender Warriors*.

Wallace's was not the only voice heard during the aforementioned *60 Minutes* piece, however. Roger Kimball, managing editor of the right-wing publication *The New Criterion* said of Queer Studies programs in academia, "Here what you have is a coterie of politically motivated people who are attempting to use the university as an ideological training ground," going on to add, "We have to give students what they need not what they say they may want." California transgender activist Gwen Smith said that the thought of Kimball and his ilk telling her what she *needs* is rather frightening.

Luckily, Kimball does not exercise creative control at Diverse Works.

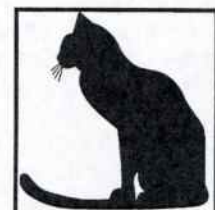
Saturday's program, *12 Minutes MAX!* - *Smashing Assumptions*, is a series of six short pieces - performance, reading, video - by local transgendered artists which are designed to challenge the boundaries of gender. TATS members who will perform include Daniell McCleney, Jennifer Rene and the inimitable R.J.

Sunday's presentation will be a screening of

Candace Schermerhorn & Bestor Cram's feature-length documentary *You don't Know Dick*, about female-to-male transsexuals - men who have embarked on an enormous struggle to recover dignity and an identity denied. The film won the best Documentary Award at the 1997 New England Film and Video Festival.

Cameron's slide show and dialogue presentation will be on Friday at 8 p.m. *12 Minutes MAX!* will be on Saturday at 8 p.m. *You Don't Know Dick* will be shown on Sunday at 7 p.m. Said Cameron of his work, "I've met so many transsexuals through this process of photographing them and its just been an incredibly rich experience." Undoubtedly, the entirety of TransGenderFest will be an incredibly enriching experience. For more information, call Diverse Works at (713) 228-0914.

(from the yet to be published article of the same name in the *Triangle*)



TATS MEMBERS SPEAKS AT BAYLOR....

(Continued from Page 1)

According to the instructor, Dr. Scott Basinger, PhD., the curriculum was highly influenced by student input before the course was offered. The students themselves specifically asked for information on transsexuality, and even went out and searched the internet for information before stumbling upon our website. From there Dr. Basinger took the initiative and contacted me via our website Email links.

Afterwards he and I set up an initial meeting to discuss the appearance before the class, and struck an immediate friendship. Coincidentally this came on the heels of my conversations at Rice during a push to make inroads with the academic community at our local universities. In our initial meeting I, in essence, instructed the instructor on the broad spectrum in the transgender community and the various concerns beyond the issue of sexuality. It's safe to say we both came away from our initial meeting duly impressed. I was especially impressed with his sensitivity, sense of fairness, and his diligence in seeking us out – as opposed to glossing over the subject.

The class discussion was a definite success.

Ours, the final panel to meet before the class, was one of the most successful of the entire course according to Dr. Basinger. We were not only received well by the students, but aroused a very good round of question and answer. Daniell of course was the star of the 'show,' keeping the class lively with her witty repartee. She also developed quite an attraction for Isaac (Dr. Basinger's co-director.) As for the class, virtually all of the questions dealt with pertinent aspects from a helping professional's perspective, and absolutely none of the questions strayed into the realm of insensitivity. Personally, I was extremely impressed with the approach and genuine concern reflected in the students and their questioning. It's enough to make a trans gal misty-eyed.

It is also extremely comforting to know that at least one crop of physicians who will some day intern in our local hospital emergency wards will have at least a minimal first-hand exposure to transgenders before viewing one on a gurney. Hopefully this will prevent a situation such as Tyra Hunter in Washington DC; who after a traffic accident was laughed at and berated by the EMT's (who found she was still a genetic male) while bleeding half to death; then was treated similarly at the local emergency room whereupon she died. It's obvious the attending medical technicians and physicians had

never personally met a transgender, much less gotten beyond the all-too-widespread stereotypes and misconceptions thereof. Had they, there might never have been the insensitivity present that resulted in her death. The students we encountered appeared to be conscientious enough to take this experience to heart and infuse some sensitivity into their practice.

What did class think of us? The reviews are still out, but we'll report on that in next month's issue. However, Dr. Basinger reported that he was very impressed with us all; mentioning how we were a very good representation of the transsexual community. Even with attendant problem of my untimely tardiness to class and subsequent inability to do an adequate job of moderating my first time out, Dr. Basinger thought the dis-



Daniell McCleney (R) thinks hard about one of the many questions posed by the students. After the lecture finished, a number of students lingered to ask further questions.

"ARE YOU GAY...?"

Submitted off the net by Phyllis Frye

Who knows if this is true or not, but it shows what can happen:...

An employee for XYZAir, who happened to have the last name of GAY, got on a plane recently using one of his company's 'Free Flight' programs. However, when Mr. Gay tried to take his seat, he found it being occupied by a paying passenger. So, not to make a fuss, he simply chose another seat. Unknown to Mr. Gay, another XYZAir flight at the airport experienced mechanical problems. The passengers of this other flight were being rerouted to various airplanes. A few were put on Mr. Gay's flight and anyone who was holding a 'free' ticket was being 'bumped.'

Airline officials, armed with a list of these 'freebie' ticket holders boarded the plane to remove the free ticket holders. Of course, our Mr. Gay was not sitting in his assigned seat as you may remember. So when the Ticket Agent approached the seat where Mr. Gay was supposed to be sitting, she asked a startled customer "Are you Gay?" The man, shyly nodded that he was. At which point she demanded: "Then you have to get off the plane".

Our Mr. Gay, overhearing what the Ticket Agent had said, tried to clear up the situation: "You've got the wrong man. I'm Gay!". This caused an angry third passenger to yell "Hell, I'm gay too! They can't kick us all off!". Confusion reigned as more and more passengers began yelling that XYZAir had no right to remove gays from their flights. To avoid causing any more trouble all gays were allowed to remain on the flight.

Corollary:

If you are given a take-home test, you will forget where you live.



Dr. Basinger's class listens intently as the panelists discuss transsexual issues.

ussion went wonderfully. He was even impressed with how well his class responded to the subject, and was quite pleased with the scope of their questioning. Some of the questions asked, and subsequent answers, provoked his curiosity about further exploring those aspects in future class studies.

He also made a point at the discussion's end of asking us back next year, to which we agreed. Personally, I'd love to see this become an annual occurrence. Through education, we will come to a greater understanding of each other – and that's a situation where we all benefit.



American Boyz Awards Honor TG Heroes

LAUREL, MD — The American Boyz, Inc. is pleased to announce the establishment of the American Boyz Awards to recognize achievement in the F2M and SOFFA community. An anonymous jury of judges accepted recommendations and made final selections from a large field. Nominees represented a diverse array of female to male transgenders (F2Ms), significant others, friends, family members, and allies (SOFFAs).

In the first annual ceremony, three awards were granted at the True Spirit Conference, Saturday, February 21, 1998, in Laurel, Maryland. "It is volunteers like these who give generously of their time and energy for the benefit of others that are creating the community where we all want to live, and who are taking that message to the world at large thereby transforming mainstream culture as well. We owe them our deepest thanks, because without them, we would be alone and struggling in isolation." said conference chair Gary Bowen.

The first award, the American Hero Award, was given to a single person in honor of their lifetime of service. The winner was **Sylvia Rivera**, a latino drag queen who was one of the drag queens that fought at the Stonewall Rebellion, and who in 1970 founded Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries (STAR), the world's first transgendered activist organization. Though she herself was homeless for most of the thirty years she has been doing activism, she made a difference in the lives of gender variant people, whether mtf or F2M, including young people, homeless people, people with AIDS, people of color, and many others. For this she is affectionately know as 'Mother Sylvia', mother of the transgendered civil rights movement.

The second award given was the American Eagle Award, given for significant service on

behalf of F2Ms and SOFFAs. The winners were:

Mary Boenke, mother of an F2M, one of the founders of the Transgendered Special Outreach Network of P-FLAG, co-author of 'Our Trans Children' for her work on behalf of transgendered families.

Shannon Minter, F2M, attorney with the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and former director with ICTLEP.

Spencer Bergstedt, F2M, attorney with AEGIS and F2MCEP, and formerly with ICTLEP, author of 'Trans Legalities.'

Yoseño Lewis, black Latino F2M, Vice-President of the F2M International, and member of the National Policy Roundtable of the NGLTF.

D. Michael Munson, F2M activist, AIDS educator, and founder of FORGE — one of the largest regional F2M organizations in North America.

Bet Power, F2M, leader of the East Coast Female to Male Group — another of the largest regional F2M organizations in North America.

The third award was the American Boyz Service Award, given for at least one year's worth of outstanding service to the American Boyz and/or the True Spirit Conference.

Adam Parandanscola, for helping to draft the inclusive language and mission of the American Boyz, plus transgendered medical advocacy that lead directly to Whitman-Walker's clinic at TSC 98.

Tom Malesic, for editing and personally funding the monthly American Boyz newsletter for over a year.

Jessica Xavier, a fabulous ally of F2Ms and SOFFAs, serving two years on the True Spirit Conference committee, mentoring F2M leadership, and one of the first national M2F TG

leaders to encourage F2M participation and leadership.

Loree Cook-Daniels, for her work on behalf of SOFFAs everywhere, serving as SOFFA Coordinator for the American Boyz, for serving two years with the True Spirit Conference committees, and for F2M and SOFFA positive journalism.

Jon Banks, for serving as Virginia contact person and Southeast Coordinator for over two years, for serving two years on the True Spirit Conference committees, and POC contact person for Amboyz.

Leslie Feinberg, author and advocate for transgendered civil rights who has served for two years with the True Spirit Conference committees and as an advisor to the American Boyz.

Helen Garfinkle, who has served for two years as the Site Coordinator of the True Spirit Conference who is one of the several people who are the workhorses who make True Spirit happen.

Calico Rechy, who has served with the True Spirit Conference committee for being Volunteer Coordinator and DJ, who is the Latino liaison for the American Boyz.

In addition to the official awards, the TSC 98 conference committee gave an unofficial award to **Gary Bowen** for his service as conference chair. It was a handmade nameplate inscribed with his name and title and his famous motto, "Those who say something cannot be done should not interrupt those who are doing it." Next year's True Spirit Conference 99 will be held in Laurel, Maryland, the first weekend in March. For more information contact: True Spirit Conference, c/o The American Boyz, Inc, P O Box 1118, Elkton, MD, 21922-1118 or Email them at: transman@netgsi.com

A Few Last Drops

Submitted off the net by Lauren Robison

The local bar patrons were so sure that their bartender was the strongest man around that they offered a standing \$1,000 bet. The bartender would squeeze a lemon until all the juice ran into a glass, then hand the lemon to the bet taker. Anyone who could squeeze one more drop of juice out of the lemon, would win the money.

Many people had tried over time, (weight lifters, longshoremen, etc.) but nobody could do it. One day this scrawny little man came in, wearing thick eyeglasses and a polyester suit, and said in a tiny, squeaky voice, "I'd like to try the bet."

After the laughter had died down, the bartender said okay, grabbed a lemon, and squeezed away. He then handed the wrinkled remains of the rind to the little man.

The crowd's laughter turned to total silence as the scrawny little man clenched his fist around the lemon and six more drops fell into the glass. As the crowd cheered, the bartender paid the \$1,000 and asked the little man, "What do you do for a living? Are you a lumberjack, a weight lifter, or what?"

The little man replied, "No, I just work for the IRS."

A man is a person who, if a woman says, "Never mind, I'll do it myself," lets her. A woman is a person who, if she says to a man, "Never mind, I'll do it myself," and he lets her, gets mad.

A man is a person who, if a woman says to him, "Never mind, I'll do it myself," and he lets her and she get mad, says, "Now what are you mad about?"


A woman is a person who, if she says to a man, "Never mind, I'll do it myself," and he lets her and she get mad, and he says, "Now what are mad about?" says "If you don't know I'm not going to tell you!"

Submitted off the net by Holly Foster Wilson

Springing Back To Life.

Submitted By Deana L O'Hara

The story you are about to read is true. Most humorous ones are. *The names have been changed to protect the innocent.

 ne bright sunny morning in Utah, Susan* was busy getting ready for work. It started out a typical day like any other and then ... as she went to let her retriever inside before she left for the day, she noticed he had a very muddy and quite dead rabbit in his mouth. Now this wasn't just any rabbit mind you, but it was all white, the pet variety, and looked suspiciously like the one owned by the little boy next door. Panicking, because she was new in the neighborhood, and fearing being socially ostracized for her dog's behavior, she stepped of into the realm of irrational behavior. She took this very dead rabbit, gave it a bath, blow dried and combed the hair, snuck into her neighbors yard and put Mr. Bunny back into his cage. Hoping they would find him and assume he died of natural causes, thus alleviating herself and Rover from all blame.

She left for work relieved and amazed at her quick thinking.

Upon returning home from work, she found her neighbor pacing up and down in her front yard. As her neighbor approached she panicked slightly but managed to ask what was wrong. Imagine her surprise when her neighbor blurted out:

"There are some really sick people in this world. My son's pet rabbit died two days ago and we buried him. Some idiot dug him up, cleaned him off, and put him back in the cage!!!"

Life After Death

Submitted off the net by Holly Foster Wilson

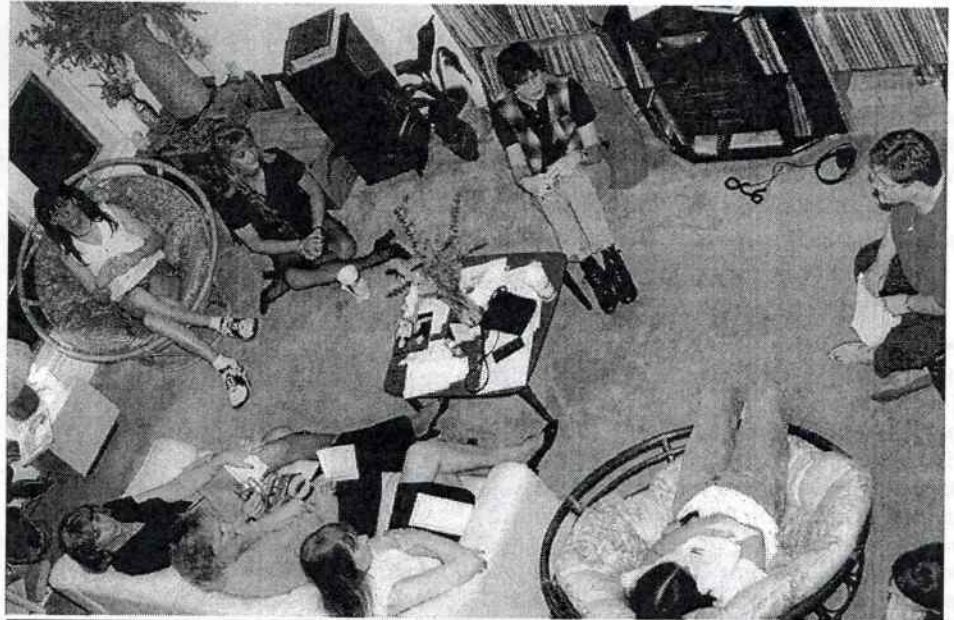
Two lovers interested in spiritualism and reincarnation vowed that if either died, the other one remaining would try to contact the partner in the other world exactly 30 days after their dying. As fate would have it, a few weeks later the young man died in a car wreck. True to her word, his sweetheart tried to contact him in the spirit world exactly 30 days later.

At the seance, she called out, "John, dear John; this is Martha. Do you hear me?"

A ghostly voice answered her, "Yes Martha, this is John; I can hear you."

Martha tearfully asked, "Oh John, what is it like where you are?"

"It's beautiful. There are azure skies, a soft breeze, sunshine most of the time."



(Above) An overhead view of Deborah Bell's (at right) presentation at TATS. Seated clockwise from Deborah, Kristin Ingram (bottom right corner), Alison Kubota, Jennifer Lytwyn, Sharon Webster, Carey Porter, Lisa Hayward, Jenifer René and Tami Scott. (At right) Deborah Bell (left) gets demonstrative during her discussion on breast cancer males and transgenders as Kristin Ingram (right) smiles knowingly.



HAPPY EASTER.

"Well what do you do all day," asked Martha.

"Well Martha, we get up before sunrise, eat some good breakfast, and there's nothing but sex until noon. After lunch, we nap until two and then have more sex until about five. After dinner, we go at it again until we fall asleep about 11pm."

Martha was somewhat taken aback. "Is that what heaven really is like?"

"Heaven? I'm not in heaven Martha."

"Well then where are you?"

"I'm a jackrabbit in Arizona."



Old friends share a laugh: Vanessa Edwards Foster (L) & Mariette Pathy Allen (R) during Mariette's visit here for Photo Fest in early March.

And People Still Ask Me Why I'm Political... by Katrina C. Rose

"I told you so" is a mean phrase. I enjoy saying it to people I hate. I hate saying it to people I care about. I have to say it to a dear friend of mine, though. Again.

Marie Gallagher had a Super Bowl party this year. She picked the Packers to root for.

Why?

Later this year, she is going to have SRS in Neenah, Wisconsin. The Packers are, not surprisingly, the fave NFL team in Neenah. Though I did go to Marie's party, I declined to participate in the Packer-backing because of the inordinate number of evangeloids on the team. When the Pack won the Super Bowl following the '96 season, there were as many religionist media outlets covering the game as there were legitimate sports journalists. More than a few people declared Green Bay to be "God's Team." (I'd been wondering if anyone would ever come up with anything more disgusting than the "America's Team" slop that has sustained the Cowboys for the last 20 years - "God's Team" did it.)

Yes, Denver is hopelessly sandwiched between James Dobson-town and Bill McCartneyville along a frozen stretch of I-25 and quite probably has its share of right-wing evangelino players and supporters. However, if any of the Broncos have plummeted to the depths of Reggie White's recent idiocy, I'm unaware of it (plus, I wanted Elway to win one - sorry, but I do root for underdogs.)

Anyone with a stake in GLBT rights who roots for a team with as much of a connection to the religious right as the Packers had is effectively rooting for the devil. I thought the Broncos might pull an upset of the heavily-favored Packers. After John Elway ran off the field professing his desire to go to Disney World I said "I told you so" - but in a very light-hearted way. Deep down - I really didn't care who won. I cared more about spending an evening with my true family than I did about the outcome of the

game.

"In the process of history, homosexuals have never been castrated. Millions of them never died. Homosexuality is a decision, it's not a race," said the Green Bay Packers' so-called 'minister of defense' on Tuesday. White, who is an ordained minister, went on to say, "People from all different ethnic backgrounds live in this lifestyle. But people from all different ethnic backgrounds also are liars and cheaters and malicious and back-stabbing."

Likewise, athletes from all sports are malicious homophobic bigots. But, using such a factoid as a basis for a belief system is beyond the pale of sanity.

White, who had been invited to speak to the Wisconsin Legislature by Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen (a Republican), made numerous Archie Bunker-esque stereotype-masquerading-as-compliment remarks about Asians ("they can turn a television into a watch"), Hispanics ("they can put 20 or 30 people in one home; they were gifted in the family structure"), Whites ("blessed with the gift of structure and organization"), Native Americans (able to avoid enslavement by the Whites because "Indians knew how to sneak up on people") and even his own race ("If you go to a black church, you see people jumping up and down because they really get into it"). His most vitriolic comments, though, were directed at gays and lesbians, alleging that the nation has turned from God, partly by allowing homosexuality to "run rampant." Those who disagree were invited to consult scripture.

This is the same Reggie White who, in 1996, received the Simon Wiesenthal Center's "tolerance award" for his "commitment to fostering tolerance and pursuing his vision for a better America." David Smith, spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign, said White's remarks showed "complete disrespect" for gay Americans.

There are some outside the GLBT community who are willing to challenge White's bible-encrusted bigotry. Jim Rome, host of a national radio sports-talk show heard locally on KILT-AM said while commenting on White's speech, "Every time this guy opens up his piehole something incredibly whacked comes out." In response to White's homophobia, Rome was willing to make the unequivocal statement: "Homosexuality is a sexual orientation. It is not a sin."

The next day, Rome mentioned that he was being pummeled by scripture-faxes from right-wing nutcases. He should be applauded for not backing down from his previous day's anti-Reggie comments, referring to White's comments and the anti-gay faxes as "gay-bashing out and out."

One of Rome's callers, a woman from Green Bay, responded directly to White's 'turned from God' slur by saying "People have not gotten away from God in this country because of homosexuals. They've gotten away from God in this country because of ignorant bible-thumpers like Reggie White that spread this kind of ignorant hatred. It is sickening to me."

With that, little more needs to be said.

Actually, just one thing: "I told you so."

I hope you don't hate me Marie. I love you dearly. In fact, you can have my Tennessee Oilers t-shirt if you want.

Meow.



RACE-RELATIONS LANDSLIDE

An Editorial by Phyllis Randolph Frye

I was encouraged by the recent Chronicle poll (March 16) of Texans' feelings about race relations and racial discrimination.

In the four responses, 70 percent felt race relations were poor or fair, 59 percent felt that discrimination against African-Americans was serious or very serious, 55 percent felt that discrimination against Hispanics was serious or very serious and 92 percent felt that it is important or very important to improve race relations.

These numbers would be viewed as either "overwhelming" or "landslides" if candidates or constitutional amendments were on a ballot. Why, then, do we have so many people elected to our Legislature or to Congress who do not support bills to help improve race relations?

Why do so many of these same elected people actively try to kill affirmative action and proactive legislation?

If more people would simply vote, and if

those voting would not be fooled by party labels or by ad slogans that have nothing to do with the issues, we could get to solutions quickly.

If people would speak openly against each and every racial slur (no matter how small) heard at a party, in the lunchroom or over coffee, we could be the generation who does not pass racial discrimination on to the next.



TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- From our own back yard...according to the *Houston Press*, West University police have been trying to track down the culprit who's been stealing books of checks from the post office and re-selling them to the criminal community. The high-rent inner city suburb has been plagued by the thefts which were determined to be an inside job. One person caught passing these stolen checks was a 'drag queen' (their wording) named Kitty Briggs who spent thousands of dollars on shopping sprees with the bogus checks. Her primary purchases were...colostomy bags! So much for the stereotype that transies are only into fashion....
- After almost 2 years of struggle over transgender inclusion in the Non-Discrimination Policy at Rutgers University, Exec. Vice President Joe Seneca released a memo which expanded discrimination protections to include "people who have changed or are in the process of changing their sex." The change effectively expands the policy to cover transsexuality. The change, led by Ben Singer - a Rutgers FTM graduate student, was resolved by re-interpreting the category of Sex, already covered by the University's policy. A primary difficulty in the negotiations was the apparent confusion on the part of the Rutgers attorneys regarding the meaning of "transgender." (*sounds like the city's legal dept - ed.*) Unfortunately this is only a limited improvement as it covers only those with the "intent to change sex." Apparently administrators were fixated upon "men in dresses" showing up in classrooms. Thus the mandate requires one to identify officially as transsexual to be protected.
- On the other hand ... Illinois State University voted unanimously to accept a new constitution which excludes "sexual orientation" from its anti-discrimination policy. Even though protection had been in the language previously, legal council for the Board of Trustees advised the members to "bring the University's constitution in line with state statutes" which has no anti-gay discrimination policy. In an odd twist, the state statutes, as the state of Illinois has no anti-gay discrimination policy. In an odd twist, this policy change comes just weeks after the Administrative Council recommended that insurance and related benefits be extended to included same-sex couples.
- On a sad note, another face on the national TG scene has passed away. As announced by Sarah DePalma on KPFT's *After Hours*, Betty Ann Lind passed away March 4 from complications from a stroke. She was very involved with her local group, the DC chapter of Tri-Ess, appeared in Mariette Pathy Allen's book *Transformations*, and worked with other TG organizations on the east coast. One place she was a prominent presence at was *Fantasia Fair*, where she was a wonderful help. I personally remember Betty Ann from the *Fantasia Fair* in 1983 - my first time out of the closet. She was a helpful and caring individual to all of us newbies that year; and one of the instrumental folks at the fair who got me to "relax and accept" myself as a transgender. As she once told me, "There's a helluva lot worse things to be!" To be missed might be one of them....
- Speaking of Mariette Pathy Allen, I had a delightful visit with her while she was down for Photo Fest here in Houston. Unfortunately her schedule was such that she had precious little leisure time to spend, but we did manage a couple visits while she was down. While she was here, she went to a salon run by a friend of hers where she met a TG from Costa Rica named Rachel - one of the performers in the upcoming *TransgenderFest* at *Diverse Works*. Rachel not knowing who Mariette was, explained to her that she was TG, etc. and offered to bring out a book that 'her hero' had published. The book she drug out - *Transformations*. She was so thrilled to meet Mariette, she cried and mentioned that she wanted to meet the people in the book. Mariette replied that she'd try to get me to get in touch with her (but we never connected.) Later Mariette went to *Diverse Works* with her hair stylist friend and met Laura Kellner. She then mentioned another interesting person she met while there, an FTM who owns a courier service here in town...to which I replied "Justin Tyme Alexander." She was surprised we all knew of each other in such a large place. Just last Tuesday I met a girl from Costa Rica at an HCDA meeting. Her name: Rachel (yeah, that one!) It's getting to be a small world....

 **Services, etc.** 

PHYLLIS RANDOLPH FRYE

**Attorney and Counselor, and
Licensed Professional Engineer**

B.S. Civil Engineering, Texas A & M University 1970
M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Texas A & M University 1971
Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

Areas of Legal Practice:

- Criminal Defense ---
 - Transgender Issues and Documents ---
 - Divorce and Family Issues ---
 - Wills, Power of Atty, "Living" Wills ---
- Although licensed since 1981, I have not taken additional testing, therefore the State Bar requires that I state that I am "Not Certified by the Board of Legal Specialization"

Areas of Engineering Practice:

- Civil / Structural ---

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MINISTER ANSWERS FOR GAY CEREMONY

KEARNEY, Neb. (AP) – A Methodist minister could be removed from the pulpit for performing a lesbian unity ceremony. A jury of fellow ministers was to consider his fate today at the end of a church trial on charges that he held an unsanctioned liturgy and disobeyed United Methodist Church rules. The Rev. Jimmy Creech pleaded innocent yesterday in what Methodist officials said is the first challenge to church policy on homosexual ceremonies. They said the trial's outcome could shape how the church interprets its stance on homosexuals. Creech performed the ceremony involving two unidentified women in September.

**Reality is only an illusion,
albeit a very persistent one.**

-- Albert Einstein

Sea of Life

By Dianne Boucher

*I'm drifting along in a turbulent sea,
affecting the lives of those around me.
I knew what I wanted, where I wanted*

*to go,
but the currents of life take me where, I
don't know.*

*In the wake of my journey, I'm
beginning to see
the lives I've affected emotionally.*

*I mean harm to no-one as I swim
towards my goal.*

*I just want acceptance and peace in
my soul.*



CHALLENGES PRIVATE

(Continued from Page 3)

Challenges are wonderful opportunities, if we can but grasp them by the horns and ride them like mythical beasts. Each challenge successfully met represents a step growth in our spiritual curve, our ability to love others and make this planet a better world for all mankind to inhabit. If there were no challenges, most members of the human race would petrify and die of boredom ... okay, remember I did say most of them.

So, is my personal transformation the last challenge then? Not a chance. I still want to own my own chemical business, publish my next novel, start hospice work

I read this article. It said the typical symptoms of stress are eating too much, smoking too much, impulse buying and driving too fast. Are they kidding? This is my idea of a perfect day!

-- a random thought from Marsha Warfield

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TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 6, Issue 5

Houston, Texas

May, 1998

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.

TRANSGENDERFEST A HUGE HIT!!! 'SMASHING ASSUMPTIONS' PACKS THE HOUSE!

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The TransGenderFest held at DiverseWorks April 3rd through the 5th was an absolute success. I was only able to attend the Saturday night showing – Smashing Assumptions – but from what I could see, the show was extremely well received. The show was played before a packed house. In fact, seating was at such a premium that some were required to sit on the floor in front of the stage – and I say the word stage loosely. The stage area itself was spartan; actually only a large space of open floor with some curtains on both sides. The lighting was somewhat rudimentary, but was utilized surprisingly well. While the ambience can intimidate some first-time

attendees, it also lends a much more intimate feel to performances.

The lack of stage amenities certainly did not intimidate the performers though. In fact, from the opening piece through the final act, the entire show ran smoothly and was performed to perfection. The initial set – none of which exceeded 12 minutes – began with a two-person performance by the creator Lisa Jacobs and Chuck Jackson entitled 'Little Boy Blue.' The piece began with Jacobs as a cigar-smoking

dandy, puffed up with male bravado, waxing about his 'sweet tart.' Midway through the set, Jackson appears as the ingenue...who is anything but. The 'sweet tart' figuratively emasculates the pompous dandy, ending with him chained by the wrist, and cringing at the heels of his finger-snapping wench. It was a wonderful metaphor for the illusion of male dominance over women, and the fragile quality of the balance of power in 'traditional' relationships.

The second performance – 'Winter Holiday' – was written by our vice-president, Daniell Christian McCleney, and performed by her and TATS member Jenifer René. The second act was arguably one of the high points, and certainly one of the best performances, of the evening (but then again, I'm a bit biased...they are my friends after all.) It was a very touching look at the transcendence from one life to another, and the mutability of the shells our spirits inhabit at various junctures. I had gotten to see a few of the rough rehearsals, but what we all witnessed that night at DiverseWorks was vastly improved. The timing was perfect, the acting was superb, and the expressiveness of both actresses' performances was artful. Jenifer René's previous acting experience was obvious in her easy grasp of the character. 'Winter

(Continued on Page 5)



Daniell Christian McCleney (L) scathes while Jenifer René (R) seethes in the TGfest's 'Winter Holiday.'



'Winter Holiday's author, Daniell McCleney during the plays ending soliloquy.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| May 9 | Social Meeting at:
Stephanie Brooks' @ 3:00 PM |
| May 23 | Un-Meeting at
Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM |
| June 13 | Social Meeting at:
Stephanie Brooks' @ 3:00 PM |
| June 27 | No Meeting !!!
we'll all be at Pride Parade @ 6:00 PM |

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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) 827-5913 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

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:
http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Springtime is here, and things are heating up. Time to get on our diets in earnest, and hopefully get into shape for the swimsuit season. Is it just me, or is it more difficult to lose weight anymore? With all the various diets, and myriad of supplements, we as a nation seem to be pushing the needle up the scale instead of down. Can I relate to that! I diet just so I can retain my status of 'a little overweight.' A lot of my problem is my schedule, and my breaking the old routine of a nightly run with the dog. That plus the increased food intake over the fall and winter months have left their mark. Sigh....



We had a pretty momentous event during the past month - Smashing Assumptions, the most recent version of the 12 Minutes Max! performances at DiverseWorks. The show was an overwhelming success (for more details, see the articles on TransGenderFest.) It was great to see so many folks from different walks of life turn out for the performance. My hope is that, as the title indicated, the event did indeed smash assumptions.

My initial impression is that it did just that, at least with one Melissa Noble I met after the performance. She (as you might recall from last month's tidbit on Mariette Pathy Allen) was the hair stylist who was hosting Rachel - one of the participants in Smashing Assumptions. She'd never had any knowledge of transgenders before seeing Horacio/Rachel, and was quite intrigued by her. She was very impressed with her meeting with Mariette during their visit, and again learned even more about the community as a whole. Then after witnessing the show at DiverseWorks, seeing the faces behind those images, she was drawn in.

Melissa Noble is one of the driving forces behind DiverseWorks, along with Laura Kellner and Loris ~~XXXX~~. After the show we had a really nice chat about doing a show for Mariette to showcase her photos about the transgender experience. This should dovetail nicely with Mariette's plans to prepare a second book on transgenders - this one documenting transgender activism. As this goes to press, I'm currently in negotiations with Ms. Noble to work up a proposal to submit to DiverseWorks for

just such an event. I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

Apparently there was quite a buzz about our newsletters which were passed around the event. It was seen by a number of non-TATS folks who attended, and all had positive feedback. Michelle pulled off quite a coup by deciding to pass them out at the Fest. We certainly got a lot of attention, including a potential new advertiser: DiverseWorks. Melissa even asked for a copy, and may even be a future subscriber to it herself. Just that much more interest stirred up about our group.

In just over a week from now is the Unity Banquet, Saturday May 9 at Riva's in the Montrose. Do y'all have your tickets yet? Parking may be a little tight, so I've made prior arrangements for us to use the Hubbard Financial parking lot. It's about a block and a half away, but the way this is going, it's likely you'll be that far away parking on the street. Hubbard Financial is at Montrose and California (one street south of Missouri.)

Which brings me around to...Unity. We're very fortunate to have that here. I've heard of too many situations from friends around the country - Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, Louisville, Columbus - where there isn't the same unity between the various groups in town. Whether it boils down to ideological difference, competition, or just plain intolerance; far too many of our sisters around the country don't get to enjoy what we take for granted here in Houston.

We've become a very cohesive community, but we can't rest on our laurels. We have to continue to cooperate, tolerate and communicate. The Unity Banquet is a celebration of all of that. Saturday, May 9, beginning at 6:30, I plan on celebrating with you all.

A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

Michelle Myers
Katrina C. Rose

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for forwarding articles

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Kristin Ingram

Marie Denise Gallagher

for submitting humor

Annis Parker, Houston city councilmember

Mariette Pathy Allen, New York NY

Lauren Robison, suburban Baltimore MD

Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV

for scanning photos

Katrina C. Rose, a big thanks!!!

All photos by Vanessa Edwards Foster

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Michelle's Musings -- This Is My Desk By Michelle Myers

Normally I do not write about myself. It is not false modesty, just a fear of boring myself to death. Well I am going to make an exception this month.

As most of you know, I work for Exxon Engineering and have done so for about 33 years. I transitioned on the job last May and the first job they gave me, as 'Michelle' was to coordinate the activities of an engineering contractor doing work for the Baytown Refinery. That job ran from about mid June to mid November and involved a lot of long hours and an ever changing basis with many changes in the direction of the project. In December, we were successful in getting the final appropriation from Exxon Corporation. Since that time we have been finishing up the engineering details and now equipment is arriving at the refinery for installation early next year.

Exxon Engineering has had a peer recognition program for the past five years and generally passes out about 10 to 15 awards per year. It is called the "Exxon Engineering Award for Excellence." By the way, Exxon Engineering has close to 1,000 employees. Well, on Wednesday, April 22nd, I was presented with one of the awards for the work that I had done for the project at Baytown. This is particularly important to me since the award nominees and

recipients are decided upon by my peers. It felt so exhilarating to receive such an award considering that it was for the first job that I did as 'Michelle.' It was also very special since it was the first such award that I've received.

It is so much easier to be good when you are being yourself!

I wanted to mention to you all that I have begun discussions with the Gay and Lesbian Community Center, located at 803 Hawthorne - in the heart of the Montrose, about use of the facilities for TATS. My thought is that it may be beneficial to us and to others in the community to have a more public meeting or a meeting in a more public place on a regular basis. At the present time I am thinking about using these facilities about once a quarter. I would be very interested in feedback, either pro or con in nature. I also plan to discuss it at the next board meeting.

By the way, the next meeting of the board will be on Sunday, May 24th at my apartment, starting at 1:00 PM and lasting till approximately 3:30 PM. Officers and members of the board should make every effort to be there. Any member wishing to join us is more than welcome.

I would also like to mention several events again so you can get them on your calendar.

The Unity Banquet is Saturday, May 9,

1998 at Riva's and starts at 6:30 PM. Be there!

Every year the Rosenberg Clinic has a get together of past, present (and future) members of the Gender Program. This event will be on Saturday, June 13th. The doors will open approximately 10:30 AM with activities scheduled to go from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. There is a \$5.00 charge at the door. It is also an excellent opportunity to bring a member of your family, if you are so inclined. There will not be a 3:00 PM TATS meeting that day.

Saturday, June 27th is the evening of the Pride Parade. I believe it is a fantastic opportunity for the entire transgendered community to get out together and march in the parade. Last year we had about 25 people in the transgender contingent marching on Westheimer and it was exhilarating for all those who participated. Let's see if we can get that number up this year. Anyone wishing to participate or help out in organizing the Transgendered contingent just give me a call at (713) 524-6349. Be Unified, Diversified and Electrified this year.

Wishing you love and knowledge, Michelle.



MAYOR BROWN UNVEILS NEW INITIATIVES AGAINST HATE CRIME

By Michelle Myers

On Monday, April 13th, Mayor Lee P. Brown announced at a press conference three new initiatives in the fight against hate crime in the City of Houston. The Mayor delivered the news at the Jewish Community Center located at 5601 South Braeswood.

The three initiatives were outlined and discussed by the Mayor and by Houston Police Chief Clarence Bradford. The new initiatives are:

A Hate Crime Hotline has been established as part of the Houston Police Department. The number is (713) 308-8737. With this new hotline, hate crime can be reported 24 a day. Initially, the phone will be directly answered between 7:30 AM and 4:30 PM with instructions for the "off hours". During "off-hours" you may either leave a message with details or follow instructions on how to get to someone to talk to directly. Crimes that occurred prior to these initiatives that are reported through the Hotline will be followed up on, even if only to establish a pattern of behavior of the perpetrators.

Lieutenant Mark A. Eisenman has been designated the Hate Crime Coordinator at HPD.

Lt. Eisenman is a 13 year veteran of HPD and is a member of the Criminal Intelligence Division (CID). The new coordinators position is within CID. This means that in addition in the officer who has investigated the particular crime that has been reported, CID is also aware that this crime is judged to be a "hate crime" by the victim.

A program of further training for HPD officers about hate crime is planned. This training will reinforce the state-mandated training that HPD officers already receive. The training will focus on the HPD officers' function to recognize that a hate crime has been committed, to work through the system to insure proper attention and to work with the victim in a cooperative and respectful manner.

"Houston is blessed with a comparatively low hate crime rate," said Mayor Brown. "However, hate crime terrorize an entire community, so one hate crime is one too many, and we can not lower our guard. These initiatives will help the community and the Houston Police Department form a greater partnership in the fight against this particularly offensive type of crime."

"These steps reaffirm the Houston Police Department's long-standing commitment to fighting hate crime by giving them the highest investigative priority," said Houston Police Chief Bradford.

The Houston Police Department states that 31 hate crimes were reported in 1997. Of these eleven were racial, six were religious, six were ethnic and eight were due to sexual orientation.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines a hate crime as a criminal offense committed against a person or property which is motivated by the offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, ethnic/national origin group or sexual orientation group.

Again, the new **HPD Hate Crime Hotline is (713) 308-8737.**

"Equality, dignity and justice are human birthrights; not benefits society awards to those born with a certain gene, a particular skin color or a particular physical anatomy."

— Urvashi Vaid

FTM ARRESTED AS 'PREDATOR'

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Friday evening, April 2, as I got home from work I flipped on the tube and noticed the show 'Nash Bridges' just beginning. As the opening credits rolled, I noticed the guest star was RuPaul; so I stuck around - a-la Katrina - to see how the show treated trans-folk. It turns out the show wasn't half bad, albeit the transgender aspect was in the stereotypical form of comedy relief (still better than portraying us as depraved criminals.) What caught my attention at the show's end though disturbed me. The lead story on the 10 o'clock news blared the news, "a woman masquerading as a man is arrested after assaulting a young girl."

That was enough to grab my interest in the Channel 11 newscast that evening. Sure enough, the story documented the story of an obvious FTM being paraded around for the late night viewers as "a woman posing as a man..." That alone was enough to incense me. But further galling was the perverse pleasure that newscaster Sylvan Rodriguez took in reporting about the "sexual predator."

Nineteen year old Tommy Duncan, born Tanya Lee Duncan was arrested in Pasadena for fondling a 12 year old girl. According to Duncan, the two met at a skating rink whereupon they developed a mutual attraction. Allegedly Duncan represented herself as a 15 year old boy while the female victim passed herself off as a 16 year old. The two then began dating in earnest, with some heavy petting involved - consisting of nothing more than groping. While Duncan was arrested for outstanding traffic warrants, the victim learned of Duncan's true identity and came out with allegations of sexual assault. It was also then that Duncan learned the true age of the victim.

It is certainly not excusable to use ignorance as an explanation for statutory rape, and I certainly don't think that Duncan used very good judgment. While I don't have all of the details of the charges, there has not been any charges or inference of penetration of any kind - only mutual kissing and groping. The problem I really had with the report and the charges themselves is the fact that this is looked upon as sexual assault and the arrestee, a predator.

There are statutory violations involved, and I don't pretend to dismiss those. Duncan even admitted his poor judgment in the news interview from the county jail. But in a situation where it was a mutual decision, and there was no force initiated by the perpetrator, why is this considered assault? Moreover, why is this individual paraded around as a 'sexual predator'? There were no sexual acts according to the report, and there was nothing that could be con-

sidered predatory about a mutual attraction. You have to prey upon somebody to be a predator, and the only thing preyed upon would be this young girl's naïvete.

When you juxtapose this with the rapes committed on women every day by true predators, with the stalking and the violence involved, Duncan's charges pale in comparison. Sexual assault and rape implies an act of violence. Mutual attraction, albeit one with statutory implications, does not implicate someone of an act of violence. Deception, yes - violence, no. The reporter, Rodriguez, and Pasadena's P.D. mouthpiece, both exaggerated the nature of the incident by labeling Duncan a predator. The Pasadena's police spokesman even mentioned they were happy to have another "sexual predator off the streets."

Concerning sensitivity, Channel 11's news department is in some serious need of education. Their eagerness to portray a transgender being arrested as some kind of a 'pervert' is both blatantly biased and sickening. It brings the KHOU news department down to the level of tabloid TV. One might expect more from a 'supposedly educated' major city newscast.

As for the Pasadena Police Dept, the lack of knowledge of transsexualism is rather believable - though not necessarily excusable. While the need exists for some education there, Sarah DePalma has taken lead and approached the department's administrative heads for a cursory education which will be followed up by a substantial meeting with Rosenberg Clinic's Dr. Collier Cole. Given the environment in Pasadena, an industrial suburb of about 200,000 with a reputation for being rednecked and conservative, it's very unlikely Duncan will be able to return to any modicum of a private life.

Unfortunately, for Tommy Duncan the damage has been done. Even if he's exonerated from the sexual charges, it is highly unlikely the media will cover it. Headline-wise, it's not newsworthy...not nearly as much as the initial arrest. While I singled out Channel 11, they may not have been the only guilty TG-baiters. I only reported on them because they were the newscast I happened to watch that night. But it's apparent that there is a long way to go before society and the media view us - and treat us - as they would any other individual.

A Seat at Another Table - State Bar Establishes Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Issues Section

By Katrina C. Rose

On April 17 in Austin, by a nearly 3-1 margin, the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas voted to establish a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Issues Section.

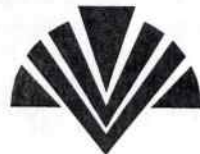
Houston attorney Mitchell Katine, Chair of the new section, formally presented the proposal, backed by petitions signed by over 250 Texas attorneys, to the Board which, after an attempt to prevent the matter from even being voted on, heartily approved the section's creation.

The section has several purposes, all of which have been recognized by a cross-section of legal practitioners throughout Texas as being worthy of the focus which will result from creation of a Bar section: (1) to promote the study of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and HIV law; (2) to study and report on laws, decisions and governmental regulations that affect GLBTs and those living with HIV; (3) to provide a common meeting ground and forum for members of the legal profession who are interested in the legal problems of people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered as well as those who are living with HIV; (4) and to take action regarding these matters.

Importantly, political and social advocacy are not among the issues listed. While they are important in the struggle for equality, they are not proper specific purposes for a State Bar section. Of course, the creation of this section did not, itself, come without a struggle. A similar section proposal failed in 1996, though only after alarmist speeches by those opposed to the section's creation. This latest proposal saw a last-minute parliamentary maneuver to prevent the matter from even coming to a vote.

One of the criteria to establish new sections is a showing that the new section does not encroach into the subject matter of any existing ones. The hostile proposal, if successful, would have sent the proposed section to a committee to study whether it would conflict with the existing Individual Rights Section. Charles Spain, Secretary of the new section, noted that sections dealing with issues affecting African-Americans, American Indians, Hispanics and Women apparently do not conflict, noting

(Continued on Page 6)



TRANSSEXUAL WHO WANTS TO FIGHT CRIME HAS TO FIGHT THE SYSTEM FIRST

By Katrina C. Rose

The difference between a crossdresser and a post-operative transsexual should be painfully obvious. Unfortunately, it is not obvious to the San Francisco Police Department. And that is rather painful for Cristiana Rivas.

Cristiana always wanted to be a San Francisco Police Officer. To help her gain experience for that ultimate occupation she served in the military and also worked for the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms. As she was sure that she wanted to serve on the SFPD, she was equally sure that she was truly female - despite having been born male. Last year, she underwent sexual reassignment surgery to resolve the dichotomy between her feelings and her physical appearance.

She also began the process of applying for a position on the SFPD - and she thought that the process was going rather well, having passed written, oral, polygraph and physical tests. There was also a background check. However, there were no problems there either - she had let the department know about her transition up front as well as a few youthful indiscretions (she had tried drugs a couple of times - something that even Al Gore and Newt Gingrich are willing to admit to having done.) The problem came in the psychological exam, where the therapist kept referring to her as a crossdresser.

"You don't use the word crossdressing with someone like me," said Rivas. "She probably never interviewed someone like me before, so how could she understand who I am?"

Within the transgender community there is occasional friction between crossdressers and transsexuals - a point alluded to by Kate Bornstein in her book "Gender Outlaw." While some transsexuals have been known, sadly, to have something of a superiority complex about having 'gone all the way,' all can agree that transsexuals and crossdressers have some different issues to deal with in their lives (although when it comes to most employment law, they typically are equal: absent some specific protection, like San Francisco's, neither have any protection.) Likewise, all would probably think that someone conducting psychological screening for the SFPD would be aware of how to properly screen a transsexual, irrespective of labels, as the department not only has a policy prohibiting discrimination against transsexuals, but also currently has an openly transsexual officer serving on the force - female-to-male Sgt. Stephan Thorne. However, Thorne transitioned *after* joining the force. Rivas is apparently the first to attempt to join the force post-transition.

All of this leads to a disturbing question - what good is any non-discrimination policy if it is either not followed or not applied equally? For Rivas, the answer is currently 'not much.' The employment process

was going so well that she had already quit her job with the ATF in anticipation of beginning training at the SFPD academy.

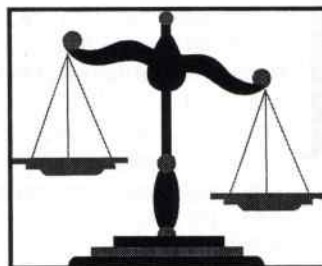
SFPD Chief Fred Lau has said that the department did not disqualify Rivas because of her transition, a line echoed by Dr. Michael Roberts, a San Jose psychologist whose company handles the department's evaluations. Roberts says that Rivas' surgery "would have made no difference whatsoever," adding that, "For us it was an irrelevant concern. She's making it relevant because she's unhappy with the results." However, Rivas is still in the dark as to exactly why she did not pass the test. "I can't explain it because they won't let me see the test."

She has taken her case to San Francisco's Human Rights Commission and City Supervisors Tom Ammiano and Jose Medina have also sent a letter to Lau complaining about the department's lack of sensitivity. "Do they need sensitivity training?" queried Ammiano. "I would say so."

And how much sensitivity does the Houston Police Department have when it comes to transsexuals? There is no simple answer to that. Houston transgender activist Sarah DePalma presumes that most of the bigger departments in Texas don't have policies dealing with transsexual officers - or applicants, though she emphasized that her presumption shouldn't be seen as a slap, but merely as an acknowledgment that the issue has probably never come up. "The only time they really come across us is as sex-workers or, once in a blue moon, in a traffic stop."

Future sensitivity by the SFPD may benefit the next transsexual applicant to that department, but, for Rivas, there is still a battle to be fought. She paid \$1,000 for her own psychiatric evaluation to send to the department - an evaluation which concluded that she was "emotionally fit and stable." However, the department has held firm. An evaluation is scheduled to be conducted on April 6 by an independent psychiatrist (though hired by the city's Department of Human Resources.) The decision of that psychiatrist will be final.

Unless she decides to take legal action - which she is considering. Stay tuned.



STATE BAR ESTABLISHES SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER I.D. CODE....

(Continued from Page 4)

that whenever a GLBT person is involved in litigation there is simply a "different spin" on the issue, however well-defined that issue may already seem to be. Even the head of the Individual Rights Section stated that, in his view, there was no overlap.

Ultimately, the motion to send the proposal to committee failed by a wide margin, clearing the way for the vote on the issue itself, creating the section.

The creation of this new section matters to all GLBTs and those living with HIV as *all* people are affected by the legal system - either directly or indirectly. Noteworthy is that not all of the supporters were attorneys - six transgendered non-attorneys sat alongside the legal professionals. Katine pointed out to the Board that in 1996 only three people showed up to support the proposal but that for this proposal over a dozen were in the audience. This may not seem like a large number, but at a rather small gathering of rather powerful people, every ounce of GLBT representation matters.

Of course, representation also matters in the political branches of government, which could eventually make a statement on the subject. The California Bar has all but ceased to exist because of Governor Pete Wilson's disapproval of the Bar's endorsement of same-gender marriage and its ban on discrimination against transgendered people - his disapproval was in the form of a veto of the Bar's funding bill.

The next session of the legislature may well be a time for vigilance.

Friday, however, was a time for celebration. After the vote, Houston attorney Phyllis Frye jubilantly stated that creation of a forum such as this new section was one of the reasons that she founded the International Conference on Transgender law and Employment Policy in 1991.

She added, "This is a great day for freedom."

Indeed.

DURING A TRAFFIC STOP ONE EVENING....

Submitted By Hon. Anise Parker

A policeman pulls a man over for speeding and asks him to get out of the car. After looking the man over he says, "Sir, I couldn't help but notice your eyes are bloodshot. Have you been drinking?"

The man gets really indignant and says, "Officer, I couldn't help but notice your eyes are glazed. Have you been eating donuts?"

TRANSGENDERFEST A HUGE HIT

(Continued from Page 1)

Holiday' even garnered a number of laughs at the performers' repartee – especially those of the play's writer. After all, we are talking about Daniell. Especially good was her soliloquy to end the piece, with the lights brought down and a lone spotlight on her. The musical scoring of the piece was also masterfully done by sound coordinator Christine Fusco. The classical pieces chosen were neither intrusive nor overbearing, but set the mood at the intro, and underscored the soliloquy's poignant feel towards life ever after. It was far and away the best usage of sound during the evening.

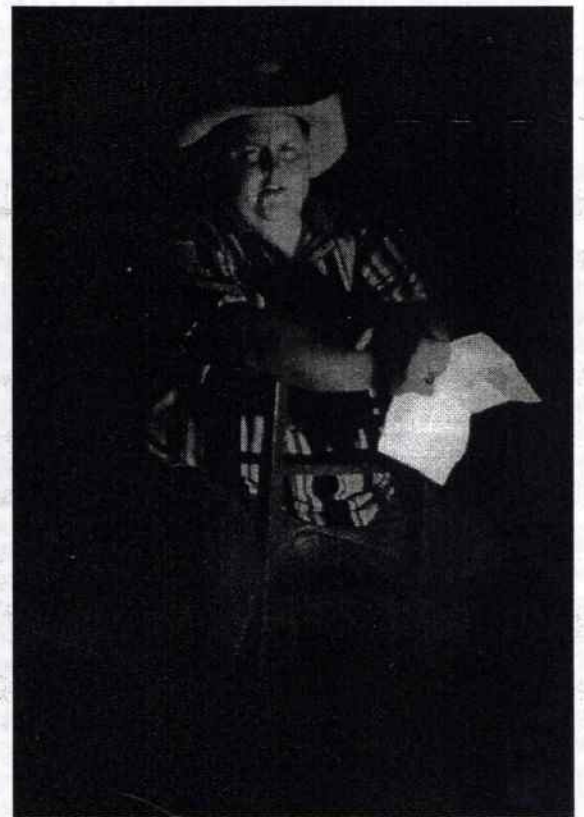
Moving in a different direction, TATS member Rainly John Donald Schoubroek performed the third act of the evening – a reading of his poetry from his personal writings. His piece, entitled 'Poetry in Rep,' began with R.J. (as we all know him) sitting in a wooden chair turned backwards and speaking to the audience. The lack of elevated staging enhanced the intimate feel, while the lighting set a very pensive mood. Coupled with his matter-of-fact style, it was unclear as to whether he was delivering a performance or merely reporting about an acquaintance in a serious situation. It was actually both. His poetry was largely drawn from experiences he went through while growing up as a

girl in a drug-infested household, fending off the molestation and advances of a series of predators. It is a heartfelt and tragic story, reaffirming in the sense that he was able to survive the hard days, survive, and in fact thrive. His poetry reading was an excellent vehicle to point up that fortitude. The sparse staging, and his relaxed, personal oratory brought the entire audience there. Again, I know I'm biased because R.J.'s a friend, but I was truly impressed with his performance and very proud of him.

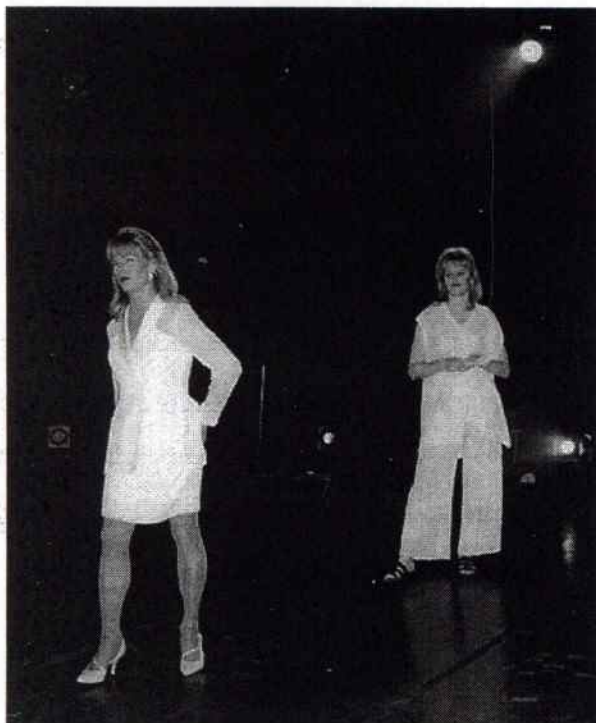
The next two performances of the evening took a more avant-garde, expressionistic direction. The first of these was performed completely *en español*. Horacio, aka Rachel, wrote and performed solo in the fourth act entitled 'Horacio 68.' Rachel, who currently lives in Costa Rica, is a crossdresser who – upon hearing about the DiverseWorks show – wrote her piece in 15 minutes. Coming from a tranquil land surrounded by strife-torn countries had a great influence on Rachel. Being a crossdresser in a machismo-driven country is dangerous

enough, but surviving in a country where everyone is at risk because of political upheavals is that much more daunting. Her story was an analogy: it compared being a closeted transgender wishing to escape the closet in a macho-based society with being a lone woman attempting to flee a war-torn environment of opportunistic, predatory soldiers and the ever-present death squads. Her acting abilities were impressively emotive, with an expressive quality that transcended the language barrier. Her usage of props was also very provocative – suitcases, including one suspended in air, spinning; yet another carried at the beginning of the act, dripping water; and a simple white square and circle on the floor. Equally impressive was the use of lighting: minimal, but artfully done. It was the most masterful usage of both lighting and props that evening. It also turned out to be one of the most pleasant surprises of the evening as well.

The fifth act was certainly the



R. J. Schoubroek delivers a riveting performance of his original writing in 'Poetry in Rep' at DiverseWorks.



Jenifer René (left) ponders a point while her 'alter-ego' Daniell McCleney looks on during one of the April 4th performances of TransGenderFest at DiverseWorks.

most provocative of the festival. Preceded by the song, "Stupid Girl" from the group Garbage, Tee Sullivan wrote the two-person performance entitled 'Box Marked F.' This act had only one prop – a white wooden box made from 12 foot two-by-fours laid on the floor. Inside the box jumped an animated Tee to begin the set, while the narrator circled outside the box in a white lab coat and clipboard and clinically gave a biographical timeline of the subject in the box. As the narrator—known only as Zig—described the life of a young lesbian torn between her sexuality and gender identity questions, Tee physically acted out the emotionless narration. Tee took command of the stage, moving like a prizefighter in the ring around the inside of the box. This set also garnered the biggest laughs of the evening: once when it described a childhood football game of shirts and skins—Tee played on the skins team. The second laugh was her description as a young adult working as her "girlfriend's co-dependency counselor," as Tee gave a devilish grin. As the play progressed it became even more compelling with descriptions of acts of violence, and a mother's pulling her children close as our subject approached and calling her "a sexual predator." The ironic

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TRANS GENDER FEST A HUGE HIT

(Continued from Page 5)

timing of this was not lost on me considering the F2M in Harris County jail for being a "sexual predator." (See the article *FTM Arrested as 'Predator'* in this issue.) This act documented the pain of arbitrary classifications from both directions. We as transgenders know well that we struggle with outside forces about as much as from forces within. Late in the piece Tee first doffed her shirt, then her pants, and finally her jockey underwear in a metaphorical analogy of her peeling away the layers of her inner psyche to an eventual self-discovery. The last portion was riveting in its shock value, but was done with intent as opposed to more abstract forms of expressionism. Whether it was the shock value or not, it was easily the most memorable piece of the night.

After a virtually flawless show, it was almost inevitable that there would be one performance that struggled. The final act, a solo performance by Tom Kinney aka: Janelle DuBois, was the unfortunate 'hard luck award' winner of the event. 'Janelle's Drag Queen Side Show' started off well enough, but sputtered mightily during the middle of the set. She seemed more preoccupied with the drips of water on the floor (left from Horacio's piece) than with her lines. The audience watched uncomfortably while she struggled again and again to focus her attention. I must, however, give the girl credit: in what was admittedly painful to watch - much less struggle through, she showed admirable pluck. It's doubtful anyone else could suffer so miserably before a fidgeting audience and yet continue the piece without a second thought. It was ironic that where she stumbled in her act happened to be the portion where she played up people's discomfort with drag queens. At the set's end, she

finished with a touching poem entitled 'Sand Painting.' It documented her attraction to and subsequent relationship with a younger drag queen, and was received well by the crowd. She finished on enough of an upbeat to leave the audience wondering aloud whether her stumbles in mid-performance were not actually part of the act.

In fact, the last set was fitting; driving home the point that these were all amateur performers. Yet the performances themselves were anything but. It was such a well-performed, inspiring show throughout that until the final set's problems, the crowd had allowed itself to be swept away by momentum of the performances. The final act notwithstanding, it was difficult to grasp that what we'd just witnessed was not indeed professional performances. There is true talent in the transgendered community, and it was evident at DiverseWorks. I consider myself proud to be a member of such a diverse and wonderfully talented group of folks.

What is Easter?

One Easter morning, a Sunday School teacher asked her class if they knew the origins of this, special day.

One young man responded immediately, "It's opening day for the Yankees and Giants".

Not wishing to stifle creative thinking, the teacher responded, "What a wonderful answer! But I had something else in mind".

A young girl then stood and remarked, "That's the day we get nice new clothes and go find the eggs from the Easter Bunny.

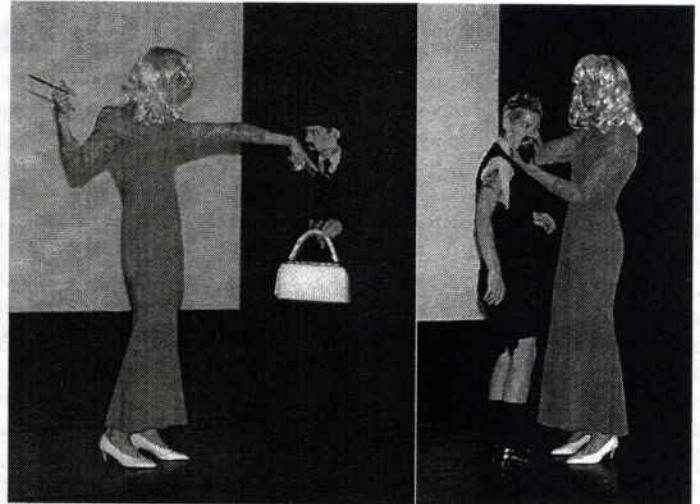
"That's right", said the teacher, "But there's something else just a little more im-

portant."

A young man then jumped up and yelled, "I know, I know!!! After Jesus died on the cross, some of his friends buried him in a tomb they called a sepulcher." The teacher thought, 'I don't believe it, someone actually knows'. The little boy continued, "and three days later Jesus arose and opened the door of the tomb and stepped out".

"Yes, yes!" said teacher, "Go on, go on!"

And the youngster said "And if he sees his shadow, we have six more weeks of bad weather."



Above: the before and after of emasculation - Chuck Jackson (in dress) and play's author Lisa Jacobs (in suit) do a twist on gender roles in 'Little Boy Blue.' Below, Jenifer René reacts in horror in the first scene of 'Winter Holiday' - one of the 12 Minutes Max! performances at DiverseWorks' April 4th show of TransGenderFest.



TATS RATED TOP PANEL AT BAYLOR

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

In a follow up to last month's issue, I promised to let y'all know their impression of us. Well, the vote is in...and the students chose the TATS panel as the best of the semester!

Quoting the instructor, Dr. Scott Basinger, PhD: "In the Human Sexuality Course at Baylor College of Medicine, the TG/TS panel was top rated by the medical students. Panel members did an outstanding job of educating the students about TG/TS issues, broadening the students knowledge in preparation for their clinical practice. The panel was particularly effective in dispelling stereotypes, and put a real, warm, and often humorous face on a little known segment of our community." Way to go, girls!

New Hate Crime Hotline is More than a Number

By Michelle Myers

As mentioned in my news article, Mayor Brown has announced new initiatives in the fight against hate crime in the City of Houston. I wanted to follow-up on the news article with a few thoughts of my own about the subject.

I was very surprised and extremely pleased on Friday, April 9th when I received a call from the Mayor's office inviting me to the press conference that was held on the 13th. Needless to say I attended and was the only one, other than Chief Bradford, to be in uniform. (I wore my Q-Patrol tee shirt, radio, whistle and badge. All very official!)

Gary Norman, hate crime specialist with the Montrose Counseling Center, Clarence Bagby, president of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus and Terence O'Neill, administrative assistant to Annise Parker were there also. Each of us asked a question and I tried to incorporate most of the answers into the news article.

Gary and I did get a chance to talk with Lieutenant Mark Eisenman for about 5 minutes and we reminded him that with this new initiative, he should expect the number of reported instances of hate crime to increase. We reiterated that a sizable increase in the numbers should be taken as a positive effect of the new initiatives and not as a negative.

The numbers reported by HPD are the numbers that are official. However, we have other sources of numbers that did not make it into the HPD statistics and a sense of the situation that would indicate that the HPD statistics of hate crime motivated by sexual orientation is the tip of the iceberg. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs reported 31 cases of Anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Violence in 1997 for Houston. That number compares with other cities such as El Paso with 186, Columbus, OH with 206 and San Francisco with 402. The willingness of victims to report probably has more to do with the statistics that the actual level of bias or hate crime in a city. Reporting of hate crime is one of the primary ways we have to reduce the real occurrence of hate crime in Houston.

The three initiatives spelled out by the Mayor are really needed.

Centralized, 24 hour per day, access to someone in HPD for reporting should be a real improvement in understanding the extent of hate crime in Houston. The current situation for reporting, although well intentioned and very needed when there was no other way, at times leaves a lot to be desired. You can not get a live body at either Q-Patrol or the Gay & Lesbian Switch Board's lines. These are both voice mail lines. The Montrose Counseling Center has

regular business hours but basically handles the longer term counseling for survivors of hate crime. The HPD Hate Crime Hotline is what is required and it deserves our support. However, the community's services will remain in place as a check, as support of, and as a sounding board for HPD.

By putting the Hate Crime Coordinator in HPD's Criminal Intelligence Division (CID), the Mayor has made a subtle but significant change to the system. Previously, the victim could tell the police officer making the report that a hate crime had been committed, but if the officer did not put that in the report, that was the end of the line as far as classification as a hate crime. With CID in the loop via the Hotline, there is the possibility of someone from CID now asking the reporting officer why this particular incident was not shown as a hate crime. It is a subtle change but an extremely important one.

The training of HPD officers in three areas will also greatly enhance HPD's efforts. In addition, this training will have input from the various communities to insure that the need for sensitivity to the situation is fully understood by HPD officers. The three areas of concentration for training are:

- Better classification as to whether or not an incident is a hate crime
- Improved instructions on how to work hate crime within the system
- Increased sensitivity to the needs of the victim and how to treat the victim with understanding and respect.

I also feel that I should mention that the HGLPC has taken a very active role in helping the Mayor set this program up. In addition, The Caucus will work with the Mayor's office on this issue on a continuing basis. If anyone has feedback on actual incidents, either good or bad, you can contact The Caucus, the Montrose Counseling Center, Q-Patrol or me. The community wants to make sure that the system is working like it is supposed to. If it is not, there are steps that the community can and will take to improve the system.

Don't be a Victim! If you are a target of a hate crime, be a Survivor - Fight Back!



**HPD HATE CRIME
HOTLINE
(713) 308-8737**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

By Katanya Irwin

Dear Ms. Foster,

I am forever delighted by the humor in the TATS Newsletter. I cut the Cinderella stories out and mailed them to a son.

The occasion for this letter is the reference to terrible headaches in the article, An Orchiectomy Story. I am constantly seeking medical information in medical libraries, magazines, books, newspapers, TV, etc. Being 67 years old, I feel some of the information might help me to survive a few years longer than average.

Regarding headaches, the December 1996 issue of Senior News (free in the Houston Public Library) mentioned that coffee drinkers often wake up from anesthesia with a headache. Senior News cited Mayo Clinic anesthesiologist, Dr. Joseph Weber as their source.

I was castrated in December, 1995 and had no headache at all. But I never drink anything with caffeine in it. I used one ounce of Baker's chocolate made into candy at home for energy on my part-time job. But I stopped using even the chocolate one month before surgery. I knew in general that caffeine is a powerful chemical which should never be used in conjunction with other chemicals unless you can predict the outcome and all side effects.

With regard to swelling: I don't recall any. But I covered all incisions with Mercurochrome. Antibiotics are becoming useless. I've reversed two swellings due to infection, and treated two stab wounds with Mercurochrome with total 100% success. I learned the value of a \$2 bottle of Mercurochrome from a retired Marine Corps officer who'd gone through the 2nd World War and seen plenty of wounds and serious injuries.

Katanya Irwin

THE ATHEIST & THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

(Submitted by Lauren Robison)

An atheist was spending a quiet day fishing when suddenly his boat was attacked by the Loch Ness monster. In one easy flip, the beast tossed him and his boat high into the air. Then it opened its mouth to swallow both.

As the man sailed head over heels, he cried out, "Oh, my God! Help me!"

At once, the ferocious attack scene froze in place, and as the atheist hung in mid-air, a booming voice came down from the clouds, "I thought you didn't believe in Me!"

"Come on God, give me a break!," the man pleaded. "two minutes ago I didn't believe in the Loch Ness monster either!"

IT'S TIME TEXAS CHANGES NAME, PUSHES FOR NAME CHANGE BILL

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

You read correctly: It's Time Texas has changed its name. The new name, reflective of a pending merger between It's Time America and AEGIS, will be TGAIN – the Texas Gender Advocacy and Information Network. The response to the new name has been very positive, according to TGAIN director Sarah DePalma. Both NOW and the Texas legislative entities have approved of the name change. "It describes to people what we are, as opposed to [the name] It's Time Texas which basically said nothing," mentioned DePalma. The only lukewarm reaction to the change has been from other It's Time affiliates.

The name of It's Time America and its other affiliates will not change regardless of ITT's name change, or the upcoming merger with AEGIS. According to Sarah, the merger is all but complete; the only thing remaining being the official signing and announcements. This however does not change It's Time America's focus – taking an active approach to affecting positive change for the TG community.

On April 27, an intimate group of the TGAIN in-

ner circle took place at Sarah's home. Sarah, Katrina Rose and I discussed the proposed direction for TGAIN activities. The primary push for the upcoming legislature, barring any unforeseen anti-TG proposals that will need counter-action, will be the name change bill. This proposal has failed before, but is reworded to take out direct references to transsexual or transgender and use more legislator-friendly terms as gender identity. By codifying this in more politically safe terms, it's hoped that the new bill will have a much better chance at success.

The tentatively worded proposal to push before the state legislature is as follows:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 45, Family Code...is amended by adding Section 45, 105 to read as follows:

SEC. 45, 105: CHANGE OF NAME AND VITAL STATISTICS INFORMATION.

a) A court shall order a change of name for a petitioner under this subchapter if the petition is accompanied by a sworn affidavit of a licensed

physician that the petitioner identifies as a gender other than the gender indicated on his or her driver's license, birth certificate, or other official documents.

b) A court that orders a change of name for a petitioner under this section shall simultaneously order:

1) that the Department of Public Safety, as soon as is practicable, change the petitioners gender on the petitioner's driver's license and other identification documents under the department's control; and

2) that the Texas Department of Health, on receipt of a physician's sworn affidavit that the petitioner is in fact a person of a different gender than the gender indicated on the petitioner's birth certificate, amend the petitioner's birth certificate as provided by Section 192.011. Health and Safety Code to reflect the petitioner's true gender.

c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require surgical intervention as a prerequisite to the granting of a change of name or gender as described in Subsections A & B.

Neovaginal Lining Found Similar To 'Normal' Vagina.

By M. Itallano

Recent attempts at vaginoplasty for transsexuals have utilized a variety of techniques, including split-thickness and full-thickness skin grafts, penile inversion procedures, and signoid-colon methods. Although the advantages and disadvantages of each continue to be debated, many stated disadvantages are clearly exaggerated or are erroneous. For instance, Masters and Johnson's (1966) pioneering work on the artificially created vagina clearly demonstrates that "the method of creating an artificial-vagina barrel is incidental, since the functional reaction patterns of artificial vaginas are identical regardless of how they are constituted."¹ (p.101). The statement includes behavior during arousal and orgasm as well as lubrication, a subject steeped in controversy.

Some surgeons opt for the use of sigmoid-colon methods in the belief that this provides an advantage of lubrication secreted by colon mucosa. Other surgeons employ mucosal flaps from the urethra to supplement penile inversion for the purpose of providing lubrication. They believe lubrication can't be achieved by the use of skin grafts or penile inversion. This is untrue.

There is much to be learned from nontranssexual women who have had surgery for "inadequate" vaginas. From months to sometimes

years after skin grafting, the graft loses all its skin properties and adapts to its environment, becoming a mucosa which takes on the "exact cytology, gross and microscopic, of a normal vagina" (Sherfey, 1973).² Masters and Johnson state, "Suffice it to say that on the basis of pure cytologic evaluation, it is impossible to differentiate the epithelial cells taken from the artificial vaginas of Subject 'A' (when under the influence of adequate hormonal replacement) or Subject 'B' from those of normal vaginal mucosal smear" (Masters & Johnson, 1961, p.203).

Some surgeons disagree, stating that the tissue is not mucosa, but only resembles mucosa. They are only partially correct, since the normal female vaginal tissue is not truly mucosa either. It is called mucosa only because it lines a body pathway. It contains no mucous-secreting glands (Fawcett, et al., 1995).³ That is why lubrication is a transudate phenomenon, the source being dilation of the capillaries that surround the barrel and the subsequent squeezing out of fluid through the vaginal walls, which in normal and artificially constituted vaginas have been shown to be a functioning two-way membrane (Masters & Johnson, 1966). Although Masters & Johnson note that production of lubrication usually takes longer in the artificial vagina, they also showed

that some artificial vaginas are capable of lubricating as well and as rapidly as any normally constituted vaginal barrel and that two of their patients had "lubricated, in fact, more effectively than many women with normally constituted vaginas" (Masters & Johnson, 1966).

Pierce, et al. (1956) demonstrated the conversion of skin to vaginal epithelium which, after twenty years, included normal vaginal pH levels, complete loss of hair, complete loss of pigment, complete loss of sweat gland, and normal vaginal epithelial glycogen levels. They proposed, "The process is not one of metaplasia, for no new cell types are produced. Rather, there is alteration of existing cell layers and the loss of skin organs" (p. 6).⁴

Those post-operative male-to-female transsexuals who amuse themselves with the peculiar statement that they still have a penis, but that it's just turned inside-out, should note that not only do they not have a penis, but they don't even have the skin of a penis any more. The histology of the tissue has changed. It also responds to hormones in an identical way as does a normal vagina, with "cyclic cornification and mucification" (Sherfey, 1973).

(Continued on Page 10)

¹ Masters, W.H., & Johnson, V.W. (1961, May-June). The artificial vagina: Anatomic, physiologic, psychosexual function. *Western Journal of Surgery, Obstetrics, & Gynecology*,

² Sherfey, M. (1973). *The nature and evolution of female sexuality*. New York: Random House

³ Fawcett, D.W., et al. (1994). *Textbook of histology* (12th ed.). New York: Chapman & Hall.

⁴ Pierce, G.W., et al. (1956, July). Changes in skin flao of a constructed vagina due to environment. *American Journal of Surgery*, 92, 4-8

TRANSGENDER AGING RESEARCH PROJECT NEEDS YOUR PARTICIPATION

By Tarynn M. Witten, PhD.

My name is Tarynn M. Witten, Ph.D. (check me out at <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~wittenm>) and I am the initiator and co-director of the International Longitudinal Transsexual and Transgender Aging Research Project (ILTARP). This longitudinal project is an attempt to address the lifecourse needs of the transgender community. It is the first an ongoing project to formally address these issues and has many component projects which will be detailed on an upcoming web page - which will be announced very soon now.

One critical component of this project is an attempt to formally document the healthcare needs and experiences, experiences with violence and abuse, and general demography of the "T" community. For many years the "T" community has been silent and uncounted. What we call "invisible." While we are now coming out to claim our voice, we are still an unknown quantity and it takes numbers to make changes. We are trying to contact as many "T" people as possible around the world. Currently, the survey is being distributed in 10 countries worldwide. We are hoping to have 14 countries collaborating by the end of 1998. We have a comprehensive survey which we are trying to get filled out so that we can make an accurate international demographic description of the "T" community. "T" people includes pre/post-op transsexuals, transgenders (individuals who live full time in their non-natal gender) whether they are on hormones or not, cross-dressers, transvestites, agendered, individuals with other gender perceptions, dual spirits, and any non-Western gendered viewpoints. We need to reach all races, all cultures, and all classes of the "T" community. Remember, many of us do not have access to the internet so please spread the word on the streets as well. We are also interested in collaborating with those of you are members of the "intersex" community as well.

I would appreciate your help in connecting with individuals in these categories. All work is medically confidential and is anonymous. Surveys come in stamped, pre-addressed envelopes so that the sender cannot

be identified. The ILTTARP has been approved by the University of Michigan School of Public Health Institutional Review Board. It is sponsored under the aegis of the Comprehensive Gender Services Program of the University of Michigan Medical Center.

If you feel you that can assist in any phase of this project, I would greatly appreciate it. Please circulate this message to anyone who might have access to the aforementioned populations, to anyone who might be interested in filling out the initial demographic survey, to anyone who resides in another country who might help us make contact with "T" people in that country, and to anyone who knows anyone who might be interested in furthering the cause. Please send your email address or phone number if you wish to be contacted by us. If you wish to receive the survey, please send a complete postal mailing address so that we can send you the survey. All addresses are treated medically confidentially. If you would like copies of the reports based upon the ongoing survey, please send me a note to that effect, with a postal address so that we can send you the reports. There are currently 4 reports available.

For further details, you may contact me at via any of the following: **Tarynn M. Witten, Ph.D., 313-936-2102** (also has confidential message machine) Email: **wittenm@umich.edu** or **tarynn_nightwing@hotmail.com**, or visit our website at: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~wittenm>, or via mail to:

Tarynn M. Witten, Ph.D.
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(Submitted off the net by Marie Denise Gallagher)

NEOVAGINAL LINING FOUND SIMILAR TO NORMAL VAGINA

(Continued from Page 9)

The presence of ovaries is not a necessity. For instance, "The-estrogenic and early luteal effects demonstrated by Subject 'A' are obvious, and serve as a clinical indication of adequate steroid replacement in this surgically castrated female" (Masters & Johnson, 1966, p. 203)

More impressive is a recent report by Alessandrescu, et. al. (1966), who did biopsies on twelve artificially constructed vaginas and found an vaginal structure identical to a normal vagina.¹

Although it may be suggested that transsexuals may respond differently than nontranssexual females in regard to the results of vaginoplasty, it is my opinion that the burden of proof that this is the case rests with the surgeons

¹ Alessandrescu, D., et al. (1966). Neocolpopoiesis with split-thickness skin graft as a surgical treatment of vaginal agenesis: Retrospective review of 201 cases. *America Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 174(1), 131-138

who employ such procedures as colon usage and mucosal flaps for the purposes they intend. Since the nature of the work is clinical and not generally investigative, they should at least advise their patients that future study may be necessary before the value of their technique can be substantiated.

(Submitted off the net by Kristin Ingram)



CIRCUMCISED

Submitted by Holly Foster Wilson

Two five year old boys standing at the potty to pee. One says, "Your thing doesn't have any skin on it!"

"I've been circumcised."

"What's that mean?"

"It means they cut the skin off the end."

"How old were you when it was cut off?"

"My mom said I was two days old."

"Did it hurt?"

"You bet it hurt, I couldn't walk for a year!"

3 + 3 = ?

(Submitted by Mariette Pathy Allen)

In group session one day, a psychiatrist was talking with three patients. He asked the first "What is three plus three?"

"153" answered the first patient.

The doctor wrote the answer down and turned to the second patient. The psychiatrist asked the second, "what is three plus three?"

"Tuesday" responded the second patient.

Once again, the doctor wrote the response on his pad. Finally, the psychiatrist asked the third patient "what is three plus three?"

"Six" answered the third patient.

"Why that's correct," the doctor replied, scribbling madly. "How did you come up with that?"

"Oh, easy," said the third patient, "I just subtracted Tuesday from 153."

Did you know...?

The "save" icon on Microsoft Word shows a floppy disk, with the shutter on backwards....

All porcupines float in water....

A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why....

TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- TATS member R. J. Schoubroek is glad to be alive. He had a recent auto accident that totaled his light pickup. He was driving on Clay Rd. and apparently hit a drop off on the right shoulder, overcompensated and went off the left side of the road and through the ditch; finally rolling his truck a few times. It turns out that he was not wearing his seat belt; and during the rollover he was thrown through the passenger's side door (even though he was driving!), thrown up in the air, and ended up in the bed of the pickup after it finally came to a stop. Other than a scrape and a few bruises, the only thing that happened to him was that he had to have his left ear sewn back on (other than loss of his pickup, that is....) He's okay now, and a little wiser. And R. J. ...to paraphrase Daniell in the play: next time – wear a seat belt!

- It seems to be a trend...as this issue goes to print, a number of our girls have recently returned from a lobbying trip to Washington! Monica Roberts, Marie Denise Gallagher, Daniell Christian McCleney and Arwen Schiesler all made this year's lobby days. Watch for more details in next month's issue.

- Japan's top model Gaku, is a 19 year old 88 lb. male. Ever since a Japanese stylist dressed him in mascara and mini-skirts, 'her' career has taken off and more than doubled. Strut yer stuff, girlfriend!

- Get a fake ID in Cali – easy! Anyone can get a state identification in California under any name they please. All they have to do is pay the extra \$12. It's unknown if this covers changing gender designation as well. If so inclined, a person could change their name every week out there! When they refer to "what's-her-name," they really mean *what's her name?...*as in *today???* Nowhere but California....

- On a more serious note from California...TG pioneer Carol Beecroft is in the Tulare, CA hospital recovering from a heart attack. Beecroft was the founder of Gender Expressions, which later merged with FPE to become Tri-Ess. Our thoughts go out to Ms. Beecroft for a speedy recovery.

- ANKARA, Turkey (AP) – A transsexual singer, whose battle to switch genders helped legalize sex changes in Turkey in the 1980s, is creating a new media furor. This time, it is over 48-year-old Bulent Ersoy's marriage to a 21-year-old man. And the latest controversy could make getting sex changes more difficult for others in this predominantly Muslim country.

Ersoy, who went to England for a sex change 14 years ago, has enjoyed notoriety as "Abla" or big sister in a show of the support for her gender change. During the military rule of the early '80s, Ersoy was barred from performing on stage because of his "effeminate" ways. He had to go to Britain for a sex change because they were illegal in Turkey then. On her return she won a court battle that granted her official recognition as a woman, opening the way for thousands.

But newspapers and television stations have attacked the morality of her April 4 wedding. "By trying to show her marriage as something normal, she has trodden all over the concept of the sacred family," wrote Sabah newspaper under a banner headline calling Ersoy "shameless." The public outrage about her wedding may boost support for legislation pending before Parliament that would make sex change operations harder to obtain in Turkey.

- Asbury Park, NJ (UPI) — The postman always wears...a dress? Postman Scott Shortreed decided that if the postal service wouldn't let him wear shorts in 80-degree weather until April, he'd wear the next best thing – a skirt.

Shortreed argued that women have a choice between pants and a skirt all year long, so he asked supervisor Vincent Daniels if he could exercise the same option. Daniels sarcastically said yes and that was enough for Shortreed, who then asked fellow postal worker Marise Galgano for help in coming up with a skirt that would fit him. She took a pair of his banned-till-April postal shorts, altered the crotch, and turned them into a below-the-knee skirt, which Shortreed wore on his route in Asbury Park. That was special delivery!

Daniels characterized Shortreed as a malcontent who wanted to make him look bad. Galgano said she was just concerned with how Shortreed looked and would have tailored the skirt to show a little more leg if he'd modeled them for her. Talk about a new way to 'Go Postal'... with a fe-mail touch!

Services, etc. .

PHYLLIS RANDOLPH FRYE

**Attorney and Counselor, and
Licensed Professional Engineer**

B.S. Civil Engineering, Texas A & M University 1970
M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Texas A & M University 1971
Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

Areas of Legal Practice:

--- Criminal Defense ---
--- Transgender Issues and Documents ---
--- Divorce and Family Issues ---
--- Wills, Power of Atty, "Living" Wills ---
Although licensed since 1981, I have not taken additional testing, therefore the State Bar requires that I state that I am "Not Certified by the Board of Legal Specialization"

Areas of Engineering Practice:

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TATS Tidbits
(Continued from Page 11)

• The GLBT community has its own financial network. The Gay Financial Network LLC (GFN) officially opened April 24 in New York. The GFN will feature an online array of complete financial services geared toward the community. Walter Schubert, founder and president of the parent company SGI Ltd., stated that he was "pleased that the response has been so overwhelmingly supportive." GFN will feature online trading, access to over 5000 mutual funds, 24 hour account access, ATM debit cards, automated bill payments, and much more. For more info, contact: Robb Argento or Denise Walpole of Terpin Group at Rargento@terpin.com or Dwalpole@terpin.com.

• Jerry Springer was on America's Most Wanted! True! However he was not one of the featured fugitives on the show, but instead was there to help nab a 'most wanted' suspect. One of Springer's shows last year featured beautiful transsexuals, and even had a segment where TS's and their boyfriends did a little Q & A with the audience. It turns out that one of the boyfriends of a blonde bombshell named Amber was a bank robbery suspect. Even worse, it turns out that they met while cellmates in prison! All the elements of a TS bash-fest....

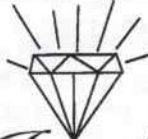
Surprisingly, they barely mentioned the transgendered element at all. It would've been all too easy for either AMW's John Walsh or Springer to play this to the hilt. Other than the initial mention, the rest of the segment focused on the suspect - as it should. I don't know whether to be happy or mad. Go figure!

TATS members stealing the show...

Jenifer René (left) and Daniell Christian McCleney (right) compare hands during a show stealing scene at TransGenderFest on April 4th.



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TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 6, Issue 6

Houston, Texas

June, 1998

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 GOES TO WASHINGTON

By Monica Roberts

On April 20 and 21 TATS members Marie Gallagher, Daniell McClency, Monica Roberts, and Arwen Schiesler journeyed to Washington DC to join other transgendered activists from across the US to lobby for trans-friendly language changes in the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1998, Violence Against Women Act II, and to ENDA.

Your TATS team focused our efforts on the Texas Congressional delegation. After a quick Lobbying 101 session, we started marching through the Rayburn, Longworth, and Cannon House office buildings, where our House reps have their offices. Our first stop was the office of District 9 congressman Nick Lampson, and we had a very productive meeting with Stanley Allen, his legislative assistant or LA's as they call them on Capitol Hill. We found out during our meeting that Stanley had just been elected to the board of the Gay and Lesbian Legislative Assistants Assn which invites speakers to their noon lunches. Upon hearing about GenderPAC and our concerns he asked us to pass along an invitation for Riki Wilchins and Dana Priesing (the GenderPAC Chief lobbyist) to

speak to their group. Score a big one for your TATS team!

We also had a very friendly response from Arwen's congressperson, who is none other than Sheila Jackson Lee of District 18! Matt Eggers and the rest of the staff in Congresswoman Lee's office were visibly concerned when we pointed out that the language in the bills we were lobbying had loopholes that needed to be closed. We spent a very productive 30 minutes with Congresswoman Lee's efficient staff and after leaving her office your rookie lobbyists were feeling very euphoric at that time.

Our remarkable hot streak continued when we visited Congressman Mac Thornberry's office, whose district covers the Panhandle and Wichita Falls area. We had a 4:00 PM appointment with another



TATS Team in the Halls of Congress: (L-R) Monica Roberts, Arwen Schiesler, Daniell Christian McClency and Marie Denise Gallagher pose in the Rayburn Bldg.

congressman, so we decided to walk

(Continued on Page 5)

UNITY BANQUET PACKS THE HOUSE!!! RECORD ATTENDANCE OF 118 SHOW UP FOR EVENT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster



Phyllis Frye, Michelle Myers, Clarence Bagby and Sarah DePalma enjoying the banquet.

What can I say about the Unity Banquet? I could heap my own superlatives on it, but as its coordinator, it would appear as grandstanding. So I won't. However I will say, based on comments from those who attended, that it was an unquestionable success.

If you base these things on attendance, those figures bear this out as well. According to Michelle Myers - treasurer for the prior most successful Unity Banquet sponsored by TATS - the record attendance was 61. Our total attendance this year was 118 - nearly double the previous record!

(Continued on Page 5)

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- June 13 Dr. Cole's Gender Prog. Meeting: Rosenberg Clinic / Galveston @ 10:30 AM
- June 27 Gay Pride Parade: on Westheimer in the Montrose @ 7:00 PM
- July 11 Social Meeting at: Stephanie Brooks' @ 3:00 PM
- July 25 Un-Meeting at Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM

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Katrina C. Rose

Jessica Wicks

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

What a month this has been! Lotsa happenings this May: TGAIN holds its first meeting; a record-setting Unity Banquet; a historic meeting between TG's and LGRL's Dianne Hardy-Garcia; the AIDS walk; and the official signing up for the Pride Parade, just to name the notable events. We also had a couple surprise announcements from Clarence Bagby at HGLPC, officially inviting the transgender community to become members, and Suzanne Anderson announcing a panel set up to address TG issues within LIB (Lesbians in Business). Of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't also mention my friend, Katrina Rose's graduation from South Texas College of Law. That's still not even all...as this issue goes to press, a number of us will sit in on a panel discussion at Diverse-Works at the behest of Laura Kellner. The pace for this old girl just keeps getting more and more hectic!



Your editor emceeing at the Unity Banquet.

The Unity Banquet was, of course, the big news. Suffice to say, I think it exceeded everyone's expectations - even mine! And I coordinated the thing! My initial plan was to work hard to push for about 80 attendees, something I thought we *might* be able to reach. I really had no idea that so many people were gonna show up in droves to buy tickets those final weeks. I think I drove Mike at Riva's bonkers with my ever-escalating attendance counts, and requests for more room, more food, etc.

Trying to get all the logistics together was another problem. Foremost among the problems was the award - the star of the show (literally). The lady who took my order did not get the date of the banquet correct, and presumed that she had a month and three weeks to get the award to me - not simply three weeks! So a couple days before the big event, I checked on the status of the award only to find it was

somewhere in transit via ground freight. Not only that, UPS (the shipper) couldn't even track it. So I scrambled around to order a replacement model without the engraving. At least I wanted to have something to hold in my hand to present; as opposed to standing there - Carol Merrill-style - gesturing at thin air as if I were on The Price Is Right™ while exhorting the audience to visualize this unseen award. I was able to secure a replacement award which would be delivered via Fed-Ex by noon Saturday. The replacement ordered, I continued on more last minute banquet plans.

D-day, the day of the banquet: I still had yet to buy a cheese tray, and I had trouble getting in touch with Jenifer René to print up a roster of attendees. Little stress. Even worse, I got a call from Chrissie Fusco that she was not going to be able to take photos for the banquet - Desiree's move (which she was helping with) was taking much longer than planned and she'd be to do the shoot. No problem, I secured Katrina as a backup / replacement. Everything would be fine as long as I got the award.... The award?!!

Noon came and went - no award. *Now* there's stress! 1:00 passed, 2:00 passed...no award. I got on the phone to Fed-Ex, but couldn't track the delivery because I had no tracking number! I called frantically to where I'd ordered the award - nothing but recordings. I was fit to be tied, when finally at 2:30 - *relief!* The award showed up just in time!

After that, I ran to print up a roster at Jenifer's, order up a cheese tray and arrive in time to begin the early shift at 6:30. Of course, when I arrived, it was already a packed house! For once everyone decided to arrive early! No rest here! I was off to the races without so much as putting on my make up! Then of course it was a scramble to solve all the problems that popped up with seating, food, etc. It was a hectic task, but the results were worth it!

A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

- Michelle Myers**
- Sarah DePalma**
- Phyllis Frye**
- Monica Roberts**
- Katrina C. Rose**
- Marti Bennett**

Marie Denise Gallagher

for forwarding articles

Lauren Robison, suburban Baltimore MD

for submitting photos & scanning

Katrina C. Rose and Daniell McCleney a great big thanks!!!

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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) 827-5913 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**

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at: **http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/**

A HISTORIC MEETING WITH DIANNE HARDY-GARCIA

By Sarah V. DePalma

On May 14, 1998 a historic meeting was held at the home of Phyllis Frye in Houston, Texas. The leaders of every transgender organization in the city of Houston and TGAIN were invited to meet with Clarence Bagby, new board member of the National Gay Lesbian Task Force and current President of the Houston Gay Lesbian Political Caucus, and Dianne Hardy Garcia, Director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas.

This meeting was significant because relations between the transgender community and the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL), have been unfriendly and at times, even hostile. A few years ago, *It's Time, Texas!*, the original name of TGAIN, staged a loud protest of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby at their Stop the Hate rally in Austin, Texas!

Several meetings later followed between the two organizations without resolution of the differences between them. The history between the Houston Gay Lesbian Political Caucus (HGLPC) and the transgender community could best be characterized as distant. Clearly any meeting between the parties involved would be a step forward from this sorry background.

Ms. Garcia spoke at some length about the threat posed by the right wing in both parties to the issue of adoption of children by gay and lesbian parents. Members of the transgender



A rare photo: (L-R) HGLPC's Clarence Bagby, Phyllis Frye, LGRL's Dianne Hardy-Garcia and TGAIN's Sarah DePalma all smiles at the meeting at Phyllis' home.

community spoke at some length about the issue of transgender inclusion. As the evening wore on however, it became clear that a good deal of overlap existed between the various factions and the subject turned to ways the organizations could work together.

As a result of these discussion a general

outline for cooperation has been developed. The issues of adoption and child custody are certainly of great importance to many members of the transgender community. Therefore TGAIN has agreed to work with the LGRL in raising support to fight the right wing on this issue. In return, the LGRL will support our efforts to gain passage of the name change/gender marker bill in the upcoming session of the legislature. In addition, the LGRL has several seats on their board of directors and has agreed to open up the election process to transgenders. Anyone interested in serving on the LGRL board should send their e-mail to me for more details

In Houston, the local organizations were very pleased to hear pledges of cooperation from Clarence Bagby. For the first time ever, leaders of the local transgender community are now recommending that tg's actively join and support the HGLPC. In fact Phyllis Frye, who has as much reason as anyone possibly could have for refusing to do so, actually wrote out her membership check following the discussions.

I want to stress that the agreements with the LGRL are not cast in stone. What we have at this point is an agreement to cooperate. Given the past history between the transgender community and the LGRL however, there is reason believe that this time, the agreements will be carried out.

TGAIN MEETS, DISCUSSES STRATEGY

By Sarah V. DePalma

A small but enthusiastic group of individuals met at my home in Houston on April 26, and agreed on the following issues:

1.) The name of the organization will be the Texas Gender Advocacy and Information Network or (TGAIN), using a stylized T and G in our communications whenever possible to stress the constituency we hope to serve.

However, this does not imply that we are not affiliated with *It's Time, America!* On the contrary, our literature and stationary will plainly state, "The Texas Chapter of *It's Time, America!*"

We chose to go with the TGAIN name due to the positive feedback we received from political leaders that they preferred the new name since it clearly stated our aims and mission. It was also felt that having the word "gender" in our name could be very useful in creating affiliations with groups such as NOW or other feminist organizations.

2.) We were in unanimous agreement that employment and employment protection issues

are the leading reasons for our existence. On my radio program we recently held a forum on the political needs of the tg community and employment related issues clearly were on the minds of all concerned. Toward that end we agreed that a bill we introduced into the legislature concerning the name gender marker process will be reintroduced. (A copy of that bill will be forwarded to this list shortly.) In addition to making the name change and gender marker change far more streamlined and less costly, the bill gives us a reason to lobby in Austin on behalf of employment related matters of genuine interest and perhaps even survival for many members of our community.

3) It was agreed that in support of this bill TGAIN, in cooperation with transgendered organizations from across the state, will sponsor the first ever transgender lobby day in Austin. No date was set and feedback on the timing of this event is encouraged.

4) On issues relating to the county or municipal levels of government, it was agreed that the

work of the Houston Transgender Caucus, completed in May 1995, and adopted unanimously by the Houston Town Meeting of June 1995, will serve as our basic outline. For those not familiar with the Transgender Caucus, it consisted of the Gulf Coast Transgender Community, Houston Cross Dressers Anonymous, the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, *It's Time, Texas!*, the Royal Sovereign Imperial Court of the Single Star, Society for Second Self-Tau Chi Chapter, Texas Area Transsexual Support, and was chaired by Dee McKellar. More information on this remarkable document will follow in the months ahead.

5) We had unanimous agreement that transgendered men and people of color should be especially encouraged to participate in TGAIN. For far too long we have seen meetings where not a single man or person of color was in attendance. That is not acceptable, and we will take whatever steps are required to encourage

(Continued on Page 9)

LiB Member Visits Congress

By Marie Gallagher

On 20nd and 21st Apr, I was privileged to be part of a group of women who visited Congress to express our concern that the current Hate Crimes Protection Act (HCPA) and the Violence Against Women Act II (VAWAIL) would not protect all persons equally. This lobbying effort was sponsored by Gender-PAC (Gender Public Advocacy Coalition) a grouping of many GLBT organizations. We also took the chance to mention that ENDA is flawed in the same manner and should be modified.

The Texas delegation was made up of four women from Houston: Arwin, Monica, Danielle, and myself. We were able to visit a majority of the Texas congresspersons' offices during the two days. And in all cases we were treated, at a minimum, with respect, except for one minor incident.

Our focus was on how any bill that concentrates solely on gender and not on "Perceived Gender" would not adequately cover masculine women, or effeminate men, regardless of their sexual orientation. For the most part, the Legislative Assistants (LAs) we spoke with were readily able

to see our point, and agreed that partial protection from violence or hate crimes was not going to do much good.

Our visit to Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee's office was particularly pleasant and we were not only welcomed, but in fact courted by her staff. They expressed real concern for our issues, and also regret that the Congresswoman was not available to meet with us personally.



They also "requested", very strongly, that they be allowed to take our picture as the Congresswoman had specifically asked for this. We were happy to comply as none

of us were particularly camera shy.

The only problem in what was generally a very receptive series of visits, was our visit to Congressman deLay's office. Danielle and I are both constituents of Congressman deLay, so his LA, while not thrilled to meet with us, had little choice. Otherwise, he would have alienated voters.

During the visit with the four of us, and two lobbyists from Kentucky, Danielle informed the LA of her status as a Post-operative Transsexual. At which point, the LA was visibly shaken.

Shortly thereafter, he ended the meeting. As soon as we had exited the office, and had all entered the hallway, the door to the office was SLAMMED behind us.

We returned the next day to get a copy of the LA's business card and to take pictures outside Congressman deLay's door. The Texas delegation are also members of the Texas Association for Transsexual Support (TATS) and Gulf Coast Transgender Community (GCTC). We have all planned to return next year. Perhaps some additional LiB and TATS/ GCTC members would like to join us next time.

Israeli Singer a Controversial Hero

By Dafna Linzer

JERUSALEM (AP) — Appalled that an Israeli transsexual singer won Europe's biggest song contest, religious leaders vowed Monday to block the competition from being held in Jerusalem next year.

"As far as I am concerned it shouldn't take place in the Holy Land at all," said Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox deputy mayor, Haim Miller. "It should stay in the land of the gentiles."

In the past, the Eurovision contest was ignored by Israel's Orthodox community. But this year's entry by Dana International caused outrage. Religious legislators have called the singer a disgrace to the Jewish state and even considered toppling Netanyahu's government over the issue.

Secular Israelis, however, can't get enough of the sultry singer, who was a man before a sex change operation in 1993.

The singer's supporters hailed her Saturday victory in the Eurovision contest in Birmingham, England, as a sign of increasing acceptance of the country's gay community. Dana International won with the song "Diva."

"They (the religious) didn't want her to go but she went and she won big," said Niv Sever, a gay politician with the liberal Meretz party.

Although Miller was instrumental in halting

Israel's premier modern dance troupe, Batsheva, from performing seminude last month at Israel's jubilee bash, ultra-Orthodox leaders may face a difficult battle in banning Eurovision from Jerusalem.

Israel considers Jerusalem to be its capital and hopes the popular contest, watched by millions, may lend some international legitimacy to its claim of sovereignty over all of the disputed city. The Palestinians want east Jerusalem as their future capital.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert dismissed his deputy as a "blabbermouth" and called his threats to prevent the Eurovision contest from coming to the holy city "laughable."

"Eurovision will take place in Jerusalem," he said.

But just in case, the speaker of Israel's parliament offered Jerusalem's Knesset building — where city hall has no authority — as a back-up venue.



Pride Parade Meeting Planned

By Marie Gallagher

The Houston TG community will once again be marching in this year's UNIFIED DIVERSIFIED ELECTRIFIED Pride Parade on June 27th at 9pm. This year we will be able to decorate also. A TATS/GCTC member has volunteered her van to be used as the TG float for this year's parade, but we will need some help designing and making the decorations for this vehicle.

If you would be interested in helping out, a planning meeting has been scheduled for 14 June 98, 2pm at Marie's house. Those wishing to assist with the planning of the decorations should call to get directions (or just use the ones from Jessica and Crystal's wedding) @ 281-568-5782.

At the planning meeting, we will be discussing placement of banners, electrification of the van, proper showing of the "colors" and placards for the TG groups in Houston and the arrangements for building the decorations / decorating. If you have anything to contribute, please consider joining us.



TATS GOES TO WASHINGTON

(Continued from Page 1)

in and asked to speak to the LA handling our bills. Out comes Clint Williamson, who attentively listened to our presentation. As a matter of fact, Marie and Daniell were doing such a great job that the other assistant stopped opening mail to listen to us. We also stopped by Congressman Ruben Hinojosa's office and enjoyed our visit with his LA.



DC Divas: Arwen Schiesler, Daniell Christian McCleney and Marie Denise Gallagher (L-R) pause for a pose in front of the nation's Capitol.

However, ladies and gents, not all of our visits went as smoothly! We received a polite, but cool reception from Congressman Ralph

Hall's office. Our 4:00 PM appointment was with Daniell and Marie's congressman, who is none other than House Majority Whip Tom DeLay!

You know you are in trouble as a TG activist when you walk into a Congressman's office and are greeted by an antique rifle hanging on the wall along with a deer head and models of military aircraft on his desks. We later found out that we were the

first TG activists that had entered his office in the entire history of the event much less even get an appointment with him (I guess he couldn't turn down two constituents and a member of his own party!) We expected a high level of negativity going in, but our visit surpassed even those bleak projections. When we left his office the door mysteriously slammed shut as we were 10 feet down the hallway! (we got a big laugh out of that).

Day Two found us in the downtown Washington offices of the HRC (the Human Rights Campaign) for a quick breakfast before we hopped on Metro for our appointment with my congressman, District 25's Ken Bentsen. Unfortunately the congressman had been called away for a meeting just before we arrived so I didn't get to see him (darn!), but we did have a nice visit with Vince Willmore, who is the Congressman's Administrative Assistant, who graciously allowed us in 30 minutes early and we expressed our concerns about VAWA II and the Hate Crimes Act of 1998. Unfortunately I had just missed Congressman Bentsen because he'd been called away to a meeting prior to our arrival and I was a little disappointed, but I did enjoy our chat with Mr. Willmore. After a quick lunch, we went back to the Sheila Jackson Lee office to thank them for the hospitality they had showed us and hoped that we would catch the congresswoman in the office to thank her personally for her support and her staff's efforts on our behalf. We then hustled off to our last ap-



The TATS crew with staffers from Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee's office take time for a photo.

pointment with Rosemarry Addy of Congressman Max Sandlin's office. Ms. Addy and the staff were gracious and they attentively listened to your TATS team.

Overall, we had a very positive experience on Capitol Hill, especially Arwen and myself, since this was our first visit to DC. Marie grew up in the Annapolis area (home of the Naval Academy) and her knowledge of the DC area and Metrorail was valuable to us. (Damn, why doesn't Houston have a subway system yet?) Marie along with our spokesmodel Daniell did an excellent job articulating our concerns to our Texas lawmakers, and kudos to Arwen for setting up the appointments. We all shared the hard work of researching the voting records of the Texas Congressional Delegation on our issues.

We are all eagerly anticipating our return to Washington for next year's Gender Lobbying Day. Our intentions for the Texas group were to dispel some TG myths and help clarify our position on VAWA II and the Hate Crimes Act. Hopefully we also showed some folks on the Hill that we are concerned citizens who work, vote and pay taxes and we aren't "Jerry Springer Show" sound bites! We are a diverse multiethnic cross section of America who wish to fully take part in American society.

I think we succeeded!

UNITY BANQUET PACKS HOUSE WITH RECORD ATTENDANCE

(Continued from Page 1)

The fact that there were so many in attendance, and adding the fact that there have been absolutely no negative comments yet on the banquet, indicate more than just a resounding success.

There were a number of non-TG attendees of note. Of course Kathy Hubbard, spouse of Annise Parker, was there on behalf of Annise's office to present our certificate and accept Annise's award.

Also attending was Matthew Eastus, the mayor's liaison to the GLBT community. During a brief speech he offered his help for

any requests to the mayor's office.

Realtor Suzanne Anderson, director of LIB (Lesbians In Business) also attended and received an award of her own. Always a TG community supporter, she also extended an invitation for all of us to become members of LIB. She also announced the forming of a panel discussion at LIB focusing on trans-genders, and issues germane to our community. Again, she invited us to be panelists on that discussion at LIB.

Clarence Bagby of Houston Gay Lesbian Political Caucus (HGLPC) was also there and

(Continued on Page 8)



Couples showing unity: (L-R) Jessica Wicks & Crystal Erwin, Patty & Marie Gallagher



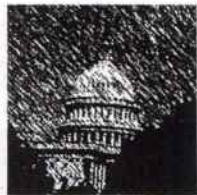
GET ON THE PLANE, TRAIN AND BUS

MY PERSONAL NOTEBOOK ABOUT GENDER LOBBY DAY 1998

By Monica Roberts

Back in April I finally got a chance to do something that I've wanted to do for a long time being that it's no secret around TATS about how I'm constantly talking about how transgenders need to be politically aware. I decided to make every effort to attend this year's Gender Lobby Day (especially since my airfare wasn't a problem). However, a series of problems cropped up that nearly derailed my participation in this event.

At Continental we bid for our vacations in November, so at that time I assumed that I had the lobby day dates covered and I didn't check it until we changed the flight schedule in March, forcing us to rebid our work schedules. Long story short, my off days changed to Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (which actually was fortuitous). When my off days changed, I went to personnel to make sure my vacation hadn't changed. That was when I discovered to my horror that I bid the wrong week and it was too late to change it! That forced me into a mad scramble to get my Sunday and Monday work days covered so that I could attend the Lobby Day. For two weeks I had no luck since yours truly has a 10 hour shift working gates that handle Newark, L.A., Washington, and international departures and most of my co-workers hate working those flights! I was beginning to get depressed until my co-worker Lucy Schroeder offered to work Monday for me since she was looking for extra hours (Thanks Lucy, I owe you big time!) My next problem was that weekend the flights were packed and my supervisor couldn't release me until 6:30 PM. The last flight from IAH leaves for DC at 7:00 PM and luckily for me it was at Gate 20 and I was working a Miami flight at Gate 21.



Unfortunately I got trapped on that Miami trip past 6:30 and we are allowed to dispatch flights 5 minutes early if every passenger is on board. I had called my co-workers and told them I was trying to catch that DC flight and I would be running up at the last minute. Well, they assumed I was on the plane and pulled the jetway. I was coming off the Miami aircraft next door when I saw the jetway come back to my horror. I ran next door bags in hand while my co-workers put the jetway back on the aircraft and allowed me to board. Had I missed that flight, I would have been forced to go through Newark and employees had been getting bumped there for two days. The next flight



From left, Marie Denise Gallagher, GenderPAC's Riki Ann Wilchins, Monica Roberts and Arwen Schiesler

from Houston didn't leave until 8:00 AM Monday morning and I wouldn't have gotten to DC until noon. Despite that, I did get a first-class seat on the way up and I had a great conversation with a gentleman who was headed to DC to do some lobbying himself. I arrived in rainy DC about 10:45 PM and my next task was to find a phone and alert Daniell and Arwen that I was in DC and then find the Metro station to make the train trip to the hotel. I called the hotel and Marie answered the phone and told me which trains to catch. I got to the Metro platform at 11:10 PM just in time to see my train pull away from the station.

I started getting nervous because the last train from the airport leaves about 12:10 and this was my first trip to DC. Happily another train pulled up a few minutes later and I was on my way to the hotel. Three trains and 45 minutes later I arrived at my stop and proceeded to make my "short" walk to the hotel. The short three block turned out to be at least half a mile and I'm tired since I'd been up since 6:00 AM Houston time and since I'm now in the Eastern Time Zone I lost another hour, and to make things worse, it starts to drizzle. Finally I see the hotel and get to the house phone to get the directions to the room, where Daniell and Arwen are waiting for me and begin filling me in on the strategy session that happened earlier that Sunday and they gave me the 411 on which TG activists made the trip and who didn't. We finally drifted off to sleep at 2:00 AM to prepare for our big day.

We got up at sunrise Monday morning to a gorgeous day and went in the lobby to have breakfast with the rest of the TG activists before we made that walk to the train station. As I sat with Arwen and Daniell eating my doughnuts it finally hit me that I was finally here and a

dream of mine was now reality. A few minutes later Riki Wilchins showed up and we then began marching to the Metro station to ride the train to Capitol Hill. We gathered at the Capitol Steps to take our "class photo" and then hustled to the Rayburn House Office building to rendezvous with Dana Priesing, GenderPAC's chief lobbyist and the person who was coordinating the lobbying effort. We grabbed some tables in the cafeteria and I took a moment to survey the room and watch the lobbying effort. We grabbed some tables in the cafeteria and I took a moment to survey the

room and watch the cross section of America that was sitting there. Capitol staffers, aides, professional lobbyists, and even a certain Congressman by the name of Newt Gingrich who was eating breakfast! Soon it was time to actually start calling on the congressional offices that we'd made appointments with. As we walked up and down the street toward the different buildings passing small groups of TG activist, tourists, and staffers I began to reflect upon the history of this country, and as we walked the hallways in the different office buildings I began to reflect upon the great men and women who have passed through the same halls that I was now walking. People like Mickey Leland, Barbara Jordan, and John Kennedy. I began to think that maybe one day that someone who is transgendered will one day walk these same halls as a Congressman and that I was doing my small part to help that day become a reality. My eyes locked on the name plates by the doors of the congressmembers, the state pennants from colleges or pro teams, framed pictures of party leaders, or in some cases crayon drawings from children in those districts.

As we left our final appointment on that first day and headed to the Capitol South subway station, I was tired, but elated. Our mission was only halfway completed and we still had another day left before we winged our way back to our separate corners of the US. As we ate dinner at a local restaurant in the College Park area we talked about our day and compared our experiences with our fellow activists, some who were having a tougher time than we did that morning. It was a lot of fun talking to some of these folks just to get a fresh perspective on the TG rights battle in other parts of the country and get to do

(Continued on Page 8)

ANNISE PARKER RECEIVES INAUGURAL 'APOGEE AWARD'

SUZANNE ANDERSON, PEGGY RUDD ALSO FETED AT EVENT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

This year's annual Unity Banquet was special in more than the usual way. Awards were passed out as individuals were honored for their contributions to the transgender community. As GCTC's representative coordinator of this year's banquet, I created an award for the person who's done the most for the TG community of Houston over the course of the year. That award – the Apogee Award – went to our most solid ally in city hall, the honorable Annise Parker.



Kathy Hubbard (R) presents Unity Banquet coordinator Vanessa Edwards Foster with certificate of recognition to the Unity Banquet from Councilmember Annise Parker

Annise's track record over the years has been very trans-inclusive, and her action before city hall in early February only galvanized that. When Mayor Brown announced an executive order February 11 to open city hiring to include gays and lesbians, it was Annise who stood up for us and insisted there be wording to cover the hiring of transgenders as well. It wasn't an easy position to take: she took a lot of heat for her stance from the conservative radio talk show types. As a result of her courage, for the first time we are to be considered equally when it comes to hiring practices for the City of Houston. It's only for municipal hiring, but it's a very important start. For this, Annise Parker is our first recipient of the Transgender Community's Apogee Award.

Annise was unfortunately out of town on city business, however her spouse, Kathy Hubbard accepted the award in her stead. While there Kathy also presented us with a Certificate of Recognition from the office of councilmember Annise Parker. The award recognized the 1998 Unity Banquet "for its efforts to promote unity and collaboration within the Transgendered, Transsexual and Transvestite Communities" of Houston.

Brenda Thomas also stepped up to the mike



Phyllis Frye presents the inaugural Apogee Award to Kathy Hubbard, spouse of city councilmember Annise Parker

to award a couple plaques of recognition herself. In keeping with the theme of the Unity Banquet, the first winner was the person who first came up with the concept for the Unity Banquet in the first place: Tri-Ess' own spouse emeritus, Peggy Rudd. It was Peggy who first wondered aloud why the groups weren't getting along, and gave wings to the idea of a group meeting to communicate in the hopes fostering unity. Therefore it was very fitting that she was recognized on this, a most perfect example of her initial efforts.

The final individual Brenda recognized was Suzanne Anderson. Some five years ago, HCDA lost its meeting location, and asked Suzanne if she would consider allowing them to meet at her office

on Westheimer. Instead of questioning Brenda as to who she was or what the organization was about, she tossed the keys and told her she could meet there. That was over five years ago, and HCDA still meets there to this day. Suzanne has also been instrumental in incorporating transgenders into Lesbians in Business (LIB), the group she presides over. While accepting her plaque, she also announced the formation of a panel discussion on transgendered issues in LIB. It was a fitting end to a night of recognition, tribute, and unity.

APOGEE AWARD CREATED

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

As the president of this year's host organization – GCTC – I wanted to make this a special, more memorable event. After mulling over the obvious entertainment-orientated possibilities, I decided instead to do something more noteworthy: create an award for the individual who had done the most for the TG community over the course of the year.

The first task was to choose a befitting name. Eschewing the obvious names with 'transgender' in it, I searched for something more representative of the award's winner. Initially I considered Zenith, but discarded it for sounding trite (not to mention too 'commercial'...I didn't want it sounding corporate sponsored.) Apogee seemed to fit the spirit of the award perfectly. Defined as the furthest or the highest point, it most closely defined the eventual winner – the person who went the furthest, and thus, represented the high point of the year for the TG community. Finding the award's first winner was a much easier task.

Coincidentally, about the same time I'd decided on the banquet's award, city councilmember Annise Parker pushed for an addendum to a successful city hiring mandate that was transgender inclusive. That made my job of choosing the first award winner a virtual no-brainer. Even beyond her support for us during the city hiring issue, Annise has been a staunch ally.

Hopefully this will become an annual award, appointed by a committee of representatives from all five support and social groups, as well as Phyllis Frye representing ICTLEP, and Sarah DePalma of the newly-monikered TGAIN. Though this initial award was created and awarded on the sly (I wanted to make it a surprise), none other than Phyllis wrote me afterward also suggesting a recognition of Annise. I knew I was on the right track.

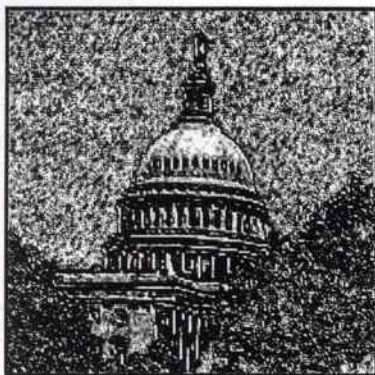
It's my sincere hope that this award will become a touchstone for the TG community, and a way of paying tribute to those who've done the most for us all.

...PLANE, TRAIN OR BUS...
(Continued from Page 6)

a little personal bonding. Later that night Marie had to return a rental car to the BWI airport, but before we did we stopped at a little pub to meet with Angela and three other members of the Kentucky contingent before we drove to Baltimore. We drove down Rhode Island Ave where Embassy Row is and it was ironic that the first embassy that I saw and recognized was the South African one! That triggered recollections of Nelson Mandela's long and ultimately successful battle to bring down apartheid and later become South Africa's president. We eventually arrived at the pub (which according to Angela our Newsletter Editor is very familiar with!) had our drink and scooted off to Baltimore.

The next morning we wrapped up our appointments and then walked the six blocks to the Lincoln Memorial. The Lincoln Memorial is on one end of the Mall and the Washington Monument is on the other end and I sat on the marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial looking to my left at the low black granite wall of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial across the street with the Capitol dome in the distance. I began to think about all of the people who shed their blood for this country in battle just to ensure its survival. We transgenders are in a battle too, to ensure that the laws of our cities, states, and ultimately the country protect our fundamental rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as enshrined in the Constitution.

I'm very glad that I made this trip. Because of my work schedule I don't get to attend as many of the TATS meetings as I'd like to because one of the realities of working for an airline is "Seniority Rules," which translates into Monica works weekends even with 11 years on the job, and that bothers me, especially since I'm a board member! The TG community was there for me when I needed them, and I felt that I needed to give back something to the community and to TATS. I hope that my small contribution of time helps move this community closer to the day when a person comes out and doesn't have to fear for their lives or their jobs.



UNITY BANQUET PACKS THE HOUSE, SET RECORD
(Continued from Page 5)

spoke about the importance of unity, and the gay and lesbian community's admiration and even envy of our [TG] active community. He also extended an open invitation for all transgenders to join the Caucus, and help make a change for real equality in HGLPC. While there, Clarence also had an engaging and rather productive chat with both Phyllis Frye and Sarah DePalma. I applaud Clarence's efforts at bridge building, that's the spirit of unity!

Maybe this is a sign that we are reaching true 'unity' in our community. It wouldn't matter if I had worked round the clock on preparations - if nobody showed up, what good would it have done? Because of the participation from the entire community, this Unity Banquet was the most successful yet!



Daniell even thought the food was pretty good!

For that, I must thank the entire TG community - and our friends as well - for showing up in such unprecedented numbers. You were the single most important factor in this success.

Others I wish to thank for helping in this success were the various groups who helped 'sell the place out.' HCDA sold all ten of their tickets! HCDSC went one further and sold all ten plus another one on top of that! Tri-Ess sold thirteen tickets! And, not to be outdone, TATS sold eighteen tickets! That was 52 tickets sold from the other organizations! Way to go gals!

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Phyllis, who sent out an Email that generated another four ticket sales besides the two she and Trish had already purchased. Most of all, Joan Bray was my angel! She sat down when I went to deliver a couple tickets to her, and started phoning people. She alone brought in an extra 12 at-



A dynamic duo: Daniell McCleney (L) and Alison Kubota, stylin' at the banquet.

tendees, on top of the ticket she bought for herself! To Joan Bray, thank you for your superior effort!!!

One last person I do wish to thank in all of this is Mike Sibouyeh at Riva's. Not only do I think the location helped make this banquet as successful as it was, but he bent over backwards to accommodate us in any way that he could.

From the first moment I spoke with him after the Annise Parker Victory Party, to the final weeks when the attendance numbers climbed to near capacity; he was nothing but an absolute gentleman. He assisted, provided and reassured me every step of those hectic last couple weeks! The service was good, the food was great, and the atmosphere was perfect! We couldn't have asked for a better Unity Banquet, and it was due in no small part to the efforts of Mike and all of his staff at Riva's! On behalf of myself and GCTC, a sincere thanks to you all!



Jennifer Lytwyn (L) and Big Roy McCarthy enjoy an intense conversation at the GCTC-hosted 1998 Unity Banquet. Despite the serious appearance here, everyone had a wonderful time!

ENCHANTED FOREST By Marti Bennett

Hello again, sorry that I haven't written in a while, things got a bit hectic for a while. It started with my being approved for HRT on 3/24/98. My plan was to tell my employer as soon as I started to take them so that everyone would have time to adjust to the new situation gradually. When the time came that it would be obvious that there were changes going on with me I planned to write an open letter to my co-workers explaining what was happening and what was going to happen. So much for plans. I told my supervisor about what was going on in private so that he would not be caught unprepared. Four days later I was called into his office and told that "The Quality of my Work" was badly down and if it didn't improve in one month I would be subject to measures up to and including dismissal. For the next month I worked harder and more carefully than I ever had in my professional career. I documented everything that I did and kept records of every instruction and suggestion that was made to me. Just after I finished two important pieces of computer programming I was called into my supervisors office and told that while I had done everything that could have been expected of me, he didn't feel that I could keep up the work at this level and so he wanted to have me leave. Since I had a bit of control at this point I negotiated for two weeks notice and this to be followed by payment for my personal and vacation time, at which time I would voluntarily resign. I saw no future with that company in the long term and felt that I would be better off resigning than to let them fire me.

This presented a major alteration in the time frame that I envisioned, things that I planned to do in six to nine months I had to go ahead with immediately. Since I planned to go to work as Marti when the time came I decided that this would be the time. I updated my resume and went full time the day that I walked away from that job. Since then I have been looking for employment on a full time basis and sending out resumes like they are going to go out of style. I have learned a lot in the past few weeks as to how to go about getting a job in the gender role of my choice. Unfortunately, so far I have to say that what I have learned is negative information. I have had interviews with placement personnel who have made me wait for hours as I watched other applicants go past me. I have interviewed with people who later won't even talk with me by phone. I really don't mind that some people do not care to work with me, but, if they don't want to, please tell me so that we will not waste each others' time.

So, now you know what has been going on and why I sort of "Dropped off the Earth", I

hope that one of the leads that I have been chasing will come through in the near future. I have several placement professionals (Head Hunters) that tell me that with my background that they should be able to place me fairly quickly. I am holding to that hope and praying that it comes quickly, I really don't want to go too deep into the money that I have set aside for future surgical work that I will need in the long term.

Now to what has been happening in the community. The Aids walk was a success for the TG community, the team shirts that Desiree designed were far and away the best that I saw from any team. Anise Parker demanded that she get one as soon as she saw them and immediately put it on. She then proceeded to walk with us for a good portion of the walk and be photographed with us several times. Good press for the community, and a very worthy cause too. I got a bit emotional while we were there, the Aids Quilt got to me, you see, I have lost four friends to Aids and it was hard to not shed a few tears for those that are gone and those that are still suffering from this grim affliction. I don't want to get on a soap box, but, I do urge each and every one to be active in the cause of Aids eradication. Don't let it be placed on the back burner and forgotten.

By the time that this issue comes out the first annual Galveston gay parade will be history and I hope that we make a good showing in support of GLBT rights there. The panel discussion sponsored by Diverseworks on May 31 will also be done, Katrina Rose being the representative of the TG community on the panel. Of all the girls and boys that I know, I can't think of anyone who can better represent us. Not that there aren't other leaders in the community that are equally capable of presenting us in an unbiased light, I can think of at least a half dozen people well qualified for this spokesperson assignment. It is just that Katrina volunteered first. Speaking of Katrina, I want to go on record congratulating her for completing law school and wish her the best of luck with the Bar exam. I have heard that this is really a hard test.

That is about all I know of that's going on in the community except the self defense class being taught June 4 through June 25 by Lilly Catherine between 8-9 on Thursdays at 6605 South Rice Ave. The cost is free, wear what you are comfortable with (Remember that you will be moving around a lot) and you can obtain additional details by calling 713-529-1209. While it is always better to not get in trouble, a little knowledge of what to do may be important. Hate crimes are still happening all over the na-

tion. If anyone cares to send me an e-mail the address is db810@pdq.net

TGAIN MEETS...
(Continued from Page 3)

full participation by all members of the transgendered community.

6) There was total agreement that any organization which is perceived as serving only one city or just one community (In this case, Houston or transsexuals only) is destined to fail. Our goal is to have a municipal chapter of TGAIN in Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston within three months; Austin, Waco, and El Paso within six months, and many of the smaller cities within a year from now. Leadership positions are open to anyone. That means cross dressers, transgendered men and women, chicanos, african americans, and people who are purple with green stripes. If you are transgendered, the spouse or significant other of a transgendered person, friend or family member, you are welcomed to full participation in any capacity and level you choose, So there you have it. Although the numbers at the first meeting were small, I believe a great deal got accomplished. The next step is up to you. Won't you lend a hand toward education and advocacy on your own behalf? Share your knowledge about us with a friend. Publish our stuff in your newsletters. Wherever and whenever possible, stand up for yourself. When you do this you stand for others as well.

JAPAN'S FIRST SRS TO BE FtM

Saitama University appears to be on the verge of providing the first legal sex-reassignment surgery (SRS) in Japan. The first recipient is slated to be a female-to-male transsexual (FTM) from the nation's Tohoku region.

Melinda Whiteway, a Board Member of ICTLEP was pleased to hear of the approval of the operation, adding "I would not have figured conservative Japan to be on the cutting edge" of SRS. Japan is quite conservative when it comes to the modern medical procedures that it allows, most notably organ donations.

Takao Harashina, a surgeon at Saitama, applied to the university's ethics committee in 1995 to perform two such operations. The committee concluded that the operations were ethically permissible but also felt Japanese society would not approve. Eventually, the university formed a gender clinic which produced a set of guidelines for diagnosing and treating transsexuals. A panel of experts at the clinic recommended to the ethics committee that the surgery should be allowed to be performed. If approved, the first such operation would take place this summer.



PINHEAD OF THE WEEK: WHITE IS NOT RIGHT

By George Diaz of the Sentinel Staff

Dear Reggie White: Just a friendly note from the "Sodomite society," reminding you that you remain a pinheaded bozo. Given a chance to clarify your absurd comments regarding ethnic groups and homosexuality during a nationally televised interview with ABC, all you did was perpetuate your image as a bigoted, narrow-minded buffoon.

Get a clue about acceptance, forgiveness and understanding, principles that you should hold dearly as a pious man. As it stands, the other "P" word is much better fit to describe your philosophical drivel. Gotta go now. I'm joining 29 other family members for dinner in the three-bedroom home we share. You know all about Hispanics and that togetherness thing.

REGGIE WHITE'S WIFE SPEAKS

(Submitted by Lauren Robison)

NEW YORK (AP) - Reggie White's wife said CBS was "too scared" to hire her husband as a football commentator because of his controversial speech to the Wisconsin Assembly. White, the Green Bay Packers' defensive lineman who first retired last week and then said he would play one more year, used ethnic stereotypes in his remarks last month and called homosexuality "one of the biggest sins" in the Bible.

"They were too scared of the Sodomite community is what they said," Sara White told ABC's "20/20," according to excerpts of the interview to be broadcast. "Well, you know what? Shame on them. I feel sorry for them because they can't stand the truth."

CBS had been talking to White about becoming an analyst, but the network said outside groups had no bearing on their decision to not hire him.

White, an ordained Baptist minister, said he does not regret his speech. "My intent was not to humiliate anyone," White told ABC. "It was to get people to realize, 'OK ... we are different, we have different cultures. If we come together, we will have more of an impact on the world.'"

White said he stands by his remarks regarding gays. "I am going to speak the truth and I am going to speak out against things that's hurting our children, that's killing off our people," White said. "If people think that's a contradiction and that's hate, they need to take them up with God, not with Reggie White."

Reggie White: The Choice of Pro- Discrimination

YPSILANTI, Mich., April 24 [PRNewswire] - The pro-discrimination lobby here today announced its choice of former football great Reggie White as a spokesman for their cause and a voice to rally around in their effort to repeal Ypsilanti's anti-discrimination ordinance.

"The choice of White as an exemplar of their values reveals the real attitudes and stereotypes at the heart of the pro-discrimination lobby," said Mark Leonard, president of Washtenaw Rainbow Action Project. White's statements to the Wisconsin Legislature last month perpetuated archaic stereotypes and alienated many who once were his fans. In his formal address, White pronounced that Blacks "are good at celebration;" Hispanics "can put twenty, thirty people in one home;" Asians "can turn a television into a watch;" and Whites "know how to tap into money."

"Attitudes like White's and those of the pro-discrimination lobby risk setting back the modern civil rights movement by 30 years. Is this what we want?" asks Leonard. "We are encouraged that the majority of Ypsilanti voters will vote NO on proposition C, which would repeal the ordinance and endorse discrimination in Ypsilanti."

"Ironically, choosing White may signal hope for Ypsilanti citizens who want to preserve the city's hard won anti-discrimination ordinance," said Leonard, "because most Americans recognize his ideas as ignorant and intolerant, and know they come at great cost to everyone. We encourage every citizen to seek out the truth, rather than accept the pro-discrimination lobby's broad, divisive generalizations."

Washtenaw Rainbow Action Project is Washtenaw County's leading gay and lesbian advocacy organization. WRAP is dedicated to promoting the equality, well-being and self-respect of Washtenaw County's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community. By providing leadership, resources and advocacy, WRAP acts as a catalyst for needed change.



TG folks and "Mother's or Father's Day"

By Phyllis Frye

Many TG folks have given birth to lovely children. They still love their children and their children still love them. Even so, sometimes there is awkwardness when Mothers Day and Fathers Day rolls around.

In the case of the MTF's: How do your kids pay homage to their father who is no longer a man? If they pay homage to you on Mothers Day, that might cause their mother to be hurt. If they pay homage to you on Fathers Day, that might cause other stresses.

In the case of the FTM's: How do your kids pay homage to their mother who is no longer a woman? If they pay homage to you on Fathers Day, that might cause their father to be hurt. If they pay homage to you on Mothers Day, that might cause other stresses.

I dealt with this for over a decade. My child was growing up and dealing with his own teenage sexual and gender confusion. You do not have to be TG to go through that. I never got cards and flowers for either Mothers Day or Fathers Day. When I went to church on Mothers Day and Fathers Day, I felt awkward, not knowing which day to claim as all of the other mothers or fathers stood. I gave up going to church on that Sunday. It was too painful. I also learned to hate those two days for the pain I felt.

My child is now grown up, married and a parent. We spend lots of time together, and from time to time, whether we are fishing or going to a baseball game or working together in the backyard building a raised bed garden, we chuckle over that time being some "father and son time". He is comfortable with me being a woman and also with me being his father.

Every year, somewhere in between Mothers Day and Fathers Day, he and his wife send a "Happy Phyllis and Trish Day" to acknowledge their love for me and my spouse. It is the kind of thing that makes Trish and me cry with happiness. It is truly an homage from a child to a parent -- just as Mothers Day and Fathers Day are supposed to be.

I share this in hope that it will offer a way to work things out with your kids or with your parents. Love, Phyllis



Out, Proud and Below the Equator: TGs in New Zealand

By Katrina C. Rose

In the South Pacific, about a thousand miles due east of Tasmania and two thousand due north of the Antarctic circle, you'll find two large islands and a smattering of smaller ones. Welcome to New Zealand: home of the kiwi – and an increasingly visible transgender population.

Houston, population 1.8 million (the city, not the metro area), recently elected its first openly gay official – council member Annise Parker. New Zealand, with a population only about twice that of Houston, in addition to a gay member of Parliament now has two out *transgendered* elected officials.

In 1993, male-to-female transsexual Georgina Beyer was elected to the District Council of Carterton, a town in the Wairarapa area that is considered rather conservative. Two years later she was elected mayor and has been approached by New Zealand's Labour Party to consider running for the Wairarapa seat in Parliament. In one round of New Zealand local elections, out of 13 GLBT candidates for various offices, Beyer was the only one to emerge a winner.

She would be the underdog in a Parliament race, but the incumbent is on the short end of some ill will concerning everyday problems of his constituents, particularly hospital services. Beyer's successful mayoral campaign in 1995 focused on themes that cross gender lines: everyday problems like homelessness and unemployment. After winning she stated "The Carterton-area people are pretty conservative but a lot of people wanted something different to happen to the Council." "Something different" can be something as simple as responsiveness to an issue as mundane as public toilets. Last summer, Beyer and two other Wairarapa mayors fought to save toilets on Rimutaka Hill, then padlocked, from destruction.

Parliament may be the next stop for "something different."

More recently, Jaquie Grant was elected to the county council of the Grey District on South Island (one of the two large islands of NZ.) Grant should be noteworthy to Texans – not simply because of the elected office she now holds but also because of the esteem in which she is held by New Zealand's Children and Young Person's Service. Grant, known as "Tranny Granny," is approved by the service as a foster parent and has fostered over 50 children.

That is New Zealand.

This is Texas. There have been rumblings that the next session of the Texas Legislature will see bills introduced that, if enacted, would



Madame mayor, Georgina Beyer: the first TS elected mayor in NZ & the world (?)

establish an absolute prohibition against GLBTs from having custody of children – stay tuned (and be vigilant.)

Perhaps this ability of TG office-seekers to get votes comes from the visibility of the TG population as a whole in NZ – a population which is becoming more and more, well, visible. Ralph Unger, a clinical psychologist in Christchurch and an expert on transgender issues, says "Its like coming out for gays. People don't want to keep the secret any longer."

As New Zealand accepts its down-to-earth TG politicians, it also accepts the less sublime such as Carmen, the "red light cabaret queen" of Wellington. Sex workers should take note: the red light district need not be the end of the line. Prior to her current position as mayor, Georgina Beyer had, for a time, worked as a prostitute.

Aside from politics and show business (yes, more than a few people have said that there is no difference between the two), there are, of course, average lives.

Steve Robb, of Lower Hutt, a veterinarian, husband and father of three sons announced that as of June 15 he would be Susan Robb. Wellington artist Paul McKay, husband and father of two sons and a daughter will soon become Claudia. Both are luckier than most in that their spouses are entirely supportive. And, McKay says of his children "The kids have accepted it with no trouble. They know I am taking hormones. The containers sit on the windowsill in the kitchen." Last year, McKay and his wife established a support group for crossdressers and transsexuals. There are between 70 and 80 people in the group.

Veterinarian Robb has stated that clients

"have been remarkably protective and supportive." One client in particular did express shock at the revelation but said that Robb was so good with his dogs that he'll continue going to Robb's clinic.

Being judged on one's ability – isn't that how things are *supposed* to work? Apparently in New Zealand it does.

Does that make America – land of Pat Buchanan, Focus on the Family, Pat Robertson, Promise Keepers, and www.godhatesfags.com – Old Zealand?

Or just plain old?

The Top 16 MENSA Pick-Up Lines

16. "This is your brain. This is your brain on my naked thigh. Any questions?"
15. "Could you help me get this tie tack out of my hand?"
14. "Towards what end does a substantially empathetic demoiselle such as yourself inhabit a locus such as this?"
13. "What say we skip this nerd-fest and hit an all-night symposium on Euclidean Geometry?"
12. "Perchance, would you be inclined to participate, at my domicile, sans apparel, in a modicum of copulation?"
11. "It doesn't take a genius to see how gorgeous you are, but if it did, I'd be overqualified."
10. "You'll have to excuse me – Your presence excites me beyond all capacity for cognitive discourse."
9. "Vini, Vidi, Va-va-voom!"
8. "You must be tired, because you've been running quadratic equations through my mind all night."
7. "That tape on your glasses really sets off your eyes."
6. "According to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle of Quantum Mechanics, we may already be making love right now."
5. "If I were to mention to you that you have a bellus corpus, would you take umbrage?"
4. "I bet your brain stem reaches almost down to your gluteus maximus."
3. "Ooohh, your IQ is 145? I like 'em dumb and strong!"
2. "By visually measuring the wrinkles in the front of your pants, calculating your body mass based on your height and weight, and dividing that number by your waist size – I conclude that you have absolutely nothing in your pocket and are, in fact, glad to see me."
1. "Baby, I'll have you barking like a *canis familiaris Runner Up, "I Q, You Q, We all Q for I.Q.",



TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• Is there a doctor in the house? How about a lawyer? Maybe, both...our own Katrina Rose graduated May 17 with her doctorate of Jurisprudence from the South Texas College of Law. Congratulations Kat! Next step, the bar exam. Then we'll actually be able to boast two out lawyers in our little group. How many other TS groups can say that?



Katrina Rose (L) gives the 'thumbs up' as Phyllis Frye (R) applauds & cheers her on.

- Yet another key member of national TG community has taken leave. Dana Priesing, the backbone behind the organizing wing of GenderPAC has gone on an indefinite sabbatical "to attend to her wobbly financial condition." Priesing, a Washington DC attorney, has acted as Riki Ann Wilchins' right hand for a number of years. Organizing the annual TG Lobby Days schedule, acting as a permanent presence on Capitol Hill, and sending out reports on the status and progress of what's transpired 'on the hill'; she's been a tireless foot soldier in the battle for transgender rights. Her sabbatical is well-deserved...but we can't help but hope it's short-lived. I'll truly miss her.
- More big news from DC ... NGLTF, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, which inclusified its mission statement recently, elected a TG person to its Board just last week. Kudos to our friends at the Task Force. More details in the next issue....
- Don't forget to protect yourself! Actually it's not the kind of protection you're probably thinkin' of (though that's not a bad idea either!) This is more along the lines of what to do when you're accosted, how to defend yourself, and how to avoid being a victim. HCDSC's president, Lilly Roddy, has offered her expertise to show us just that! Lilly is a second degree black belt, and probably knows a bit about how to fend off attackers. She'll be holding classes at 6605 S. Rice Ave. every Thursday in June, from 8 PM to 9 PM - wear something casual! Email: Lillycath@AOL.com or call 713-529-1209 for details. Domo origato, sensei!
- PFLAG moves toward trans-inclusion ... The PFLAG Transgender Special Outreach Network (T-SON) is pleased to report that the PFLAG National Board of Directors has accepted T-SON's request and its own Bylaws Committee's recommendation to add transgendered to PFLAG's mission statement by a unanimous vote. The vote now goes to the membership at the PFLAG Annual Meeting in San Francisco on September 12, 1998.
- From the land of Kiwi...New Zealand's first ever transsexual mayor has taken office. Georgina Beyer

has become the newest mayor in Carterton, a small coastal town in New Zealand. I may be wrong, but I believe that's the first transsexual elected mayor on the planet. High five, Georgina...!

- From TCF's Gwen Smith -- California recently had a victory in the state legislature. The Gender Identity Hate Crime Bill Passed State Assembly Committee. The vote was 7 - 0, with one member abstaining. Huzzah!
- More good news from California...West Hollywood has passed a transgender non-discrimination bill! The West Hollywood city council voted unanimously to pass Mayor Pro-Tem John Heilman's proposal. Ten trans-folk -- equally broken down between MTF and FTM -- appeared before council to speak in favor of the measure. According to Dr. C. Jacob Hale, one of the speakers before the council vote, "Mayor [Steve] Martin (not the actor) effusively thanked us for our courage in speaking up," and accepted Shirley Bushnell's suggestion to hold trans sensitivity training for the city's staff. Kudos to Jake, Miranda Stevens, and all the others who helped win its passage!
- Jay Leno made light of the fact that Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski had in fact considered having a sex change at one time -- which is true. He'd apparently planned to see a university psychiatrist at Michigan to discuss this, but got cold feet at the last minute. Sigh, another nice little image for society to stick onto transgenders!
- Leno's jokes were mostly the expected swipes at Kaczynski being an ugly transsexual, etc. But even I got a smile from his crack, "does this mean he would be the Unabooper?" You gotta laugh to keep from crying....
- For all you George Clooney groupies. Prepare for the video release of his first movie The Harvest. He doesn't speak, he doesn't really act, but he does a lovely little dance as a transvestite go-go Dancer in a gold lame boob tube. Now, of course, Clooney is more famous as the voice of the gay dog on the hit animation series South Park
- [Philadelphia, PA] A new low in media TG trashing ... the Philadelphia Daily News ran an April Fool's Day contest where readers were invited to "guess-the-transsexual." [sic] The contest featured pictures of two women and was headlined "She's a He? Sheesh! (Or is it Heesh?)" Readers' task was to guess which one was the 'Real Woman.' On 8 April, the paper published a photo identifying the 'genetic girl' for readers.
- Responded Beth Farrow, a member of the local transgender group Passages, "My family grew up on a steady diet of this shit, and it's one of the reasons

why we're estranged today. That's how they see me, as some freak."

Morris Thompson, the openly gay opinion-page editor, commented, "One little contest is hardly a cosmic trashing of the transgender community. I'm saying, lighten up..."

- From Newt's Library....No plans for lunch while in DC? Stop by the Library of Congress, where, at 1 PM, in the dining room of the James Madison Building, Miss Norma Jean Baker (a.k.a. Library of Congress employee Mr. Norman Billingsley) will give a rather unusual government presentation: "Transgenderism -- Growing Up and Coming Out."
- "Male/Female? Man/Woman? Boy/Girl?" ask fliers posted by the Library of Congress GLOBE -- Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Employees. "Discover the diverse worlds of crossdressing, drag, transsexualism, cross gender identity and cross-gender living." As for Mr. Billingsley's credentials, he calls himself a "gay, transgender drag queen" and past president of the Transgender Educational Association.
- On the subject of DC, the date for the 'Millennium March' has been set for April 30, 2000. Open to all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, and their SO's, family and friends; the march will be a way of focusing public attention on the need for equality in all aspects of our lives. To this end, organizers are hoping to attract a million marchers from around the country. For more info. on travel and hotel accommodations, call the MMOW committee at (818) 891-1748, or Email: MMOW2000@aol.com.
- Yale studies TG's...the Ivy League school has announced it will rename its Women's Studies program "Women's and Gender Studies." Actually it's little more than a change in terminology: the school has offered studies on gay, lesbian and transgendered subjects for years. But all are not happy with the 'new' curriculum. "[It is] an affront to traditional education," said Lila Arzua, 21, a student from Miami. "What's happening is there are specialized weirdo classes taking the place of foundational classes."
- Program chairwoman Margaret Homans defended the courses, saying sexuality and gender have permeated literature, history, art, and culture through the ages. "You get this all the time from the academic right. It will attract criticism, but we're kind of used to that," Homans said. "No human experience should be beyond the realm of serious scholarship."
- But Richard E. Hart, a venture capitalist and 1950 graduate, called it an "embarrassment" and predicted the program would cost the university in donations from alumni. "I think Yale has lost it's way.... [T]his is more evidence of a focus on frills and currently politically correct, fad-type study," he said. Maybe he's hoping it's just a Harvard prank to get back at their Yale rivals....
- Finally, those listening to KLOL's Stevens & Pruett may have heard some rather familiar jokes. Three issues in a row, the jokes that appear in our little newsletter end up on 101's morning show afterwards.(!) It makes me wonder...who among their testosterone rock crowd is reading TATS' newsletter?

Be Political, But Be Careful

By Katrina C. Rose

I want to reiterate something I said at the beginning of my Reggie White rant in the last newsletter - Marie Gallagher is one of my dearest friends I care about her dearly. I hate to see my friends hurt. And - I hate it even more when I'm to blame for it.

Through hasty and sloppy revising on my part some parts of the article can legitimately be read to imply that I was slamming Marie along with White and the radical right Packer supporters.

I wasn't. But, after reading the thing again, I understand how she could have read it that way. More importantly, I can't express in words how badly I felt when I found out how my piece had hit Marie, someone who has always had a shoulder for me to cry on, who was willing to hold my hand while I was shaking in my shoes waiting for my name-change petition to be heard, and who even bandaged my ankle for me when I sprained it earlier this year.

I hope Marie can forgive me.

As for being political and taking the time to comment on Reggie White, I can't apologize for doing that. Someone has to. The fact that he slammed non-heterosexuals effectively immunized him from total universal scorn (yes, he has been trashed in the media, but not anywhere near as much as he would have been had he only made the racial comments.) When Candace Gingrich was in town last year she said that if you wake up in the morning next to someone of the same gender, you're being political. Likewise, if you're walking around with ID that shows a different gender-marker than the one that was originally put on your birth certificate, you're being political. Consequently, you might as well speak out. Do it in any way you feel comfortable, but do it - just be careful.

SRS CLINIC OPENS IN PITTSBURGH



(Submitted off the net by Katrina C. Rose)

[PITTSBURGH, PA] On May 1, 1998, a new era in transgender care has begun in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A city that is known for so many medical "Firsts." For the first time in Trans History, a trans physician and surgeon, Sheila Kirk, has developed and is directing a facility specializing in complete transgender surgical and medical care. In addition, Dr. Kirk is performing MTF GRS, FTM top surgeries, hysterectomies and related surgical procedures for MTFs and FTMs.

The facility is named the Transgender Surgical & Medical Center or TSMC, will provide complete medical care for non-op, pre-op and post-op MTFs and FTMs including close partnership with one's local physician and mental healthcare provider, in addition to hormonal therapy. TSMC will feature surgical procedures for MTF individuals including Gender Reassignment Surgery, breast augmentation, face feminization, minimally invasive rib removal and a wide range of associated feminizing procedures. For FTM individuals: phalloplasty, top surgery, hysterectomy, clitoral freeing, facial masculinization are among the services available including an innovative surgical procedure for male pattern baldness.

Notably, this is the first clinic developed by, and featuring, a transgendered surgeon. "This step is a first step for our community," states Dr. Kirk, "However, it is an important step and signifies a positive shift that paves the way to fully utilize the immense medical and surgical talent that exists within our own community to help us treat" the TG community. Dr. Kirk was the first TG elected to the HBGDA board.

For complete information on the services provided, please contact Sheila Kirk, MD, c/o TSMC, P.O. Box 38366, Blawnox, PA 15238, by phone (412) 781-1092, or by E-mail at TSMC@aol.com.

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Ann Villavecchia	McCleney	Jane Hutton	Linda Dee	R. J. Schoubroek	Tina Bateman
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Arwen Schiesler	Denise O'Doherty	Jenifer Rene	Liz Smith	Rebecca Taylor	Trish Frye
Barbara Jolley	Desiree Walton	Jennifer Lytwyn	Lola	Rene Fenner	Vanessa Edwards Foster
Billie Houston	Diane Konipnicki	Jessi Redman	Malcolm Williams	Robin McKinnon	Vanna Davis
Bobby Calamaco	Dianne Boucher	Jessica Wicks	Marie Denise Gallagher	Robyn Burry	Vivian McKenzie
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TATS Newsletter



the Texas Association for Transsexual Support



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Houston, Texas

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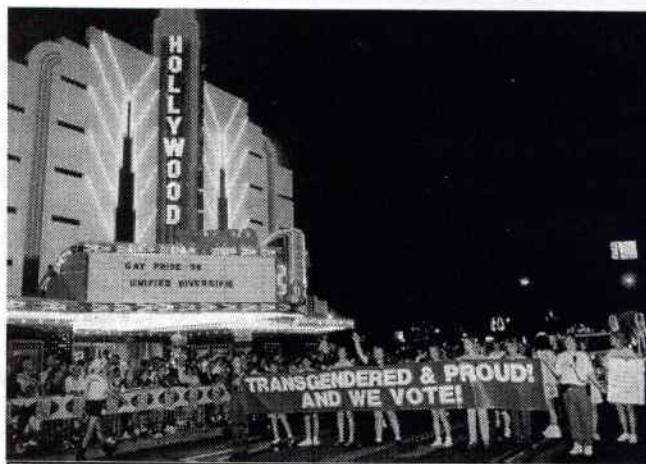
TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.

UNIFIED, DIVERSIFIED, ELECTRIFIED...AND WET!

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Actually, the last three words of that title are a dangerous mix... "Electrified...and Wet!" Not the kind of combination you usually wish for. Ask Marie. While she removed the little lights from the top of the van at the parade's end, Phyllis popped a balloon in fun. Marie, being an electrician, did not find that humorous. Hell, it even startled me and I wasn't even removing the lights! But I've gotten ahead of myself...and through a lot of the parade, I'd gotten ahead of our parade contingent. But now I've digressed.

Back to the beginning... It was a bright and sunny day in the middle of a drought when Phyllis Frye first announced to us that she was not going to be involved with coordinating the TG parade entry. I questioned how well I, or any of us, would do in replicating the successful parade turnout that Phyllis and Dee McKellar used to produce. But I figured *someone* would want to march! So I



Not Hollywood's but Houston's Transgender Community at Pride Parade on June 27 in front of Hollywood Video.

mailed in a form sent out to GCTC for us to be entered in the parade. And I waited...and waited and waited and - !

Okay, let's fast forward a little bit. We made a decision to have a parade planning meeting on a bright and sunny June 14 to discuss how to decorate Marie's van. Backtracking some, a couple months earlier Marie had offered the use

of her van as a means to carry our ice chest and - more importantly - to be decorated! The decorating sounded like a fantastic idea. After all, we were still in the midst of a drought.

Fast forward again...June 14 was nearly upon us and Marie's job sent her out of town for the week. Since we needed Marie's van for layout ideas, we decided to wait until she returned from the business trip and hold it June 21 - six days before the parade. At the meeting, we decided how we were going to layout the signs on the van, and decided also to light it up with strings of Christmas lights. Moving ahead a bit, what we ended up using were battery-operated table lights used for weddings. We spread them out as best we could, but they were not extremely visible.

Going back to the planning meeting, we'd decided to use our Christmas lights on the van. Later in the week, we found we all had 120 volt Christmas lights - too much for the van's battery. This would require hooking up a generator, and then rigging the lights. Too

(Continued on Page 4)

TS KILLS THERAPIST, THEN SELF

SAN DIEGO (AP) - He wanted to become a woman, but his therapist didn't think he was ready. The conflict led 26-year-old Julia Kate Morgan to fatally shoot therapist Rita Powers and then turn the gun on himself, said police, who at first thought Wednesday's shooting involved two women.



Julia Kate Morgan

Police discovered "Julia" was a man who had

been living as a woman in preparation for a sex change. He had shoulder-length blonde hair, had been taking hormones and dressed as a woman. After nearly a year of counseling with Powers, 41, all he needed now was her letter of recommendation so he could seek a doctor to surgically alter his gender.

"Apparently (Powers) was not willing to give that approval," Sgt. Bob Lopez said. "That appears to be the motive. He obviously knew what he was going to do because he came armed," he said.

(Continued on Page 6)

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| July 11 | Social Meeting at:
Lesbian/Gay Community Ctr. @ 3:00 PM |
| July 25 | Un-Meeting at
Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM |
| August 8 | Social Meeting at:
Stephanie Brooks' @ 3:00 PM |
| August 22 | Un-Meeting at
Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM |

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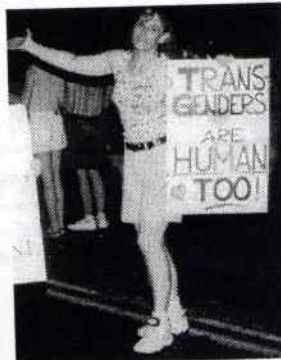
Katrina C. Rose

Jessica Wicks

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Summer sure caught up with us in a hurry! We've hit 100° on numerous occasions already this year. It got up to 102° on Sunday, June 14 – even worse, back home in Corpus it was 106° and in a little town named Orange Grove, just 50 miles west of Corpus, it was 117° that day! It feels like Death Valley Days (where's the Gipper?) At least when we ventured down there at the end of May for Corpus' first pride parade, the weather was much more seasonal – in the low 90's!



Speaking about the Pride Parade, it was a success! I really didn't see it being pulled off – I somehow thought the folks I grew up with in the Corpus of old would show up and make a major disruption. Other than a rather impotent set of protesters, there was...nothing. Absolutely nothing to fear. Even the police force I remember while growing up was, if not completely revamped, at least kept on the leash. They were all far outnumbered by the 100 or so supporters watching the parade, and just as many participating in the march itself. While that may sound small, for Corpus Christi this was a major accomplishment. It was fun getting out of town for a change and partying with the locals in the Coastal Bend....

Getting out of town for a change is what a lot of folks did on Saturday, June 13 as well for the semi-annual gathering at Dr. Cole's gender clinic in Galveston. From what I hear, it was another packed house. Of course, I had to rely on the second-hand report – again I was unable to make it down for the event. It always seems I have a schedule conflict (and rather poor luck) on the day of Dr. Cole's get-together. Last December it conflicted with the election and a cold day's battle with rabid Republicans and zealous Fitch supporters. The June before, I was in Corpus attending my best friend's funeral; then packing my mom's house in preparation for her move. The December before, I was in Corpus again; outing myself to my mom about my intentions of transition, and watching all hell break loose afterwards. The June before that

found me and my extremely cranky, newly-sober sister stranded on the side of the South-west Freeway at the Loop with a split radiator hose on my very overheated truck.

This time my excuse was for a much less stressful reason: my dad made it into town to visit for a few hours. It was the first time I'd seen him since the first summer I spent in my newly-purchased house. This time was much better circumstances. Even though I was between jobs, I at least had air conditioning this time! I also had a refrigerator this time instead of an ice chest with no ice! I've moved up in the world....

We've got a lot of things going on in our world...and even more upcoming. As mentioned last month, LiB (Lesbians In Business) is going to hold a panel discussion regarding transgender issues. Suzanne Anderson is very serious about this, and is truly on a fact finding mission. It's an excellent opportunity to strengthen another bridge for our community.

Just recently Suzanne hosted a luncheon featuring HRC's executive director, Elizabeth Birch. While we didn't spend much time on producing anything regarding HRC's excluding TGs, it was a good opportunity to meet on a personal level. She did admit to HRC's being "behind" on TG and Bi inclusivity, and expressed wanting to amend this situation. In the meantime, I plan to open the communication lines to see what can be accomplished.

Meeting the person behind the image was refreshing. She's a very interesting individual. Some human interest facts you may not know about her: She once ran away at age 13 and traveled 2,000 miles to meet...Anne Murray! Though she considered herself a 'rebel' child, she was also once a member of 'Up With People!' Betcha didn't know that.... Sometimes if you look beyond the image, you find a human inside! Cíáo for now....

Articles in this newsletter may be reprinted by other non-profit TG groups provided a copy is sent to TATS within 2 months, and proper credit is given the author. Opinions contained in this newsletter are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of TATS.

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) 827-5913 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**

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

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A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

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Marti Bennett

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for submitting humor

Marissa J. Carter

for submitting humor

Christine Fusco

for submitting photos & scanning

Katrina C. Rose, a great big thanks!!!

YOU CAN'T GO BACK HOME... CORPUS CHRISTI'S FIRST GAY PRIDE PARADE

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

It was almost unreal. Here I was marching with the transgendered banner in the Gay Pride Parade. Not that that was so notable, but the fact that I was doing this in Corpus Christi (!) gave it the unreal quality. I felt like I was in an episode of *The Twilight Zone*. The place looked the same, but the people didn't seem the same.

May 30th I was up bright and early and met at Marie Gallagher's to carpool down with Marie, Phyllis Frye and Jackie Thorne. Most of the trip down, I was lost in thought. Once we neared Corpus, I started coming to life. I was slightly antsy about being there on such an event: How was this going to be received?

Once upon a time, I knew how this sort of thing would have been received in Corpus. Anyone who was different was viewed with suspicion and often outright contempt. Any remote suspicions of homosexuality only compounded that. Often the contempt was demonstrated in more physical fashion, not unlike many small Texas cities. Not long ago, the saying went that Corpus' main export was professional boxers. It wasn't far from the truth, either. That gives you somewhat of an idea of what kind of environment it was. However, it seemed changed this time. Those who participated in the parade were credible. As for the rest of the denizens, it was almost like someone had removed all the previous residents, and transplanted them with new, rather indifferent ones. Those not out there in support, just stood around, almost confused, not really knowing how to react. Some of the supporters seemed slightly out of sorts as well. Even the protesters seemed to lack the expected vitriol and zeal - they seemed more lethargic than anything. It's not the Corpus I remember growing up in.

The police still caused some initial concern,



Carrying the banner of Pride in Corpus: (L-R) Marie Denise Gallagher, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Jackie Thorne, Dovie Foster and Jessica Wicks.

mostly just from residual memories. There was a great change there, too. It once was that police didn't talk to you; and if they did, it was not in friendly tones. Strictly authoritative - much worse if you disobeyed commands, or didn't obey fast enough. What I saw this time was vastly different: many were responding to us in polite and friendly tones! There were still about half that stood stone-faced and grim, and harkened back to the 'old era;' enough to remind me we've still got a long way to go before total acceptance. But what I saw was an amazingly vast improvement! I actually started feeling (dare I say it?) safe!

Even the after-parade party had the feel of surreality to it. The location was just around the corner from the house my mom lived in for 24 years. Talk about irony! There I was sitting where I'd sat 30 years earlier, in what was once a Dairy Queen. Instead of windows all around, there were now black walls lined with neon beer signs and strobe lights. What was the awning covered front parking lot, now was a dance floor. Some 20 years after my last visit to DQ, as a stoned-out, munchie-crazed, football-playing, beach-bum hippie; I was in makeup and

female attire, celebrating with my sister after walking in the first ever Gay Pride Parade in Corpus. Amazing!

At one point during the celebration, my sister and I - with Katrina and Marie tagging along - walked around the block to see what had changed and to look at the old house. It was almost foolhardy on my part; lord knows I could've been recognized. But I almost dared someone to come out and recognize me, to say something, to at least let me know I was really in Corpus. But the street was strangely quiet - not a soul outside. It was almost as if I were walking through another town.

Standing finally in front of our old house, the memories came flooding forth. My sister broke down in tears. I myself had a tough time fighting them off as well, mostly memories of the previous year: the family turmoil, my grandma dying, my best friend's funeral, my mom selling the house and emotionally lashing out at the one person close to her at that time...me. The old house looked pretty much the same, almost like we'd never left. We couldn't just walk up the driveway, and stroll in the back door anymore. No more sitting in the shade of the back patio. Everything else looked the same, almost frozen in time.

It hadn't changed. We had changed! We weren't the same people we were when we lived there. We'd just finished something we never would've fathomed just 10 years ago, Corpus' first Pride Parade. It was a very defining moment for us. We could go back home, but we could never really go back to the old days. We were now so vastly different people, and there was no going back. It was quite a juxtaposition - the memories of the past to the current. Congratulations Corpus Christi! Time does change things.

ENCHANTED FOREST

By Marti Bennett

Well, another month has passed and it seems that time has flown by. On the personal front I am still unemployed, however I have high hopes that this will change around the Fourth of July. This month has been full of big doings in the TG community. Most notable being the Gay Pride parade. If you have never marched in one of these then you have really missed a great thrill. As we turned the corner to come down Westheimer the crowd started to cheer, applaud and wave, they kept that up until we finished the parade route. I waved with first one arm and then the other as I tried to keep waving to

all the people who were supporting us, I just couldn't keep waving that long, but I tried. If you have never heard public approval of the TG community and sometimes wonder if the public really does know that we exist, then all I can say is that you really need to make plans to be in the next parade. Unfortunately, the next parade won't be until next year. By then I hope that the community will be able to field a true float, if all the groups that I saw can manage to do so, I hope that we can too. There were twenty-five people who braved the rain showers and marched and while I am not going to attempt to list them all, I do want to thank them.

The only one that I am going to mention is Marie Gallagher for kindly donating the use of her van to carry our signs and banners. Suffice it to say that all the community leaders were active in the good showing that we made and they deserve special thanks also. I hope that some of the many pictures that were taken show up in this issue. If anyone cares to send me an e-mail the address is db810@pdq.net



UNIFIED, DIVERSIFIED, ELECTRIFIED...AND WET!

(Continued from Page 1)

much work for a mere 2 hours that we had allotted for decorating. We decided (since no one had 12 volt lights) to go with whatever lights we could find. Jackie & Rose managed to find some lights the day of the parade, and we went with those. It wasn't quite what we'd envisioned during our planning, but we were electrified!

Going back to the planning meeting, we also decided to have poster-board signs for every group on the sides of the van to make sure we were all represented. It was 'a great idea' we thought as we squinted at Marie's white van in the noonday sun. Moving ahead to the night before the parade: the sign making party! We gathered again at Marie's to do up signs for carrying during the parade. Going back to the planning meeting, we had all assigned each group to do their two signs for the groups before the party. Moving ahead to the sign making party, we spent the evening printing up slogans for our hand carried signs, and coloring in our hand made signs. Our signs were looking quite festive. 'This should be great!' we all thought. Of course there was a slight chance of rain on parade day...but what were the odds? This was a drought...!

Moving ahead to the parade's end, we realized a little late that we shouldn't have expended so much time on the signs. Or should've use acrylic spray to fix the colors onto the board. (I did manage to do that on the color portions of my handmade signs, but still had a little bleeding on spots I'd missed.) Back to the night before the parade, we made some calls. Sarah DePalma couldn't make it! But she would make some TGAIN signs for the van. Crystal and Cissy from GGA in New Orleans made it in during our sign making party. Though we weren't sure how many folks were gonna show



The TG Contingent before the parade. Back row: (L-R) Cissy Conley, Sarah Jane Connell, Marie Denise Gallagher on van door, Michelle Myers, Lisa Haywood, Jackie Thorne, Crystal Little, Jennifer Lytwyn, Chris Duffy, Lilly Roddy leaning in, Lynn Rios, Marti Bennett and Sheila Appleton. Front row: (L-R) Vanessa Edwards Foster, Amber Houston, Billie Houston crouching behind Brenda Thomas, Desirée Walton leaning forward, Paula Allen, Brandi Welch and Rose Wall.

for the parade, it was starting to shape up nicely.

Moving ahead to parade day, I sent out the last missive regarding the parade details. Unfortunately, I couldn't provide much other than to find the organizers and ask where we were lined up. Going back a few weeks, the Pride Parade held a meeting to assign slots in the parade. Neither Marie or I were able to make the meeting, but Michelle Myers happened to be there on HGLPC business, and entered us by proxy. However, we didn't have an assigned slot number at that time. Michelle said they would have us somewhere in the 40s. Forwarding to the week before the parade, Katrina asked Nancy Ford from the Triangle to ask about our slot number. Supposedly we were number 97. So, back to parade day, I mentioned in my last Email broadcast our #97, but also made sure to have them ask the parade organizers by our name as well. Good thing - we were number 66!

Hopefully everyone that was looking for us found us. As we all stood sweat-drenched at the parade's end, the attendance count was 25, just two shy of last year's record amount. Other than myself, the marchers this year were: Billie & Amber Houston, Brenda Thomas, Chris Duffy, Cissy Conley and Crystal Little from GGA in New Orleans, Desirée Walton, Jackie Thorne, Jennifer Lytwyn, Katrina Rose, Lilly Roddy, Lisa Haywood, Lynn Rios, Marie Denise Gallagher, Marti Bennett, Michelle Myers, Paula Allen, Phyllis Frye, Rachael Kilgore, Rose Wall, Sarah Jane Connell and her friend Lisa, Sheila Appleton and Brandi Welch. Certainly not a bad turnout.

Moving back to just before the pa-

rade...OKAY, okay, I'll stop bouncing around! It's hard to get out of parade mode! Anyway, we spent about an hour getting our signs affixed to the van. As luck would have it, two signs were left behind and had to be retrieved at the last minute. After Marie and Jackie left to retrieve the two TATS signs, we had a little time to wander through the crowd. We also noticed the skies clouding up - not a good sign.

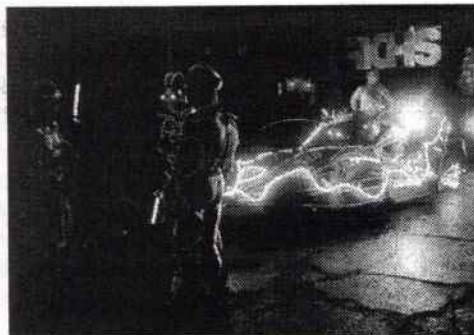
And that's what we ended up with; signs on the van that didn't look good at all! The rain began to fall. Six months without a drop, and now we get rain an hour before the parade!

Murphy and his damn laws! As I mentioned earlier, we didn't fix our signs with acrylic spray. The result? Lots of soggy, streaky, runny signs. After the rain, our van with its sagging signs looked a bit dreary. But we did some quick repairs, attached the wedding lights as best we could, and readied for the parade.

Though the crowd numbered fewer than the previous year, the number of entries didn't. Not only were the entries more numerous, they appeared much more proficient in the construction and use of lighting. Supercuts had a fabulous float, lit in white lights with Greek columns in keeping with the parade's Greek theme. Rich's had a rather unique float, constructed of what appeared to be an overturned flat-bottom boat affixed to a dune buggy frame, lit up in white, with a neon Rich's sign on top and a spotlight. That grabbed some attention! Another float of note was the Chase Bank entry (of course a little personal bias comes in there - TATS' Michelle Gregory was marching with them.)

Even the walking entries were improved, with many lit up with neon tubing. The Pride Marching Band made the best use of this, with Rich's futuristic marching men coming in with a very original version as well. Even those walking units that were economically lit up were unique and enthusiastic. My favorite walking contingent was the Kolbe Project, whose theme was "Don't feel alienated." Their entry featured the little gray martians in black robes walking with body-sized silver saucers that were planted atop three bicycle wheels. As

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The entry for Rich's was one of the more electrified units of the parade.

UNIFIED, DIVERSIFIED, ELECTRIFIED...AND WET!

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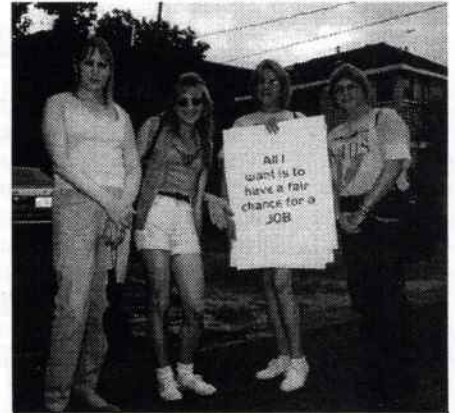
the martians walked, they rotated their saucers counter-clockwise; the little lights on the saucers making for a wonderful effect. Even EPAH's entry was notable. It was just a bunch of guys and gals in t-shirts and shorts carrying briefcases, but all carrying flashlights. They would stop every few seconds, and chant in unison while waving the flashlights and running around in a circle (maybe a metaphor for the rat race? they are a businessman's organization...) While it was basic in design, it made up for it in

the crowd itself wasn't as thick as last year's. There were fewer kids watching this year's parade as well (bummer for me.) It was still well attended though, just slightly less. Although that may have been attributable to the evening rain-shower, it didn't dampen the spirits of those who made it out. Again the crowds made it worth the walk - or in my case, worth the run.

Yes, I did the same back and forth, up and down, bouncing around routine I did at last year's parade. And I high-fived about a hundred little hands that night. That's the best part for me. The kids enjoy the parade more than anyone else. When you go over and talk with the kids, it makes them feel important...almost a part of the parade itself. Since they get the most enjoyment out of it, why not make them feel special?

Another thing I realized early on in last year's parade is it's great P.R. too! When you make the kids smile, you make the parents happy, too! A positive image for a change! And yes, a good number of straight parents bring their kids out to watch the parade - especially since it's an illuminated night parade. As long as we don't have offensive signs or garish dress, we get good advertising out of it. They finally get to see us as something other than the outlandish, self-absorbed creatures the stereotypes portray us to be.

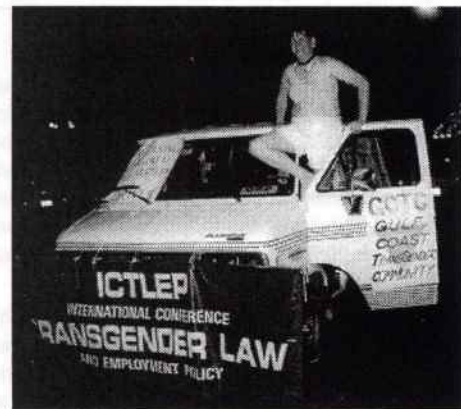
Finally, I want to thank a lot of people who helped put this thing together. Marie Denise Gallagher deserves a huge thanks for donating the van, and for attending all the Pride meetings and holding the planning & sign making



A sign of the times: (L-R) Jennifer Lytwyn, Desirée Walton, Marti Bennett and Sheila Appleton line up pre-parade.

meetings. Also a big thanks goes out to Michelle Myers for being there to get us entered in the first place, and for helping sponsor our entry this year. And of course to Jackie Thorne and Rose Wall, another round of thanks for all their

help in sign-making and doing the last minute running around; thanks to Lilly Roddy for supplying ice chests full of cold water (yes!), and thanks to GGA's Cissy Conley and Crystal Little, as well as Amber Houston, Marti Bennett, Lilly, Marie and especially Rose (who worked her little heart out) for getting the van decorated.



Marie Gallagher sits atop the official 'Transgender Van' before the parade.

enthusiasm. Of course, MCCR's entry also caught my attention. They had a contingent of families with kids in tow - an excellent concept when you think about it. Let the religious zealots protest the kids!

Speaking of the zealots, there were no protesters this year! None! I don't know if they didn't write down the right date in their calendar, or the rain kept them away; but they didn't show up at all (!) Corpus Christi's parade did outdo Houston on that aspect, they did have a couple dozen, somewhat vocal protesters. But



More signs to take note of: Rose Wall (L) and Vanessa Edwards Foster work the crowd.



Dana International: In Depth

By James Bennett

Picture a pretty little Israeli boy who plays with dolls instead of guns. Let's call him Yaron. Yaron dresses up in his mother's frocks, preening in front of her dressing table mirror, miming into her hairbrush, pretending to be Whitney Houston. The other kids at school sense that he is different and bully him mercilessly.

Picture miserable childhood turning to traumatic adolescence for the girl trapped in a boy's body. Yaron works all hours, saving for the operation that will turn him into Sharon. Picture him flying to London for that operation and... greatest moment of his life... he becomes a she. Then, as Dana International, she wins the

Eurovision Song Contest with a trashy piece of nonsense called Diva, and becomes the world's most famous transsexual.

I am picturing the story on my way to meet Dana. Then I do meet Dana and in one hour she impatiently and imperiously erases all my imaginings. "NO," she says in capital letters, dismissing every prejudice, every preconception. From luscious lips come short, staccato denials; sometimes up to seven "Nos" in a row, sometimes long "Nos" with rows of Os. So you didn't play with dolls then?

"Oh purleese. This is the most common prejudice about gays," snaps Miss International. But you preened in front of the mirror, surely?

"Nooo."

"Got beaten up at school?"

"No, no, no, no, no."

"Wore your mummy's frock?"

At last I strike gold. The "No" hovers on those luscious lips and turns sulkily to: "It was my sister's. She came home and caught me in the bathroom." Yet even this, it seems, was no great trauma: "Look, I had a wonderful childhood. I wish everyone could have such a childhood. I wasn't this girl trapped inside a boy's body, I was just a child. I was never thinking about sex - I was thinking about getting good grades at school."

Dana doesn't need to say a word to destroy

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TS KILLS THERAPIST, SELF

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The man, whose name police will not release until relatives are located, had an appointment with Powers at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday. About an hour later, police were told that someone was firing a gun inside the Cognitive Therapy Institute at Hillcrest, a predominately [sic] gay community. The bodies of Powers and the 26-year-old man were found Wednesday night in a hallway at the Cognitive Therapy Institute two hours after gunfire was reported at the office building.

When an officer arrived, shots were still being fired. He helped two men escape through a first-floor office by breaking a window, and authorities evacuated about nine surrounding blocks. SWAT officers fired flash-bang canisters into the building and slowly entered. Lopez said police believe the gunman shot Powers, then himself within about 10 minutes from the time the first shots were fired. Police later found the bodies, but didn't learn of the gender confusion until the medical examiner arrived.



Therapist, Rita Powers

A FRIEND'S INSIGHT ON JULIA MORGAN

By Cathryn C. Curtis

Wednesday, June 10th, at 5:PM...Julia Kate Morgan entered the 2nd floor mid-town San Diego medical office of her therapist, Rita Powers, for a therapy session. There was nothing to indicate that this was anything more than just another in a long series of such sessions, that is until 5:20.

911 received a frantic call for help from a scared individual who claimed that several gunshots had been fired in the medical office bldg. just moments before. While the police dispatcher was on the line, more shots were heard over the phone. Police and then SWAT surrounded the building and got half a dozen frightened people out of the structure. More gunshots were heard from the 2nd floor, then silence....

At 8:20 PM SWAT made their way to the 2nd floor, where they came upon the bodies of two women laying in the hallway. One had been shot numerous times about her body, the other had one shot in her head....

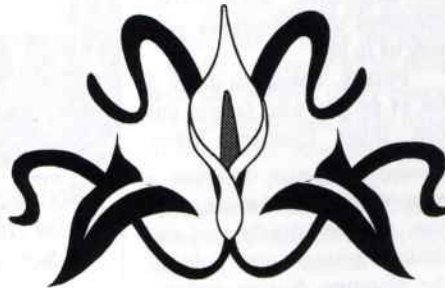
What happened? We may never know the full story, but to those of us who knew Julia, it was apparent that she had simply reached the end of her rope and had lost all hope of ever being able to complete her transition to becoming a post-operative male-to-female woman.

Julia was a Transsexual.

Early in her life, Julia was abandoned by her mother and became a ward to the state, spending many terrible and lonely years in the foster care system. These experiences toughened her dramatically from the small happy child she had been and by the time she was of age she felt mean enough to join the military. She served four years in the Navy, and the only good thing she attributed to that experience was that it brought her to San Diego, a city she was to ultimately spend the remainder of her life in.

On discharge, she landed a job at the Naval Hospital as a medical records clerk. She did well with her job and spent almost six years there, though admittedly she had trouble in re-

lating to people on the job. She was always pleasant, and many of her co-workers enjoyed her company, but she was inexperienced in dealing with her feelings, in dealing with interpersonal relationships, and she couldn't ever really develop more than just passing relationships with anyone, even the most intimate of relationships. She lived a very lonely life, shut within walls of her own construct where she felt safe and protected, but she was just beginning to understand that what she put up to keep out threats and pain was also keeping out love and friendship. She was at a point where she knew how much she was and had been missing in life and it made her very sad.



Miss Morgan had known from early in her young life that she was different from other boys her age, and at some point in adulthood she discovered what a Transsexual is and self-identified with the concept. She was certain for most of her young life that she was really female and in the last year and a half she was taking certain and positive steps to do something about correcting her birth-defect and becoming the woman she knew was within her. This was when she came into our lives.

Some 6 months ago I referred her to Ms Rita Powers, M.A., an intern working off her required hours prior to receiving her license to practice on her own. They had been seeing each other frequently over that six month period, but increasingly Julia was reporting tension between them and her own frustration with the "system" (the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care) and the way she, an intelligent, capable and accom-

plished adult, was subjugated to a 2nd class position and that her life was rested from her control and placed into the hands of another who may not have had her own interests at heart. She, over time, became more and more confrontational with Rita, more demanding of an answer..."when can I get my surgery letter?", an answer that apparently was not forthcoming.

I had known Rita for quite some time, as she had previously been my counselor and had written my 2nd of the two required approval letters for surgery. She had been challenging to me, playing a game of cat-and-mouse with my letter. She liked to use a therapy manner that was threatening to the client, stressful to the extreme, as it exposed the patient's ability to cope with and handle stress and she believed that to be a prime requisite for approval to the surgery procedure and to the high-stress life that could lie beyond it. She wanted assurance that the person in question would be able to handle the stresses that life would bring once they had taken the final step, as there was no way to take a step back once they had passed a certain point, the surgery.

This time, she failed to read the stress level of her client and pushed just a little too hard. Something snapped.

Julia entered Rita's office at 5 PM Wednesday evening, the same as she had been doing regularly for six months, but this time there was resolution in her step. She had decided to not be a pawn to the system any more. She was taking control of her life and confronting the barrier that had been placed in her path. If you can't go under or around the object, then you just have to go right through the middle of it, and that's what she had decided to do. She was going to remove the object barring her way to the completion she desperately required.

From within her purse she produced a 9-mm pistol. We will never know what happened in the 20 minutes prior to the first shot being

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Julia Morgan: The Looking Glass

By Gwendolyn Ann Smith

On June 10th, 1998, a preoperative transsexual, Julia Morgan, killed her gender therapist, the turned the gun on herself. You may have heard this tale, or at least heard the straight press shouting something about a "man dressed as a woman" killing a woman.

Yet, there is more to this story than you'll find from the Associated Press or other media outlets. And when you look into the story of Julia Morgan's last act deep enough, you may discover that you are seeing something disturbing: a mirror into our own selves.

To those who knew her in San Diego transgender circles, she wasn't abnormal, nor some deranged gun-nut. There weren't any major clues that she would someday take her life, and the life of her gender therapist, an intern named Rita Powers.

"She had been abandoned early on and had never known unconditional love," states a friend of hers, named Evelyn. "She was very independent and had come so far by herself. She had done 2 years of college getting 3.9 and had a good job, a car paid for, her own apartment, and was so proud of her getting somewhere with no

help."

She also had plenty of future plans. She planned on getting her surgery referral letters, first from Rita Powers, then a second from another well-known therapist in the Midwest. She had planned her surgery, to eventually quit the job she was at, finish college, and really "be someone." How many of us have planned similar paths?



Stress grew in her life as well. While she was full time in most places, she still worked at the hospital as a male, barely disguising her ever-feminizing figure under women's jeans and t-shirts, leading to more and more strangers "mistaking" her for female. She feared losing her job over these issues, and had seemingly planned to leave the job after surgery. She was receiving some negativity from her therapist,

probably over her "double life" at work, and had been given indications that her first surgery letter wasn't coming. Although I have been fortunate to not be in these same situations, I -- like most preoperative transsexuals -- have had a higher-than-desired level of stress in my life, and much has to do with transition.

Although those around her tried to talk her into changing jobs and counselors, she felt it would cost her more, in both time and money, than she was willing to spend. Her life-long independence also got in her way, as she seemed unable to let others help her live her life.

I can only speculate that Julia began to see her hope-filled plans fraying at the edges, and she began to plan her own demise. After her June 10th therapy session, according to a source in the building, Rita followed Julia out of the office, and tried to coax her back in to the office to talk. Perhaps, for the independent Julia, this was a final straw: her plans for surgery in jeopardy, and suicide being the only other course of action that she saw, she violently took the life of the one person that was standing in the way of both options.

A FRIEND'S INSIGHT....

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fired, though it is reported that loud voices and shouting were heard from within the office by others in the medical office building. The first of a dozen shots rang out and echoed in the halls and offices.

When the police discovered the bullet-riddled body of the 41-year old mother of two, and the second body with a single entry point wound in the head, they were certain that two women were involved in this tragedy, and that is the way the press and media handled the story for the first few hours. Later, the coroner's office and a police dept. spokesperson began reporting that the body of the suspected shooter was really that of a man, dressed in woman's clothing, a report that was heralded and repeated with glee by the media. They had a real story here !!!

Perhaps someday society will understand what Transsexualism is really about. Perhaps other "Julia's" in the future won't be pushed beyond their limits of coping by those who really don't care or understand us. Perhaps someday, society will help and understand young people who know that they are the wrong gender from early in life, instead of crushing and squashing them into the round little holes that all square pegs are forced into. This tragedy

on Wednesday could have been avoided and, perhaps, there may be a day when the frustration levels that Julia reached may never again be experienced by a confused child.

Those of us in the local "T" community lost two close friends that night, and we will miss them both. Rita, you tried to understand us and you wanted to help, but you were too inexperienced to handle this particular situation. You were a friend and a caring soul, and we shall miss you. Julia, oh..god. If you had just confided your feelings to those of us who cared, maybe we could have helped you. We tried, but you were too frustrated to listen. Your pain at last is over. Rest well, dear child. We will miss you terribly.

Julia was 27.

She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her.....

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.

Ezekiel 1:2 & 1:12

STRESS AND TRAGEDY

By Vanessa Edwards

The sad ending to the life of Julia Morgan compelled me to sit down and editorialize a bit. Many of you have heard the mainstream media's version, and probably -- similar to me -- reacted with initial disgust at Julia for bringing yet another negative affirmation of our community to the world at large. While there may be some basis for those feelings, we need to be aware that there's more to this story.

According to a friend of hers, Julia never intended to take another life that day -- only her own. It was actually a courageous act on the part of therapist Rita Powers that precipitated the murder. Powers picked up on the fact that Morgan was acting unusual at the end of their session. Realizing that Morgan could have been a danger to herself in this mental state, she apparently attempted to dissuade Morgan from any rash decisions.

Morgan, who already felt her options were disappearing, now stood to face the person who she felt had not only foreclosed on her dream, but was also attempting to remove her final option -- escape. She acted out of

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Does The Media Have GID - Genital Insensitivity Disorder?

By Katrina C. Rose

Two decades ago, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of recognized mental disorders – much to the consternation of Charles Socarides and the radical ‘reparative therapy’ wing of the profession. Remaining in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the current version being known as DSM-IV), though, are “gender identity disorders.”

Within the transgender community there is a considerable difference of opinion as to whether the continued existence of GID in the DSM-IV is a blessing or a curse. Many believe that it has the same deleterious effect on the rights of transgendered people as did the now-extinct homosexuality classification. However a ‘diagnosis’ of GID is, typically, what pre-operative transsexuals need before a doctor will perform genital surgery. Some transsexuals believe that, without a ‘label’ to put on their condition, most, if not all, legitimate surgeons who perform genital reconstruction will stop doing so.

Of course, transsexuals seeking surgery typically seek out the GID diagnosis. Such a diagnosis can just as easily be forced on someone who doesn’t adhere to accepted gender norms. Daphne Scholinski didn’t dress female enough for her parents’ liking and ended up spending part of her adolescence in a mental institution saddled with a GID diagnosis. Her excellent book, “The Last Time I Wore a Dress” chronicles her nightmare.

An even more extreme down side of the necessity for therapist approval prior to surgery was seen this week in San Diego as a pre-op MTF killed her therapist and then killed herself – possibly because the therapist would not recommend the transsexual (initially identified only as ‘Julia’) for surgery.

Letters from two therapists are generally required to be considered for surgery and Julia was apparently seeking such a letter from the therapist. “We believe that the shooting was motivated by the fact that the therapist would not agree to write the letter,” said San Diego police homicide Sgt. Bob Lopez.

West Coast transgender activist Gwen Smith fears that the media coverage could obscure other possible reasons for the violence. Says Smith “It is quite possible that ‘Julia’ was being held back due to reasons unrelated to her gender dysphoria, and that those reasons – not the gender issues – made her willing and able to pull that trigger.”

Bob Lopez, Dr. Kurt Buis, coordinator of transgender counseling services at The Center, which serves lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexual people in San Diego County said “This is completely unheard of within the transgendered community.” Unfortunately, though, the media coverage of the incident, which has been almost Springer-esque in its willingness to dwell on whether the patient was male or female, almost to the point of overshadowing the murdered

therapist (her name: Rita Powers, 41), is not unknown.

Initial reports varied wildly – some describing the transsexual as being 58, others in her 20’s (apparently she was 26.) There was also a major variance regarding her gender. A San Diego newspaper referred to the dead as “two women” while the Los Angeles Times used the phrase “Man Dressed as Woman” in the headline of an article on the incident to describe the transsexual. The AP wire story preferred “man dressed in women’s clothing.”

Deep down, there is a fear in Smith that, should she die prior to her surgery – and under circumstances that might warrant media attention – she would be listed as simply a “man dressed in women’s clothing.” She emphasizes, “In California, where this crime took place, and where I reside, someone in transition can get their legal name and gender changed on most documents, even pre-operatively. Why should that need to be changed back by the press?”

Such genital-fixation is not limited to the California press, though. In 1996 a pre-op transsexual was killed in a grisly head-on collision on a Houston freeway. Although the driver of the other vehicle was unquestionably at fault (traveling the wrong way on the freeway at a high rate of speed), the media was more concerned about the gender, and, of course, genitals of the victim, derisively referring to her as

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STRESS AND TRAGEDY

(Continued from Page 7)

desperation, not the calculated vengeance presumed by law enforcement and the media. While this doesn’t excuse the result, it does shed a different light on things.

Had it not been for Powers’ intervention, this would’ve been nothing but another suicide. Another lonely suicide – tragic, but not newsworthy. Would it have been any less tragic? For the friends and relatives of Rita Powers: yes, absolutely. For Rita herself? Yes, to an extent. It’s very likely she wasn’t some unconcerned nine-to-fiver just going through the motions. She likely would’ve felt some residual guilt for a time for not recognizing the situation and taking action. But would it be any less tragic for the friends or family of Julia Morgan? No (save for the tragic aspect of her taking another life.) It was going to be a sad result regardless of whichever situation had occurred.

Julia Morgan was *not* some evil, plotting murderess. She was engulfed in a cloud of stress and its companion, depression.

Compounded stress can do strange things to

the human mind. If left unchecked, it can create a self-regenerating spiral of paranoia and withdrawal which in turn create depression, personal chaos and more stress. It’s an emotional nose-dive that, once begun, is hard to pull out of. It appears that Julia was in the throes of this vicious cycle.

Before we leap too quickly to judgment, we need to keep in mind that stress can happen to anyone – even the best of us. Life is stressful enough for society in general. It rises sharply when you’re a transitioning transsexual.

While some may find an accepting work environment, sadly that’s very much the exception. Such was the case with Julia. Joblessness is a chronic worry for our entire community. Couple this with lower earning potential should they find work, and a rising cash outflow due to hormone therapy, electrolysis, a new gender wardrobe and the recurring expenses for transitional counseling all culminating in a surgical procedure that is far from inexpensive, and you get the picture.

On top of the income-oriented stress, there’s also social stresses: divorce, loss of children, potentially unsupportive friends and family,

possible isolation. Occasionally, there are individuals who come with the inherited baggage of previous emotional distresses – growing up with physical or sexual abuse, or (as in Julia’s case) emotional abuse such as child abandonment.

Additionally there’s the little stresses that come from discrimination in all its forms. And of course there’s always the looming specter of physical violence, made almost legal by some jurisdictions’ apathetic or dismissive approach to enforcement of the law when the victims are “those people.” Add to all these the everyday stresses of day-to-day life, and you’ve got a full plate.

Entering into the proposition of living as a transgender requires that one be capable of handling a greater than average portion of stress. Some of us may be able to deal with those types of issues constructively; others just don’t have the tools to do so. Not only is this something that the straight community needs to realize, it’s something that we in our own community would do well to recognize, too. There, but for the grace of God....



To Whom it May Concern: San Antonio Hosts 1998 Texas Lesbian Conference

By Katrina C. Rose

Maria Salazar, co-chair of the 1998 Texas Lesbian Conference, got a call from a woman prior to the conference asking for detailed information about where the lesbians would be meeting and/or marching. The reason for the inquiry? The woman wanted to keep her children "safe" from those attending the conference.

For the record, the place and time that the woman needed to be concerned with was the San Antonio Four Points Hotel on May 29 & 30. "Our being here is an act of defiance and, as such, is a political act" said Salazar.

That political act got underway Friday night with an open house at the Esperanza Center, followed by Monica Palacios's one woman show, "Greetings From a Queer Señorita." Her show was part stand-up comedy and part performance art, but all entertaining – a journey to lesbian adulthood from an adolescence during which she knew she liked girls, but just simply didn't have a name for what was going on. She said it would have been helpful if, at some point, she had gotten a divine message saying "To whom it may concern – you're a lesbian!"

The theme of this year's conference was "Creating Balance." The organizing committee felt that 'inclusion' was a major element of that theme. As part of that inclusivity, for the first time, the conference featured a workshop on bisexuality. However, there was not one on transgender issues. When asked about the lack of a TG panel in a theme of inclusivity, Salazar said that TGs were not intentionally left out. She said that the issue had been brought up early in the planning stages for the conference. However, they didn't know how to get in touch with any TGs who might be willing to participate.

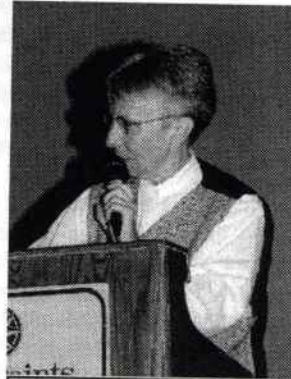
Sadly, this is another instance of the transgender community's lack of visibility working

to their disadvantage. Still, the lack of a TG panel does not mean that TG issues were absent from the conference. The Saturday morning keynote address of Arkansas activist-author Suzanne Pharr ("In the Time of the Right – Reflections on Liberation") focused not simply on sexual orientation but on the very con-

cept of gender – commenting on a realization that her family wasn't as concerned with her loving a woman as they were with the possibility that she might cease to be one. She then began thinking about transgendered people – a group she admitted not having thought about before. And, ultimately, she realized that its all the same thing – especially to the enemies of GLBT rights.

A substantial part of her speech dealt with the latest concoction of one batch of those enemies – a proposal from Oregon deceptively labeled 'The Family Act' – which picks up where the gay marriage bans leave off. Pharr commented that a more accurate name for it would be the 'Family Definition Act' as it would establish a rigid definition of 'family' based on ultra-narrow, Christian heterosexual standards – a definition which would be the only one recognized by the state when it comes to dolling out benefits.

Significantly for transgendered people, though, the proposal goes much further – declaring that a person's gender is determined *at the moment of conception*, ignoring all legiti-



Suzanne Pharr speaks at TX Lesbian Conference.

mate science regarding how fetuses develop and paving the way to criminalizing transgendered people based on their very existence. Pharr emphasized that this, while seemingly aimed only at transgendered people, actually goes to the heart of it all – for everyone – as the purpose of the act is to control not just who you can be *with*, but who you can be.

According to various reports, the backers of the 'Family Act' – the infamous Oregon Citizens Alliance –

has anywhere from 1/3 to 1/2 of the 90,000+ signatures that it needs to get the initiative on the November 1998 ballot.

Pharr feels that the radical right may have bitten off more than it can chew with this proposal, noting that many other non-traditional types of families – among them, Native American tribal structures – would effectively be outlawed by it and that many non-queers will be offended at its broad attack on all forms of individualism. She feels that this is the opportunity to make a broad alliance against the "theocratic right" as she calls it. Inclusivity that goes beyond the queer community – is the only way that proposals like this can be defeated.

'The Family Act' is more proof that radical religionists are inclusive – in their bigotry. Those who plan to fight such a proposal cannot afford the luxury of excluding any group who has the common goal of defeating such hate.

This weekend of "balance" among lesbians – of inclusivity – was the 11th Texas Lesbian Conference. Salazar estimated the attendance at around 200. Next year's conference will be in Dallas.

DANA INTERNATIONAL....

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another of my preconceptions: that somehow I'll be able to tell that this 26-year-old diva was once a man. Every inch a woman, and a beautiful one at that, she sweeps into the hotel suite, encased in skintight denim, raven hair swept up, seating herself opposite me so that I'm face-to-face with her. The zip-down denim is artfully gaping to reveal spectacular cleavage. I can almost imagine it is the cleavage that is denying every idea I put to it.

This is a smart hotel, where Sony puts up its top stars, such as Celine Dion. After last month's Eurovision victory in Birmingham, Sony won the bidding war to release Diva as a single, and now Dana is queening it here. That must feel good, I hazard. She really has made the big time.

"No," insist the luscious lips. "I'm doing lots of hard work, but this still has to be translated into millions of sales and concert tickets. Right now there are no sales in Britain, so where's the success?" The answer is that it is at home in the Middle East. Far from being a new phenomenon, Dana has had three hit albums in Israel following her 1993 debut, and been voted Israel's best female singer in a poll by national radio and two newspapers. She also claims five million pirate cassette sales in Egypt and Jordan.

But I can't even get her to enthuse over that: "Well, I was flattered, you know, but..." She goes into a monologue about how love is more important than career and she would rather meet a nice boy and settle down than win the world's biggest music contest in front of 100 million viewers any day. With all due respect, I decide,

the lady is talking out of her cleavage.

But it's the mouth talking, I think, when she tells me about the sex-change operation she had in London five years ago. So did she have to scrimp and save? (You hear about transsexuals resorting to prostitution to pay for the all-important op.) And was it the greatest moment of her life?

"It cost 7,000 pounds," she sniffs dismissively. "That's not much. I was already making lots of money. If you're smart and you set a target then you will find a way to do what you want. For the operation, you are drugged with morphine, so you don't feel the pain. Yes, you suffer, but it is in order to have a wonderful thing. You must make sacrifices to achieve something.

"But, no, it was not the great moment in my

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DANA INTERNATIONAL....

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life. You have to understand, being a woman is not down there... it's up here." She indicates her artfully disarranged coiffure. "In the mind, I was already a woman. The operation changed nothing. NOTHING. It was just something that was in my way, so I did it and I moved on."

I get the point, but Dana is warming to her theme. "Look, you don't walk naked in the street, do you?" She's become so excited that her polka-dot-painted nails, fumbling for a Marlboro, scatter all her red-tipped matches across the carpet. I go to pick them up but she insists on doing it herself. Tell-tale sign of the male within? Probably not. It is 1998. Women pick up their own matches.

Does she still have to take hormones, I wonder. The luscious lips pout: "Before, yes, but not now. I have no male hormones in my body." The cleavage emphatically agrees. Miss International makes it clear that this is a fully functioning female body I see before me. She tells me about her seven boyfriends (not all at once, you understand) and her active sex life.

So when did she first feel Yaron becoming Sharon? "About 16. I met a gay friend and started to go to discothèques in Tel Aviv. He introduced me to the gay community and it started from there."

So the real picture, then, is this. Born Yaron Cohen in Tel Aviv in 1972, to a housewife and a father who worked for the government. Happy childhood, top grades at school. Lots of choral and theatrical experience in school and youth theatres. A bar mitzvah at 13. Then an entry to the gay scene where he meets leading Israeli DJ Ofer Nissim, who offers a place in his drag show.

Yaron, now drag queen Sharon, quickly becomes the star of the show and in 1993 Nissim decides to release Sharon's showstopper as a single, a Whitney Houston parody called Saida. It is a huge hit, and Dana International is born. Her curious name comes from the title of her first song - suddenly and inexplicably everyone was using it. Still, I want to improve the picture. Was it difficult coming to terms with her sexuality?

"No, no, no."

Did people spit at her in the streets?

"NO. No one ever did me any violence."

Were there confrontations with her parents?

"Nooooo. I had very liberal parents. OK, my mother didn't exactly like it when I started to go out with my kinky friends at 16, but my parents never lock the door in my face. And then, later...well it's not like my mother dreamed all her life she would have a transsexual child. Even now she would prefer me to be a normal guy. But I tell my parents: would you prefer an unhappy boy or a happy girl? It was a process -

it took some months. First we were far, then we were getting closer, step by step."

She makes it sound so easy.

"It WAS easy. I could sit here and lie, but the truth is, it was a nice neighborhood, I had good friends. OK, it's true, I have had to spend a lot of time in my life trying to convince people I have a right to exist on this Earth but... well, I don't need everybody to like me. Just to live and let live."

Some are not prepared to do that. After the Eurovision victory, Rabbi Shlomo Benizri, a leading Orthodox Jew, announced: "God is against this phenomenon. It is a sickness you must cure... everyone abroad will say, 'Look at those Jews and what they are sending to perform, some kind of crossbreed'. Dana is an abomination. Even in Sodom there was nothing like it."

One Jordanian magazine described her work as "prostitution by singing" and accused her of "stimulating forbidden passions"; others banded about words such as "abomination" and "filth". The deputy mayor of Jerusalem, Rabbi Chaim Miller, vowed to stop the song contest being held in his city in 1999 as a protest.

And in Egypt her records have been banned after newspapers branded Dana a "corrupter of youth". Dana pouts and says "Pah" and "I don't care."

I wonder how women react to her, this cheat, this usurper who somehow hi-jacked womanhood and managed to outshine the genuine article, beating them at their own game. Her own elder sister and a mother-of-two, Limor, for example.

"Oh, my sister is beautiful," she says.

And what about the hordes of dowdy, flabby....

"They should diet," snaps Dana. She then treats me to a ten-minute tirade on the subject of beauty being only skin deep. It is the fibbing cleavage talking, I decide.

"Look honey," she says. "I am not beautiful. I am just average. I don't think about the way I look too much because I don't care about it. I would like people to respect me as a human being first of all - you should judge people by personality, not the way they look. I will lose my beauty in ten years, so what is left? I would like people to say 'she is a nice woman, she is intelligent, she has a wonderful personality'. Not to look at me and say 'I want to f**k you'. Because even ugly women get laid, you know?"

Her Cleopatra eyes narrow in concentration as she searches for an apt quote. "It is from the Bible. I can't translate exactly because I'm not English, but it says, basically: 'beauty and all that stuff is bullshit'. She glares at me: "No, I am not beautiful. Maybe you just think so because you like dark girls."

So now who's making assumptions?

Dana's theories about beauties extend, she

claims, to her male partners. "A supermodel could walk into this room right now and an ugly man could come in too, and the ugly man could conquer me." We both glance at the door, half expecting Marcus Shenkenberg and Quasimodo to burst in and commence battle. "I could fall in love with a black guy, a yellow guy, whatever. Either they have 'it' or they don't."

She did fall in love, with the last of the seven boyfriends, but that's all over now. "Honey, it would take me hours to tell you about it," she sighs. "But he is in my heart forever. We loved each other so much, but it didn't work."

Wasn't there something in the papers about the boyfriend having to choose between his transsexual lover and his outraged parents? "Yes, it was all over the papers in Israel. I told you it was complicated." Since winning Eurovision, Dana has lived at a whirlwind pace, flying all over Europe with a passport that still says 'male', before returning to the apartment in Tel Aviv where she lives alone. "You have to go through a humiliating process to get it changed. You have to see psychologists, strip, and they take photographs from every angle. So why bother? It's only a passport. I don't care."

She doesn't feel the need to fight for her rights?

"NO. Listen, what's more important - that my boyfriend should see me as a woman or that my passport should. It's just a piece of paper."

It was a vital piece of paper, though, six years ago when she wanted to launch her career in Europe but couldn't leave Israel because she

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DOES MEDIA HAVE GID?

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having been in drag.

Of the California incident Smith adds "Initial reports simply told of two women being killed in an apparent murder-suicide. Was anything more really necessary than this? Is it important that the public hear that one of those women happened to have 'breasts and a penis'? I can see a need for the crime to have a reason, but does the reason have to be made sensational?"

Perhaps the old media adage "if it bleeds, it leads" will soon be replaced by "if it has breasts and a penis, it leads"

Or - maybe it already has.

Neither brand of sensationalism will bring back either the victim or the killer, but it will serve to reinforce the multitude of negative stereotypes of transgendered people that run rampant through mainstream media.

And, in the long run, that helps no one.

TRENT LOTT IS THE PROBLEM

By Katrina C. Rose

Republican Sen. Trent Lott of Mississippi, by derisively likening homosexuals to kleptomaniacs and alcoholics, has shown himself to be a bigot - and my pointing this out is NOT extremism. His, and his party's, war against homosexuality not only warrants but demands comparison to the scapegoating practices of other totalitarian cadres that the world has had to fight - yes, including Nazi Germany. 'Love the sinner, hate the sin' is propaganda - pure and simple.

The fact that millions of people agree with Lott is absolutely irrelevant. Millions disagree with him as well. Civil rights are not based on

mere numbers. If they were, Lott's state, among others, would probably still have laws criminalizing interracial relationships. Religious beliefs were used to justify such laws - and many people still believe that such relationships are wrong, still citing religious beliefs. Basing racism on religious belief does not change the fact that it is still bigotry.

Likewise for homophobia.

The fact that some (but, importantly, not all) interpretations of certain bits of Christian dogma call homosexuality a sin is irrelevant. The Bible is not law. Lott and his ilk can 'believe' anything they want. Enforcing it is a different matter. One group of Christians cannot

force their religious will on all. Legalized discrimination against homosexuals has no logical basis. If ever subjected to truly objective analysis by courts, it will not survive. "God said it, I believe it, that settles it" is not logic. It is faith. It may be of the utmost importance to you, but it cannot be the sole basis for a law that affects the rights of non-adherents to your religion.

Sexual orientation is not a legitimate concern of government. Homosexuality is not a problem. Homosexuals do have a problem, though: bigots like Trent Lott who believe that they can legislate Christianity.

TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- Chase Bank has just announced that domestic partner benefits will be offered beginning Jan. 1, 1999! Obviously, Chase's LGBT employees are V-E-R-Y pleased!

- THE first recorded sex-change operation - a Danish painter, family man and father of two who went from male to female in the early 1930s - is the inspiration for the much sought-after first novel that sold recently for \$350,000. Viking won the best-bid auction for the uncompleted book by David Ebershoff, a 29-year-old marketing executive for Random House.

The novel, called "The Danish Girl," is based on the true story of Einar Wegener, who wrote about himself / herself in a 1933 book called "Man Into Woman." The book is about the then-experimental operation that created history's first recognized transsexual, Lili Elbe. While most people think of Christine Jorgensen who underwent the operation in 1951, it was in fact Lili Elbe who was the first transsexual - by nearly two decades!

- A new parenting option in the future for transsexuals? Yes, according to the April 19th issue of New York Times Magazine, you too can feel the magic of carrying around a nine pound, fidgety human in utero and all the associated pain and stretch-marks thereof. Franklin Kameny, a retired physicist and gay rights activist, recently proposed developing a "completely artificial" womb. He stated the embryo would be placed in the artificial womb, nurtured for nine months, and then opened, producing an infant. Sounds like those newfangled breadmakers - put it in for an hour, open it up and out pops a loaf. Talk about having a 'bun' in the oven! And later, you can wipe up poopie baby buns at 3 AM! Joy!!!

- In May's democratic primary, a Bobby Kern aka: Bobby Hidalgo won the democratic primary and thus the right to face GOP's Dan Burton in the upcoming congressional race. The notable part? Apparently he's impersonated a local female judge, was arrested

once for offering oral sex to an undercover cop (though he maintains he's a virgin), and has used the name of former Charlie's Angel Tanya Roberts to gain entry to various local events. Oh well...more fodder for the conservatives....

- Speaking of Charlie's Angels, the local T-girls were doing some rather Angels-like moves at the self-defense class held by Lilly & Yvonne Roddy. For any of you who missed the class, Lilly has offered a summer special: Three months for \$99! Protect yourself!

- Have you ever been the victim of a hate crime? Have you lost a loved from in a racist attack? Would you be willing to share your story with the visitors of HateWatch? HateWatch is seeking personal accounts of assaults and crimes based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. If you have a story, please send it to hate-crime@hatewatch.org, and include your name, address, and phone number. For more info, contact Director of HateWatch, David Goldman at: PO Box 380151; Cambridge, MA 02238-0151 or call: 617-876-3796. Cyberfolks can Email: goldman@hatewatch.org.

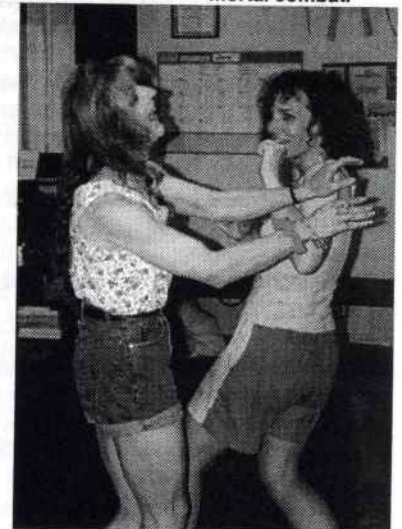
- Scientists in Italy and U.K. have identified a gene that causes sex reversal syndrome, in which people have the chromosomes of one sex but the physical attributes of the other. DAX1, which lies on the X chromosome, occasionally duplicates and causes an individual who is genetically male to develop physically as a female. Another gene called Sry, on the Y chromosome, is the gene which determines whether testes or ovaries will develop in the embryo.

In usual circumstances when these genes meet in fetal development; the Sry gene will win (you bully!) and the male child will develop normally. When the DAX1 duplicates, however, the two will gang up on the Sry gene (2 against 1! No fair!), and the child born male, will develop female physical characteristics. I think the Spice Girls movie said it best, "Blah, blah, blah, Um...Girl Power!"

- Speaking of the Spice Girls - Dana International, the Israeli transsexual who recently won the Eurovision Music Awards, has reportedly turned down an offer to be the newest Spice Girl. According to her manager Ofer Nissim, "she has other plans." Smart spice!



(Above) TG Karate class: Top (L-R) Janet's alter-ego, Sheila Appleton, instructor Lilly Roddy, and Amber Houston. Front (L-R) Karen, Yvonne Roddy, Marti Bennett, Desirée Walton and Vanessa Edwards Foster. (At left) Marti gets the drop on Amber. (Below) Desirée (L) and Vanessa engage in mortal combat.





TS Seeks Subsidized Sex Change

By Lauren Dodge

[PORTLAND, OR] (AP) — Her long legs crossed, Olivia Jaquay settles into a chair at a downtown coffeehouse, drawing an interested glance from a man in a business suit at the next table. Brushing her hair back with fuchsia fingernails, she talks of her love of vintage clothing, a penchant for rubies and her pending nuptials to a man who truly understands her. At 42, she says she finally feels like a woman in every sense of the word. Except one.

Jaquay must have one last reconstructive surgery to make the transformation from a male to female, and she wants taxpayers to pay for it under the state's health insurance plan. She contends she suffers from a gender identity disorder, and without the surgery would be left in a frustrating netherworld between the sexes. "I do not want to live in purgatory any more," Jaquay said.

On April 17, Jaquay plans to testify before a state panel that will help decide if sex-change operations should be covered by the Oregon Health Plan. Transsexualism is 688 on the list of 745 treatments and ailments. Only the top 574 are available to the 270,000 low income residents enrolled in the plan.

The issue has polarized the medical community, which is split on whether sex-change surgery is elective or corrective. "It's a complex issue," said Dr. Kathleen Weaver, medical director of the Oregon Health Plan Policy and Research. "This is a real thing for these people. But there is also some concern that doing the surgery is not going to correct anything."

Weaver stated the surgery is not a cure-all, with instances of depression and suicide following sex changes. "It's like people thinking, 'if only my nose weren't so big,'" Weaver said. "After they have the surgery, they realize that isn't the whole answer."

But Jaquay said it saved her life. "If I had not had that surgery, I would be dead," said Jaquay, who has attempted to kill herself several times. When she was turned down for coverage last fall, it came as a shock. She had gone through years of hormone therapy paid for by her HMO. Officials of the HMO, who said they thought Jaquay was a woman, declined to pay for the sex-change operation.

So last October, Jaquay hocked her Monte Carlo, sold some jewelry and had a sex change anyway.

She said she is not homosexual. As a teenager, 'Oliver' got kicked out of school and joined the Army in 1973. He spent four years there hoping his desire to be a woman was just a phase. It wasn't.

"Everything came naturally as a girl," Jaquay said. "I always went into the women's restroom. I was trying to be something my mom wanted, but I just wanted to wear her clothes."

If the operations were funded by the state plan, Weaver fears it might entice patients outside Oregon to move here for coverage. "That's \$1.5 million — a big piece of our budget," she said.

But Jaquay and others in the transsexual community say sexual reassignment is a life-or-death operation.

Jaquay said the ordeal is putting a strain in her relationship. Her plan to go back to school for a degree in computers is on hold and all the publicity is making it tough to find a job.

"We are not what you see on Jerry Springer," Jaquay said. "We are down-to-earth human beings."

(Submitted off the net by Lauren Robison)

The Three Little Pigs

By Marissa J. Carter © 1997



Once upon a time, there was a big bad wolf that lived in Iowa (1). This pseudoferal male specimen had an attitude and was unfortunately genetically disadvantaged by being predisposed exclusively toward pigs as far as its eating habits were concerned.

One day, whilst surveying a new part of its territory in the deep forest, he came across three pigs working in a small clearing. Not wanting to appear the dreaded stereotype of its species, he trotted up to the pigs and said, "Nice day, huh?" Not receiving a response he added further, "look guys, I'm not trying to be rude or anything, but I am hungry and it really wouldn't take much for me to knock you guys off and truss you up barbecue style on the ol' spit."

The three pigs put down their tools and regarded him with undisguised contempt as they recognized they were trapped in one of nature's classic paradigms.

"Tell you what," the wolf said, "I'll strike a bargain with you. I'll let each of you construct a house which I'll attempt to blow down with the ol' trusty lungs here, and if I don't succeed, I won't bother you again. Ever. Not even a prank phone call."

The pigs, accustomed to consensus

deal-making by being part of a local quality management team, quickly brainstormed the concept, and after a ten-three vote, decided to avail themselves of the deluded wolf's offer.

"Terrific," said the wolf, now rubbing his paws with glee (2). "I'll come back here in a week or so, and we'll see what happens, huh?"

The three pigs nodded in assent and set to work.

A week later, the by now extremely hungry wolf reappeared. To his amazement, the first thing he saw was a house constructed of newspaper. "Ridiculous," he thought to himself, and crept up to the rickety doorway.

"Little pig, little pig, let me in," he said, "or I'll huff and I'll puff and blow your house down."

"I'm busy surfing the Internet. Go away."

The wolf, a little taken aback by the nonchalance of the first pig, but impressed by this apparent attempt to recycle a common reading material, gathered all the strength he could muster and blew the house down with one breath. Later that evening, he consulted Chef Boyadee's All American Cookbook and consumed pork

medallions with shallots in a white wine sauce for supper with untempered relish.

Early the next morning, the wolf inspected the second pig's house. It was an early 18th century French model, with a beautifully designed inner courtyard and a Mansard roof that caused him to greatly admire the skill of its architect. However, he detected a fatal flaw, insofar as the magnificent edifice was constructed out of one-eighth inch plywood. "Must have gotten a deal at Home Depot," the wolf thought, knocking on the door.

After getting no response to two crisp raps on the door, the wolf went through his spiel, but was still greeted by silence. "I know you're in there -- you can't fool me," he said. Whereupon he completely emptied his lungs and carried out the Complete Breath twice, as taught to him by a famous yoga practitioner, before blowing the house down in three monumental exhalations.

Later that morning, the wolf had fresh bacon and eggs, with hash browns on the side. The sun had crept almost down to the horizon by the time wolf emerged from his siesta. He burped very impolitely as he

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DANA INTERNATIONAL....

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hadn't done the military service her country demands of all its young men. "They wanted me to be some kind of pilot," she scoffs. "The military police came for me three times and took me to the base and I escaped through the window back to Tel Aviv. By the last time I was 20. In the end, I showed them my breasts and they could see for themselves why I couldn't be a soldier."

Nestling between cleavage and fragrant throat is a tiny, elegant golden Star of David. I ask if she will leave Israel if her career takes off here. "Pah. I am not patriotic for Israel. I am not afraid to say good things or bad things about Israel or Europe. If I feel it was necessary for my career, yes, I would leave."

And would they call her a traitor? "They might, but it's their problem. I've dedicated six years of my life to Israel. I have volunteered for many, many organisations. I've done enough to prove I deserve to be treated as a good citizen of Israel."

Does she want children? I expect her to talk broodily about adoption or at least mouth slogans about the right of anyone of any sexuality to raise children. I've read somewhere that she had sperm frozen before the operation so that she can still be a father, if not a mother.

She is outraged. "Children! No, no, no. I don't live an illusion. My sister has two children - it's enough to be an aunt. If I have children they will find out one day their mother is transsexual. It's not good for them. Why would I want children?"

I break it to her gently that this is the one area where she isn't - some would say - a whole woman.

"What about all those women without children - they are not women? It has nothing to do with children.

No, no, no."

There is no frozen sperm, either. "Honey, I will never be a mother - or a father, OK?"

I wonder whether Dana isn't bored senseless with talking about her sexuality. Whether she wants to tell us: look, I was a man,

now I'm a woman, get over it and let's talk about my music.

But my diva-in-denial denies even that. "Look, I'm a smart girl. I need it. Not every new artist gets such huge publicity."

It's your gimmick, then? "Yes, my gimmick. And who says that is wrong? Michael Jackson has a gimmick. Madonna has a gimmick. And if you have something to offer behind the gimmick, this is a wonderful combination."

It has been a tough, tumultuous hour, a hard-fought battle, especially for two people on the same side. Claiming the victory, she smiles, leans forward and says: "I didn't tell you what you wanted to hear, did I?"

I tell her: It's just that I thought you would be more... I search for the word. More of a victim. "Oh, I'm not a victim, darling," she says. "I'm a conqueror."

**Never raise your hands to your kids.
It leaves your groin unprotected.
— Red Buttons**

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Licensed Professional Engineer**

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M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Texas A & M University 1971
Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

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TATS Newsletter - Addendum

Michelle's Musings - This Is My Desk - By Michelle Myers

July 3, 1998

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Wishing you love and knowledge,
Michelle

The Three Little Pigs

(Continued from Page 12)

gazed at the monstrosity that the third pig had constructed. It looked like something that Frank Lloyd Wright's evil twin brother might have built on a weekend bender. Still, the wolf conceded, it was made of epoxy-graphite carbon fiber composite, and would probably take all the vital lung capacity that he possessed to demolish it.

He knocked on the door. "Little pig, little pig, let me in, or I'll huff and I'll puff and reduce your abode to rubble in two shakes of a lamb's tail."

"I don't think so."

The wolf was surprised as the door opened and a very smug looking little

pig emerged, clutching a mug of hazelnut flavored coffee. The pig leaned casually against the doorframe.

"You've got some bloody nerve," the wolf said, his temper rising.

"No, what I have got is a Ph.D in Material Science, so buzz off and go do whatever it is that wolves do of a cool Fall evening."

The door slammed in the wolf's face.

The wolf, by this time almost crimson with rage, spat on the ground. "Fine, if that's the way you want it."

He carefully purged his mind of all distracting thoughts and prepared to blow with all the might of his years. He blew and blew. He blew until he

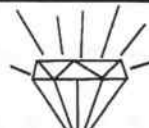
developed a pulmonary embolism and dropped dead on the spot as his heart, deprived of oxygen, quit beating.

Of course, there is a moral to this story and that is: don't fuck with pigs that have a Ph.D in Materials science.

(1) Iowa was selected as a representative State in which hypothetically, this scenario could have existed. It is by no means implied that such a scenario could only have taken place in this State.

(2) While it is recognized that wolves cannot really rub their paws together, even if they want to (they would fall over), this phraseology has been adopted to lend more credence and believability to the story.

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Michelle

TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 6, Issue 8

Houston, Texas

August, 1998

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 GROUP EDUCATES LiB MEETING

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

It was a dark and stormy night... Sorry, I couldn't resist using the hackneyed Bulwer-Lytton line. It actually was a stormy night, but we hardly knew it (other than the muffled thunder that night). But I digress.

Friday night, July 17 found a panel of TATS members sitting before a monthly LiB (Lesbians

in Business) meeting discussing...*transgender* issues! As LiB president, Suzanne Anderson, had mentioned at this year's Unity Banquet; LiB is committed to learning about the transgender community's needs, issues, and to forging common ground between the two groups. They backed this promise by inviting a group of us to the July meeting for an 'education' of its members on transgenderism and transsexualism and all of the accompanying nuances. In essence, we held 'Transgender 101.'

The panel assembled represented both leaders and the mover-and-shakers of TATS: Founding members April Lauper and Jennifer Lytwyn, board member Katrina C. Rose, members Marie Denise Gallagher, Justin Tyme Alexander, R. J. Schouebroek and current officer / editor, yours truly. LiB Vice President Jacqueline Doval (one of this year's grand marshals at the

(Continued on Page 7)



TATS panel at the LiB meeting on July 17th (from lower left) Marie Denise Gallagher, Katrina C. Rose, Jennifer Lytwyn, Vanessa Edwards Foster, R. J. Schouebroek, Justin T. Alexander and April Lauper.



LiB & TATS members Marie Gallagher (L) and Katrina Rose are all smiles, while the other panelists (background) continue fielding questions after the meeting.

TG ACTIVIST JOANNA McNAMERA DIES

By Jessica Xavier

It is with great sadness that I must report to you the death of JoAnna McNamara, by her own hand. JoAnna was an attorney who, shortly after graduating from Willamette University Law School in 1996, wrote the brief that resulted in the BOLI decision which currently protects transsexual men and women from discrimination under Oregon's state disability law.

JoAnna also served as Employment Law Moderator for the Transgender Law Conference (ICTLEP) and helped to co-found It's Time, Oregon! As my attorney, she filed the papers to

legally create my music company. And she was a comrade and sister to many of us. She will be greatly missed.

Know that each and everyone of us who are active in this movement is irreplaceable.

JoAnna was an intensely private person who, like so many of us, was estranged from her family. In her memory, I would like to suggest that we all redouble our efforts in effecting change that will make this a more understanding, compassionate and just world, which would honor and treasure the wonderful woman JoAnna was.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

August 8 Social Meeting at:
Lesbian/Gay Community Ctr. @ 3:00 PM

August 22 Un-Meeting at:
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM

September 12 Social Meeting at:
Lesbian/Gay Community Ctr. @ 3:00 PM

September 26 Un-Meeting at:
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM

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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) 827-5913 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

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:
http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/

EDITOR'S RANT

By **Vanessa Edwards Foster**

Fate does funny things. Sometimes in the most unlikely of moments, you find inspiration. Serendipity. Other times, what you thought you knew turns out to be something completely different, turning your world on its ear. Illusion.



JoAnna McNamera's death completely stunned me. Initially disbelief that hit me. Then bafflement took over. Of all the people I've had chance to meet, I felt JoAnna was the least likely to go to this extreme. *Illusion*. Apparently I didn't delve far beyond the surface. But that's a common trait for those who suffer bravely: put up a calm exterior and let few close enough to see the inner turmoil.

I was fortunate enough to meet JoAnna only once - during my first foray to lobby in Washington. It wasn't until the day we were leaving to fly home that I met her. We didn't chat much during the drive to the airport - it was mostly a three-way conversation between Phyllis, Dee and JoAnna. I listened. After Phyllis and Dee caught their morning flight out, I walked with JoAnna to her gate to await her flight. My flight didn't depart until 4:30 that afternoon, so I had time to kill.

At first it was just chit-chat as we asked the basic 'get-to-know-you' questions, what brought each of us to DC, etc. We found we shared an astrological sign - Cancer - and began discussing personality traits. Eventually the talk turned to how our parents reacted to our informing about our respective transitions.

During this part of the conversation, JoAnna picked up on my emotional sensitivity of the subject and pursued further. Though I attempted to wave it off, she stared at me with her steady blue eyes and coaxed it out. I'd told her about my mom's negative reaction, and my dad's surprising reaction and the associated guilt I had for hurting him. I literally started welling up in tears there in the Baltimore-Washington Airport. It caught me off guard.

I then told her how I was in an emotional low spot - dealing with a neurotic boss in a low-paying job after an extended period of unemployment, family problems, worries about my future, post-lobbying frustrations, etc. She soothed my emotional wounds, then told me her story.

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None of her family was supportive. She had been in transition once, close to completing the ultimate, but suffered an emotional setback. Her father made her promise on his deathbed to not go through with surgery. After his death, her conscience gave her no rest. She then went back to being a male.

'He' got married, began attending church regularly, and lived and worked as a man - at one point becoming a constable and attempting to get into the police or sheriff's department. 'He' did everything to put the 'past' behind, but it didn't work.

Even during his male days, the wife was antagonistic; belittling his trans era and increasing the fervor on fundamental religion. All the prayer and all the memories of his father's deathbed wish, couldn't stop JoAnna from returning. When he told his wife of this, she was beyond unsympathetic - she drew his service revolver and threatened to kill him. At another point, in the throes of depression, he again stared down the barrel of his own gun in his own hand.

After surviving a plane crash that broke most of his bones, after religious conversion and a cruel marriage gone awry, after the guilt from unsupportive family and depths of utter despair; she was still around to tell the tale. There had to be something more...and JoAnna began a second transition culminating in surgery. I was amazed at her Phoenix-like resiliency and asked her advice. She told me two words: "Invictus Cobarundum." After asking, she translated 'Don't let the bastards get you down.' "People will try to ruin your life - don't let them!" she said. "Don't ever let 'em get to you."

Since that day there have been many trying moments, much worse than what I went through at the time. All throughout I've been repeating her words like a mantra. From the unlikeliest of circumstances, serendipity. How I wish I'd gotten the chance to thank her...

Thank you JoAnna. I miss you....

A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

Jessica Xavier, Pres., It's Time America

Spencer Bergstedt, Boardmbr, ICTLEP

Andrea Bennett, Atlanta GA

Phyllis Frye

Katrina C. Rose

Marissa Carter

for forwarding article

Gwen Smith, TCF Area Coord. for AOL

for submitting humor

Lauren Robison, suburban Baltimore MD

Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV

for submitting photos, scanning & miscellany

Katrina C. Rose, a great big thanks!!!

Reflecting On JoAnna McNamera

By Andrea Bennett

I learned about this Tuesday morning from Sallyanne, and after the initial disbelief have found myself increasingly disappointed and disturbed. I'd never met Joanna in person but had talked with her on the telephone a number of times about both personal and legal issues. We last spoke in May, I think, and she gave no indication that she was on the edge, or at least if she did I failed to pick up on it. Joanna was so smart, and so well-intentioned, but I suppose like many of us she had learned to live within herself and to reveal little of the pain that resided in her soul.

Events like this frighten me, for I do not understand them but realize that they speak to fears and anxieties that drive us at the core of our being. To the outward eye, Joanna had everything going for her -- youth, intelligence, skill and experience. Yet she grieved, despaired even for her very existence.

As I reflect back, I recall an e-mail discussion with Joanna that began in one of the mailing lists last December. She wrote: "I have learned to accept that I have worth and that I will not let society shame me. I am worth loving and I am of value. I will not allow society's condemnation of me and my sisters and brothers in the gender world affect my sense of self-worth. In the end, for me, when I have a sense of self-worth I may be alone but I am not lonely....Life does get better and those of us on the 'other side' can tell you that it is great to be whole for the first time in our lives."

Those words echo in emptiness now, and I wonder at the struggle that must have been going on in Joanna's mind as she wrote them. Perhaps she spoke, as I often do, not so much to others, but to convince herself that she was indeed whole, and worthy of love. Yes, we say it, but do we believe it? We hold each other and say it's all right, but are we healed in any significant way?

I wrote back to Joanna that my greatest fear in changing my life was that I would discover that I still lacked the facility to connect. Before transition, I knew I did not have it, for I had hidden my essential self beneath layers of convention, pretext and artifice. I still don't really know why I changed, but my hope was that I would find a world of reality, not shadows, a world where I could be me and people would find that good and worthy. At first, I believed that this was happening, and I was exultant. But as years rolled on it sometimes seemed that I was actually drifting further away than ever before. The truth is I do not know how to relate to others, and even when I think I am succeeding I still often pull back, and fail for reasons that I am prone to blame on "circumstances", when in fact the only relevant circumstance is my own inability to go forward.

It's an inadequacy that arises from the feeling I am still not real, that despite my best efforts I fall short of the mark. It arises from a lack of trust, less in others than in my own confidence to carry my end of the load. It arises from lack of the courage to fail, or to fail again. It also arises, I suppose, from custom and practice, and my habit of walking away from ownership of self.

Joanna and I talked about this, and the feeling that maybe we would wind up alone. We told each other that this wouldn't matter, though, because we would have security and completion within ourselves, and that we would never be lonely. But that is a dark road to travel. I fear that Joanna may have gone too far down it, without telling anyone

(Continued on Page 4)

Dealing With JoAnna McNamera's Suicide

By Phyllis Frye

I went off-net on June 29 and pretty much stayed out of my office for three weeks until today. I'd gotten word that JoAnna McNamera had committed suicide, but I was not ready to deal with it. I'd known and worked with her on TG stuff for over five years, I was on vacation with my family, and I just had to put it off until today.

Reading my e-mail this morning, I got the full dose including the e-mail message that she sent just before she fired the gun into her chest. I look at the scars on my own left wrist and remember my own desperate times back in 1972. I remember the many times that she and I talked about her depression and despair, and I "held her hand", long distance over the phone, to keep her from going over the edge. Each time I got off of the phone, I told my spouse how sad it was because I knew from my own experience that when I cut myself, no one could have stopped me. I give thanks to God each day that I used a knife instead of a gun.

JoAnna and I met at the IFGE Convention in Portland, Oregon, I think it was 1993. I was the keynoter at that convention. JoAnna had called me several times before then about the trouble she was having getting through law school. Many of the students were so mean. I recounted to her the problems that I'd had in law school back in 1978-81 and hoped that she would draw strength from me making it through back then.

I remember when I first met her. She was beautiful and looked so young. I never knew for several years that she was almost my age. Until that time, I used to call her "Kid".

She and Sharon Stuart (and I think Melinda Whiteway too) and I put on the first TG workshops at the Lavender Law Conference in November 1994, again in Portland, Oregon. This was after Karen Kerin and I had gone to DC the previous July to try to testify for the need to have TG

folks included in the ENDA Bill and learned that HRC had been involved in keeping TG folks out of the Bill. JoAnna was there and witnessed when we were told by an HRC consultant that TG folks had been deliberately omitted from the ENDA Bill because the calculation was made that TG inclusion would cost about twenty-five votes in Congress. At the end of that Conference, JoAnna became the first OUT TG Director of NLGLA as a Law School Representative.

You did not know that during from late 1996 through 1997, she helped me to research and frame the arguments as we met in DC without fanfare or publicity with EEOC folks trying to get TGs into the definition of sex that *Ulane v Eastern Airlines* and its progeny had taken us out of. She also researched and wrote a brilliant Employment Law update for the fourth ICTLEP Proceedings. I'll not go into the details of the BOLI

decision that she won in her home state of Oregon, because so many others have written about it. But I do know that she wrote it and fought it and won it while still a law student.

She enjoyed being a lawyer, and she really wanted to work for the TG community.

JoAnna, if you are reading this, I just want to say that I wish you would have hung on. You would have been a much better lawyer that I am. And in the coming years, with several years of practice under your belt, you could have been the one that brought us all together. You had the brains and the personality. And I also miss your smile. I love you, Kid.



JoAnna McNamera

'TRANS' ISSUES ARE NOT WHAT GAY PRIDE IS ABOUT

By Beren DeMotier

(editor's note: the following was recently printed in the Washington Blade and Houston Voice)

We were visiting friends recently, sitting languidly in the sun (well, in the shade, actually, but it sounds less voluptuous), while our children alternately played with and fought over every toy on the lawn. We'd just reached that delightful post-brunch mellowness known especially to Lesbians, when someone broke the peace by saying, "Look at them, playing so innocently. I wonder what's next? What will be the next thing after piercing and tattooing when our kids are grown?" Her partner laughed wickedly and said, "Amputation. They'll start whacking off their fingers." To which I replied, that's old news, only it isn't fingers that are being whacked. And a lively conversation about transgender and sex change operations was had by all.

Which was fortunate for me because I've been pestering people on this subject a lot lately and here I actually had willing participants. It's good to have a sounding board, especially when you suspect that you're turning into an irrational right-wing fanatic in your approaching middle age.

It's this merging of "trans" with "Lesbian, Gay and bisexual." I hate it with greater fervor every year. And now that Pride Month is happening all around us, I have tons of reminders everywhere I look that we are being linked, like it or not, ideologically, and legally.

I can deal with the legal. I don't think transgender people should be oppressed or discriminated against, whether being "trans" means that a man or a woman has undergone sexual reassignment surgery, or because they're a woman who wants to dress completely like a "man" and could pass if she wanted to. And even if you are a transgender warrior, attempting to break down the barriers of gender roles and sexual identities as specifically dual, you shouldn't have to lose your job over it.

Sure, as a mother of both a boy and a girl, I know in the very pit of my soul that gender is more than a social construct, despite my feminist education, but hey, to each their own. It's just that I don't think either transsexualism (changing hormonally and/or physically from one sex to another) or being transgendered (transgressing gender, among the many definitions floating around the cosmos at the moment) are what Gay pride is all about. And I wish I didn't have to see it on every banner, T-shirt and poster for the entire month of June.

It's not like I don't have some sympathy for the movement, or want to sweep it under the rug. I don't want to be like the St. Patrick's Day

Parade organizers and disallow anyone to march under whatever personal banner they please (barring pedophiles - I am a mother first, damn the civil liberties issues). Gay transgender warriors please attend, along with Queers and Corgis and the full membership of the Metropolitan Community Church. Non-Gay transsexuals marching in support of Gay pride, please do. Carry your signs and cheer. It's not that I want exclusion, oppression or a transgender-free parade, it's just that when the announcer begins and starts shouting about what we're all there to celebrate, it's not the obliteration of a dual-gender system that comes to mind.

My friends were equally baffled by the rise in transgender activism among young people, where it seems to have become a replacement for ACT UP in its intensity and attractiveness for the young and plottically motivated. No



more the simple Renee Richards complete change we all grew up with, transgender has become a multi-faceted octopus of transsexualism, cross-dressing, packing, and indefinable levels of androgyny created synthetically. We were talking about this last one, including the fad to "change at will" using black-market hormones. For a group of women entering the age where cancer becomes a common topic, and ever nearer to home, the idea of taking your body for granted in this way is a bit hard to take. As is the narcissism. To spend all that time and energy in switching identities from male to female or female to male, in order to make a social statement, is staggering. As one of the women said, if you have enough time on your hands to mess with gender, get a hobby, volunteer, go to temple. Give till it hurts.

Frankly, as a dyed-in-the-wool femme, I enjoy a little dichotomy in life, so I'm no fan of the seemingly "utopian" goal of transgender proposed by some. And as for assigning gender by behavior, another tenet of the movement: Even though my wife brings home the bacon

and I fry it up in the pan, we both know we're women, and isn't that the whole point of being Lesbians?

My skeptical side says that this is yet another attempt by extremists (identified primarily as Gay before this whole "trans" deal became the latest thing) to shoot our movement in the foot. For who knows what reason. This is also the same side of me that often mutters "idle hands make the devil's work" even though I am nothing close to a Christian. But then just call me an "integrationist." I don't want to be different, "queer" or outside the norm. I don't want to fell the patriarchy, join a socialist revolution (despite the medical benefits potential, which is alluring), or abolish the need for two bathrooms in your local McDonalds. I just want to be free to live my life, love who I love, and raise my kids (who will doubtless change their gender just to annoy me). For me, that's what Gay pride is all about.

REFLECTING ON JOANNA...

(Continued from Page 3)

where she was going, without bringing along a companion, and without a means to signal for help when she came to that part where she was lost and frightened.

I think Jessy is right that we become intensely private souls. If that realization doesn't come to us sooner, it will come to us later. We are a strange bunch, crazy by most people's standards, but doing our best to hang in there and find our place in the world. We grow up so isolated, set apart by the knowledge of our differentness, often abused for it and taught to hate and ridicule the things that make us our unique selves. The world tells us we should not be who we are, and contrives to keep us from doing what we feel we must. Why do we have to hurt others just to live the way we know we are? Why must we be mistreated for being no more than who we are?

Yet a marvelous beauty resides among us, childlike, innocent almost to the point of naïvete, deeply hidden. God, I treasure our people! I treasured Joanna. I want us to play, to dart among the stars, to dance and sing, to roll in the fresh grass. I want us to tickle each other, and to laugh out loud, and to dine on curry. I want us to smile with the knowledge of who we are, and to be loved precisely for that.

I want us to stay, and to not be hurt. I want no more losses. May the loss of our precious Joanna remind us that hatred and fear must cease, and that we must find ways to love and be loved.

A REBUTTAL TO Ms DeMOTIER

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

A recent column by Beren DeMotier questioned the validity of having transgender inclusiveness in Gay Pride week. After reading this, I felt compelled to clarify some of the inaccuracies in her article.

Early in her column, she decries, "...this merging of 'trans' with 'Lesbian, Gay and bisexual.' I hate it with greater fervor every year." My apologies to you personally for our 'linkage' with the Gay and Lesbian community. Actually, there are a few in the transgendered community - those mostly-closeted, 'dyed-in-the-wool straights' - who would also like to disassociate the TG community from the Gay and Lesbian community. Some of them feel that the increasing visibility and hedonistic lifestyle of the Lesbian / Gay community over the years has actually increased the vitriol from society in general towards the *entire* community - including transgenders. The vast majority of trans-folk see that sentiment for what it is, a broad oversimplistic generalization. Which brings up the crux of the issue: stereotyping.

In a later quote, DeMotier says, "we are being linked, like it or not, ideologically, and legally." That's a very true quote...for us all! It's not that we have linked *ourselves* together as much as our *circumstances* have. These circumstances are a direct result of society's linking us together. For better or for worse, we're inextricably lashed together by straight America. Regardless of whether they see a Hermaphrodite, a Butch Lesbian, a flamboyant Drag Queen, a Log Cabin Republican, a Bisexual or a transsexual; society views us *all* as 'those weirdos.' Regardless of how we identify ourselves, we're all 'Gay' in society's eyes.

DeMotier continues, "I don't think either transsexualism or being transgendered are what Gay pride is all about." True, we are not what Gay Pride is *all* about - I don't recall anyone stating we were. We are only a *portion* of what it's all about. Gay Pride events began, if I'm not mistaken, after the Stonewall Riot. As I'm sure you already know, there were *absolutely no transgenders who participated* in that catalytic event. Of course that's assuming that you like your history 'revisionist-style.' Read up on Stonewall: trans-folk were there. Some were actually the instigators. Even discounting that fact, there are many transgenders who are bonafide lesbians and gay, she even admitted as much in the article. Why then should there not be any TG involvement in Gay Pride?

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Transphobia is Not What Gay Pride is About - Freedom Is

By Katrina C. Rose

"I just want to be free to live my life, love who I love, and raise my kids"

And go to Pride celebrations without seeing or hearing the word 'transgender.'

Oregon lesbian Beren deMotier does a good job of cloaking transphobia with a veil of inclusivity. For that very reason, her piece in the June 19 issue of the Washington Blade ("Trans Issues Are Not What Gay Pride is About") is one of the most disgusting pieces of ill-informed marginalization of transgendered people ever to appear in any newspaper - queer or mainstream.

Ms. deMotier has decided for herself that transgender issues are not "what Gay pride is all

announcer begins and starts shouting about what we're all there to celebrate." She claims to support legal equality for TGs but her attitude reeks of 'separate-but-equal.'

California TG activist Gwen Smith was totally dumbfounded by the article, postulating that deMotier might be correct in fearing "that she's turning into an 'irrational right-wing fanatic.' Certainly she seems to use many of the same arguments that the right wing has used against us - and I mean all of us - gay, lesbian, bi and trans." DeMotier leaves the reader with the Robertsonian impression that TGs perhaps recruit, commenting that she and her friends are "baffled by the rise in transgender activism among young people."

I see absolutely no logic in the distinction that she draws between transsexuals who try to blend into the woodwork after transition and surgery - assimilationism, which is

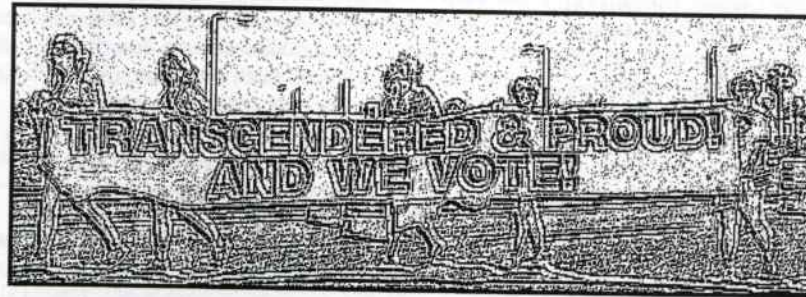
what I assume she was implying approval of with her reference to Renee Richards, who tried to assimilate before being outed - and those who have the nerve to speak out about their lives and experiences as deMotier has no problem doing regarding her *Harriet & Harriet* family (mommy, mommy and two children.) Hasn't she ever heard homophobes who say that they supposedly have no problem with what homosexuals do in their bedrooms but simply don't want to see any form of same-gender affection in public?

She calls the use of black-market hormones a "fad." Few (though admittedly, some) transgendered people willingly go that route. I can only assume that she considers being thrown out on the street as a teenager and being forced to do the prostitution tango in order to stay alive merely a "fad."

Might deMotier be willing to take desperate measures to make herself whole - physically and psychologically - if a barrier existed between her and her sexuality as does the barrier between male and female that transgendered people endure?

Even more disturbing than her treatment of hormone usage is her musing about the entire concept of changing one's gender. She effectively dismisses it as a narcissistic hobby. She

(Continued on Page 6)



about" and, though she professes to feel that TGs should not be "oppressed or discriminated against," she wishes that she "didn't have to see it on every banner, T-shirt and poster for the entire month of June."

Well, I wish that I didn't have to see the superiority-complex-ridden babbling of lesbian and gay male transphobes who, but for their attraction to members of their own gender, would probably be welcomed with open arms by the Traditional Family Values™ cadre.

Naturally, deMotier totally ignores intersexed people in her diatribe. Had she attempted to deal with their issues - or even their very existence - I'd like to think that she would have realized how absolutely preposterous her overall position is and would have aborted her article prior to submitting it for publication.

She did, however, take the time to mention pedophiles. No, she didn't equate transgendered people with pedophiles but she did relegate TGs to a spot only one rung above them on the hierarchical ladder of who is worthy of inclusion in Gay Pride. She wouldn't allow pedophiles to march in Pride parades at all (and neither would I; pedophilia exclusion has nothing to do with the issue of Pride and everything to do with the safety of human beings who are too young to defend themselves, either mentally or physically) but would allow TGs to march yet would simply not have us be acknowledged "when the

TRANSPHOBIA...GAY PRIDE....

(Continued from Page 5)

seems to approve of the position of a friend of hers who declared "if you have enough time on your hands to mess with gender, get a hobby, volunteer, go to temple. Give till it hurts."

And homosexuality is just behavior; deMotier can change if she really wants to.

Its the same logic.

If she uses it against transgendered people, she loses all moral authority to complain when Pat Robertson and Jerry Fallwell use it against her.

I find it amazing that a member of a sexual minority from Oregon would have such a cavalier attitude toward *any* group routinely targeted by Christian fanaticism. She must be totally unaware of The Family Act – the latest concoction of Lon Mabon and the Oregon Citizens Alliance, the well-funded bigots who got Measure 9 onto her state's election ballot in 1992. This latest piece of madness, if enacted, would carve into public policy the most rigid, heterosexist parameters for determining what is, and is not, a

family. But, it would go further – declaring that gender is absolutely and irreversibly determined at the *moment of conception*. This would not only prelude recognition of gender transition but also effectively prohibit recognition of biology-based factors that may conclusively prove that homosexuality is not taught and learned but is innate.

OCA, as well as other right wing hate groups like the Christian Coalition and the American Family Association, are extremely inclusive. They hate all of us – gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered.

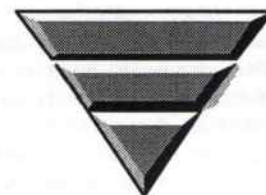
Gwen Smith added, "A movement based on excluding those who don't fit a narrow definition is no movement at all. It is a small attempt to redefine a status-quo." I don't care how normal or low-key deMotier's lesbian family is, it is equally far removed from the Fallwellian status quo as any life of transgendered person – be it a conservatively-dressed yet liberal-thinking law school graduate like me or a chalk-skinned, crimson-lipped Goth chick who used to be a Goth dude who may get the urge to revert following an unduly brutal absinthe buzz.

I tend not to hang around with Goth chicks

– but then I don't hang around with a lot of the various sub-groups you'll see at a Pride parade. That's not a slap at Goth chicks, leather dudes or even drag queens in feather boas. Its a statement about what I do with my free time. Pride is a statement that the government has no Constitutional authority either to criminalize our existence or erect other legal impediments to equality based on how we spend our time and who we spend it with – or which gender-marker was stuck on your birth certificate based solely on what the obstetrician thought that your genitalia looked like instead of what was developing in your brain.

We are all in the Pride boat together.

Beren deMotier and those who think like her are trying to tip it over – not transgendered



REBUTTAL TO Ms. DeMOTIER

(Continued from Page 5)

Later DeMotier laments "the obliteration of a dual-gender system." Again, sorry to burst the bubble, but there has *never* been a dual-gender system in nature. An estimated 1 in every 2,000 births are children who are intersexed – *hermaphrodite*. The vast majority of them are surgically altered at birth (in essence, sexual reassignment surgery) to conform to society's constructs of 'two genders only.' But's *that's not nature*. Only in the small minds of those who can't fathom something not like themselves has that concept existed. Since this includes a sizable portion of our nation's body politic, this 'dual-gender system' continues. All the while, fact is ignored and swept under the rug.

Transgenderism's "attractiveness for the young and politically motivated" perplexes DeMotier. I have *yet* to see *anyone* who became transgendered just to be politically active. If I did, I would encourage them to rethink this – that's a long way to go just to be 'political.' As for non-trans-folk pulling for the TG cause, it's likely because we're perceived as the 'under-dog.' While conservative elements of assimilationist Gays and Lesbians continue to distance themselves from us; it's struck a chord to those in the community who know us as people. They've rallied to our side, and I appreciate that. And I certainly won't forget that either! I worked on a city council campaign for an 'out' lesbian friend of mine. I worked my butt off in her campaign, and I'd do it again! In fact I – a

pre-op transsexual – was one of her two volunteer coordinators. The best part of this? That campaign was for city councilmember Annise Parker – the first 'out' elected official in Houston (no small feat in conservative Texas!) And I was only one of fifteen transgenders working that campaign. Sometimes *transgenders* are active in *Gay and Lesbian* politics, too. If "idle hands make the devil's work," then why shouldn't we be active?

The "narcissism" Ms.DeMotier pointed out may exist in the transgender community – *to an extent*. Again, she paints the entire community with the same stereotype. This is about as true as saying "All lesbians are butch." Both statements are ridiculously false. Only the uninformed would make such blanket statements.

The comment about the "time and energy in switching identities" from one gender to another "in order to make a social statement" is laughable. For all I know, Ms. DeMotier's attraction to women may be controllable and thus a social statement. But from the vast majority of lesbians I know, their desire is more intrinsic. Similarly, transgenders have an innate identification with the opposite gender – many from their earliest childhood recollections and before. Why would we begin our notion of making a 'social statement' at age 3 or 4? Liberating ourselves from self-repression is our 'social statement.' Our "utopian goal" is to just be while partaking in the American Dream just as anyone else. Sound familiar? If I'm not mistaken, the Gay and Lesbian political movement has been striving for this same ideal.

Finally DeMotier asserts that "extremists" pushing this "trans deal" are trying "to shoot our movement in the foot." If your movement is to gain tolerance, acceptance and equality from society; then society will view it as a bit hypocritical if you're unwilling to tolerate, accept and consider equal the members of what they consider 'your community.' Remember, society doesn't distinguish between gay or bisexual or transgender. And Ms. DeMotier...while you've been venting, that rifle of yours has been precariously close to your foot. Mind the trigger....

WAYS TO REJECT PICK-UP LINES

Submitted by Holly Foster Wilson

Man: "Haven't we met before?"

Woman: "Yes, I'm the receptionist at the V.D. Clinic."

Man: "Want to Dance?"

Woman: "No, thank you."

Man: "Don't thank me, thank God somebody asked you."

Man: "So, wanna go back to my place?"

Woman: "Well, I don't know. Will two people fit under a rock?"

Man: "So what do you do for a living?"

Woman: "Female impersonator."

Guy: "Hey, come on, we're both here at this bar for the same reason!"

Gal: "Yeah! Let's pick up some chicks!"

MYOPIC VIEWPOINT

By Spencer Bergstedt

It is a sad day when the oppressed become the oppressor, but such is the case with Beren deMotier's column regarding the inclusion of trans pride with Gay pride (June 19, Blade).

I lived for over 15 years as an out dyke until I found the resources and information which allowed to follow a life path that I didn't think was possible for me - living as man. I am an FTM (female-to-male) who has transitioned and live my life as a man and as an activist - both

within the Gay community for many years, and now, within the trans and broader queer communities. I often hear this type of argument about how trendy it is to be trans or the argument that trans issues don't belong with Gay issues. What a myopic viewpoint.

The opponents of fairness to Gays already lump us together. Further, gender issues are at the heart of much of the discrimination faced by Gay men and Lesbians. Think about it - who among Gay men and Lesbians are the greatest targets of discrimination? Butch dykes and ef-

feminate men. Much of that discrimination is about those folks transgressing normative gender roles and expression.

I assume that deMotier would also exclude from pride celebrations those transmen who identify as fags and those transwomen who identify as dykes. Apparently their being trans would determine their appropriateness at pride celebrations.

The inclusion of trans people and our issues doesn't diminish the movement toward civil rights and acceptance, but rather enhances it.

TATS PANEL EDUCATES LiB....

(Continued from Page 1)

Pride Parade) briefly moderated to begin the meeting. To keep the meeting on an informal feel, we conducted the discussion on a question and answer basis - which bests tailors the information to the audience's desires. And the questions flowed!

There was a lot of genuine curiosity about transgenders, and a wide range of questions. Quoting Jackie Doval, "Although the meeting was one and a half hours long it was not enough time for all of the questions people had to get asked. Members and non-members came up to me after the meeting congratulating us on having such a presentation." Many LiB members expressed surprise at the ease with which we answered even sensitive questions forthrightly. "The tone of the meeting was such that everyone seemed to feel comfortable enough to ask some vulnerable questions and expose individual...phobia, bias, acceptance and even ignorance" Doval stated. "It seemed everything was welcomed in a very respectful manner."

An intense interest developed between the members and our guys - especially Justin. It turns out his physician was in the audience, and during a question regarding hormone therapy for guys, described the metamorphosis of the genitalia regarding the increased size of the clitoris as well as the "increased sensitivity." The enraptured crowd sat wide-eyed in interest until one of the audience members chimed in, "Can I get

those?"

Even though it was a brief comic relief, there were a number of butch women in the audience who were transfixed to this portion of the meeting. It appeared to really have a number of the LiB members reexamining themselves. "It allowed everyone to explore, if not question, their own or friends sexuality," opined Doval. "Where is the deciding moment for a very boy-butch lesbian...or femme lesbian to decide 'I want to be a heterosexual or bisexual male?'" At

The feeling was that a true symbiosis was being created here. Obviously we were well received at the meeting - Katrina, Marie and April are all current LiB members. As for myself, it was almost like a campaign mini-homecoming with all the familiar faces: Vicki McClanahan, Helen Rodriguez, Marion Friedman and Janet Langham, Carol Clark, and of course Deborah Bell. I also got a chance to chat again with Dina Portillo and Mary Ann Smith whom I'd met at the Elizabeth Birch luncheon. Without exception, all welcomed us

with open arms. It was also quite "a turn out of an audience in spite of the weather" according to Doval.

LiB was so impressed with the meeting, there are plans for a second meeting for 'further fact-finding.' Words can't stress how well the meeting went. Being a social / business networking organization, LiB is highly recommended to all our members - especially our lesbian and / or entrepreneurial members. "The obvious seems to me that LiB members and guests did not want the meeting to end" according to Ms. Doval. "I think the meeting was awesome!!!! Not to mention what an education on Transgender." We've truly got a lot of friends at LiB. Check into it!



LiB panelist April Lauper (R-L) beams for the photo with an unidentified LiB member, Justin Alexander listens intently while R. J. Schoubroek jots a note, Vanessa Edwards Foster smiles at Justin and Marie Gallagher (end of table) smiles at the camera.

one point the crowd even began imploring Justin to take his shirt off to view his chest, which he did to the oohs, aahs and admiring comments. For a second it almost felt like LaBare. I had to remind myself we were at a LiB meeting!

think the meeting was awesome!!!! Not to mention what an education on Transgender." We've truly got a lot of friends at LiB. Check into it!



FACTOIDS ABOUT ANIMALS YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW....

- Lorne Greene had one of his nipples bitten off by an alligator while he was host of "Lorne Greene's Wild Kingdom."
- Murphy's Oil Soap is the chemical most commonly used to clean elephants.
- The very first bomb dropped by the Allies on Berlin during World War II killed the only elephant in the Berlin Zoo.
- If you bring a raccoon's head to the Hennifer, New Hampshire town hall, you are entitled to receive 10 cents from the town.
- The United States has never lost a war in which mules were used.
- More people are killed annually by donkeys than die in air crashes.
- A pigs orgasm lasts for 30 minutes.
- A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out.
- Some lions mate over 50 times a day.

Notes To Diary: Another Week Passes – Four Months On Hormones

By Marissa Carter

Thursday 2 p.m. Uneventful flight to Newark in first class. Female lawyer next to me yaks the whole time on the phone. I think she's already lost the case.

Thursday 7:30 p.m. Emerald Aisle at National. Where have all the cars gone? Ask. Moved into undercover parking lot when it rained. Duh! Poor selection. Settle on Buick. Has a transmission that sounds like a P&W JT9D jet engine.

Thursday 8:30 p.m. Operator at hotel guides me by phone into the Hilton. Think I'd know how to get there by now. Person who designed the roadways at Newark is very sick. Ought to be committed. Parking lot a long walk to the lobby. Should be a shuttle.

Thursday 9 p.m. Spend ten minutes trying to figure out how to turn on the light switches. Aren't there codes for these sort of things? Always missing something when I pack. This week it's an alarm clock. Try to set hotel one. Can't turn the radio off and have to pull the plug. Who needs one anyway?

Friday 7:30 a.m. Ask for omelet in dining room. Still waiting for it half an hour later. Perhaps they're phoning corporate for recipe. Wonder if Marissa would have lost her temper or been sarcastic. Probably. Bitch.

Friday 8:45 a.m. Lost in NJ. Last part of client's map is backwards. Wonder if they're dyslexic. Arrive 30 minutes late. CEO missing from meeting (no one knows where he is). Probably mid-morning tryst or perhaps his alarm clock malfunctioned.

Friday 11 a.m. Finish meeting early. Stop by at nearby mall for phone calls, coffee and a little store browsing. Carrying organizer. Everyone asks me if I work there. Note to file: don't shop with organizer in future.

Friday 1:30 p.m. Arrive early at next client in western NJ. Negotiate way through some kind of "fair" camped around industrial park. Eyed suspiciously by security guards who look remarkably like Montana Freeman. Lead client has just resigned from company after big fight. Fortunately other people in the group will see me. Interminable questions from Koreans. What do they think I am, an information booth?

Friday 6 p.m. Race back to Newark. Needn't have bothered. All flights on indefinite hold due to approaching storm. Pepperoni and veg pizza in Continental Express is so good, decide to have two slices. Add entry to Marissa's mediocre food guide to North American airports.

Friday 9 p.m. Bad news. Newark at code red. Didn't know airports could get coded. All

flights to Providence (RI) canceled. Continental wouldn't retrieve bag (they said the lightning made it too dangerous -- weenies). Arranged through AMEX to drive to Providence after Continental told me they couldn't even get me on a flight there the next day. Mentally figured out type of explosive device to send their president. Decided on C4. So much for being an Elite member.

Friday 11 p.m. Stuck on upper deck of George Washington Bridge. Don't these people have lives? They need to be sleeping, not driving into the city. Work on voice mail.

Saturday 2 a.m. An entire 747 crew is checking into the hotel. Manager says I look tired. @#%&!**! Upgraded to exec level.

Saturday 2 p.m. Make three trips to the airport. Despite being told that my bag would be on the first flight out of Newark, nothing shows. First flight canceled anyway. Bag shows up from bus chartered from Newark. Wait ... I know some of these people. Exchange horror stories.

Saturday 5 p.m. Quick change into blouse and slacks – fast make-up job. Visit girlfriend of mine (and her boyfriend) for first time as Marissa. Meet another married couple (two of Nikki's friends) for cookout. Enjoy myself tremendously. Wife of couple invites me for "tour of kitty farm" on next visit. Wonder if her husband knows that she's bisexual.

Sunday 9 a.m. Wake up to thunder. Second storm system already moving through. Shop before driving on to Boston. Pick up dress and negligee set at bargain prices.

Sunday 4 p.m. Rough flight to Ottawa but exceptionally nice service for a DH8 prop-job. Crash and burn landing. Get the fifth degree from Immigration as usual. Note to file: write memo in FAQ format for Ontario immigration. Avoid humor.

Monday 9 a.m. Scenic drive to National Research Council campus. Spend 15 minutes trying to find entrance to building. Remember too late that "reception" in French does not mean "lobby" in English. Pleasant host, but no coffee available. What's wrong with these people?

Monday 12 noon. Brief shopping trip in Rideau Centre. Buy dress at bargain price. Rush to airport. National Tilden's computers down. Unable to get bill. Write postcard to my son and spend 45 minutes on the phone with customers. What do they think I am, an information booth? Chicken wrap for lunch at the gate. Add location to mediocre food guidebook.

Monday 7 p.m. Okay flight but sit on the ground at Philadelphia for 20 minutes. No room at the inn. Philadelphia to La Guardia in

a DH8. Help old lady to fasten seatbelt. Take supershuttle into the City. Driver is new and takes interesting route through Brooklyn to avoid tolls. Over the Queensborough bridge says "he no longer sees good at night." Great, all this to become another traffic statistic. Manage to direct him to the hotel.

Monday 9 p.m. Hotel full – upgrade to Presidential suite. I guess being a gold member counts for something here. Two bathrooms, a jacuzzi, separate shower and bath plus real plants in the living room. Usual problem with light switches. There must be codes for these things in New York. Find out that by twiddling the ornate brass knob on the bottom you can adjust the lights. Reminds me of TV series "Get Smart."

Tuesday 10 a.m. Weather channel says that another round of storms will hit the New York area this evening. Fast walk-through the MD&M show at Jacob Javits Center. Never seen so many tall girls – dozens at or over six feet. Memo to file: investigate medical plastics for new career when ready to go full-time.

Tuesday 3:30 p.m. Manage to get onto earlier flight. Nearly creamed by a Citation business jet out of Teeterboro. Flight from Pittsburgh to Flint (MI) is delayed due to bad weather. Watch severe thunderstorm and tornado touching down in Pittsburgh on TV – everyone should take cover. Order barbecued chicken pizza. When it arrives, flight is called. What's wrong with these people? Haven't they got a TV? Eat pizza in record time of 1.5 minutes. Read article in USA Today that people at home have better weather information than pilots.

Tuesday 7 p.m. Another rough flight and C/B landing. Passengers pray to God on the last half-mile, even the atheists. 45 degrees outside. How far am I from the Arctic circle?

Tuesday 8 p.m. Unpack. Voice-mail and company e-mail server down. Try on new night-dress and robe – good job I bought them in Boston, the room is freezing.

Wednesday, 7 a.m. Alarm goes off prematurely, waking me up from deep dream about romantic date with a man. These hormones are getting to me. Wish there were more physical changes.

Wednesday 8 a.m. Order Denver omelet at breakfast. Intense discussion centers on the fact that they don't make Denver omelets with cheese in Michigan. Who cares? Just make me the \$%#@#! omelet, okay? Note to file: back to pancakes next week.

Wednesday 9 a.m. Arrive at Delphi-E. Inquisition waiting. (Nobody expects the Spanish

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FTM – MTF FIRE!

By Gianna E. Israel

Recently I overheard a FTM community leader state that he disliked attending MTF-oriented conventions because of the sexual harassment. I listened closely as I had heard similar complaints from some of my FTM clients in the past. So it seems, according to them, if a couple of FTMs enter or participate within a social environment filled with MTF women, they undoubtedly experiencing uninvited romantic overtures from MTFs.

So, some ask, what is the big deal? Aren't men supposed to enjoy a woman's attention? One would think a man naturally would be interested in females. How many non-transgender men would complain about being surrounded by a fan club of admiring females? This article probes the question why FTMs and MTFs don't always see eye to eye on this and other issues.

I am hoping this article sparks some controversy. Not over my exposing a sensitive issue, but rather so that FTMs and MTFs can develop a better understanding of each other. Moreover, I believe it is extremely beneficial for transgender men and women to examine the gender stereotypes which they embrace in order to reconstruct their sense of identity.

One of the most common assumptions FTMs appear to resent is the idea that being one type of transgender person automatically means one has a unique insight into another's experiences. After all, are not MTFs and FTMs transitioning in similar but exactly opposite directions? Unfortunately having a transgender identity is not always that simple.

Surprisingly, the feelings, ideas, experiences and needs existing between MTF and FTM persons can differ dramatically. FTMs in many circumstances are interested in being or becoming men. They are not likely to experience the same degree of excitement an MTF may feel when discussing female experiences. This is because FTMs are serious about seeking male bonding and rivalry. Sometimes, a woman who gets in the way of this process is likely to get pushed aside or put in her place. Like their non-transgender counterparts, some FTMs can be extremely aggressive, confrontational, even obnoxious.

In defense, it should not however be assumed that FTMs are misogynist or hate women. Quite simply they just don't want to be women. In fact, their once having lived as women does not necessarily mean that they had the same feelings as a non-transgender women. Unlike non-transgender women, FTMs are likely to have spent the majority of their lives fighting the very feelings and characteristics that non-transgender women readily accept.

Rightly so, FTMs frequently take great pride in

the previous point. Many are also often quick to announce that they rejected their feelings and feminine characteristics many years before transition. This generalization, while frequently true for FTMs, is uncharacteristic of most MTFs who often have to struggle very hard to develop feminine attributes. Somehow the previous dynamic introduces consternation. Who is more valid? Is it the person who blended in easily to society before transition or the one who had to struggle harder and longer after transition?

Another difference which can bring up strong opinions is the issue of victimization. Notably, a woman adopting male attributes is less likely to be victimized than a male adopting female attributes. At times both MTFs and FTMs feel unrecognized, because they believe their population is more overlooked than the other. At times, FTMs may feel that nobody wants to hear about it when a man gets victimized. Men are supposed to just take it. MTFs may feel that nobody cares when a woman gets victimized. Women naturally end up getting victimized more than men.

Over the years I have spoken with a number of FTMs who have deeply resented the romantic overtures of MTFs. Conversely, I have also spoken with a number of MTFs who have felt victimized by an FTM responding hostilely or nervously to the advances of MTFs. It would seem that apples and oranges don't always mix, unless their is a mutual consent to make a fruit salad!

Generally speaking, most males prefer to be the aggressor in male/female coupling. In my experience most men's opinions of a flirtatious female can be that she is cute, however men also know that a woman who flirts aggressively will also likely be flirting with more than one guy. Also, sometimes FTMs have a gay identity, just as some MTFs may have a lesbian sexual orientation. All this adds up to one complex process of people trying to figure out who is attracted to who.

Shoshanna Gillick, MD., a transgender woman and psychiatrist, summed up the preceding process of understanding relationships best when she says that it is truly a beautiful thing when two people among thousands can find love, attraction and companionship. The brain synapses fire, the heart beat increases, biological drives take over and a connection is made. Keeping such a process alive is a significant achievement, according to her.

One of the things that naturally set up both MTFs and FTMs for some rocky first time romantic pursuits is the fact that transition introduces a re-examination of both sexual orientation and intimate discovery. Testosterone can do wonderful things to a new man's sex drive. Also, estrogen can remarkably awaken a new woman sensualities. These biological factors should not be forgotten, neither should a person's sensitivity and manners.

Unlike non-transgender persons who may have a lifetime of experience pursuing intimate and

sexual liaisons, newly transition persons are frequently just getting started redefining who they are and who they are attracted to.

If you are an FTM and receive an unwanted sexual advance, take into consideration the new woman's predicament. This new woman may have spent any number of years as a male where she was expected to aggressively seek out those relationships she desired. She may not yet have learned that if a man finds her attractive she won't need to worry about being pursued. After all, the most subtle female flirtation will attract the right partner. Afterwards, men do a remarkable job of letting women know when they are interested.

If you are an MTF and a FTM is not interested in you, don't allow this to damage your self-esteem. Generally speaking if a fellow's eyes don't open wide at a subtle flirtation he may be previously engaged or not interested in anyone. Give guys their space and you will find they can be fairly nice, even sophisticated and gentlemanly.

Submitted off the net by Gwen Smith

Big-time Journalism: Can You Say "Chop! Chop! Chop!"? I Knew You Could

By Katrina C. Rose

Some of you may have seen a letter by yours truly in the Wednesday, July 22 issue of the Houston Chronicle. What you saw there did get most of my point across - but the Chronicle did some significant editing nonetheless. Below is the text of what I actually sent in.

Homosexuality is not a sickness. Bigotry is.

An increasing barrage of homophobic legislative proposals from the Republican Congress. Fraudulent claims that homosexuality can be cured. The common theme? Religion. Bigotry is bigotry even if you base it on your religion.

The zealous homophobic religionists - both in and out of government - are simply proving to more and more people that laws - both criminal and civil - which heap legal disabilities upon non-heterosexuals are laws respecting the establishment of religion and should be declared unconstitutional.

I truly hope that enough people realize this to stop the sickness of bigotry before innocent people begin to be shipped off to concentration camps to be "cured."

TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- **Rubber Duckies Hazardous To Your Health?:** It's getting so you can't even take a bath without worrying that you'll go in as a man and come out as a woman. In Europe, plastic ducks are reportedly being banned from bathtubs out of fear that they might cause cancer or sex changes in children!

The plastic ducks have been outlawed in Denmark, Austria, and Spain, with other countries set to follow. The demonic ducks apparently contain a small dose of phthalate, a chemical used to soften plastic in teething rings and inflatable swimming pools. Some experts claim the chemical might be linked to tumors and sex changes in fish. The toy industry dismisses the charges as absurd, but maybe this explains why all those British comedy troupes whose members dress as women.

- Scientists are noticing a trend toward androgyny...in animals! First it was male alligators in Florida's Lake Apopka found with undeveloped, or poorly developed male genitalia. Next, it was fish in the U.K. Then it was bullfrogs. Now the trend has been noticed in eagles, whales, otters and other animals. The apparent culprit? Environmental pollutants.

Items as toxic as Dioxin and PCBs, and as ubiquitous as paint, ink and substances in plastics are causing a 'feminizing of nature.' Sounds like a good argument against nurture! Even ingredients in cosmetics has been found to contribute to this. Well, duh! It's kinda hard to be manly in lipstick, rouge and eyeshadow!

- And in the world of sports...for several Arizona Diamondbacks, the charter flight home was even uglier than their 12-6 loss to the Florida Marlins. After losing the game, 10 of the younger players lost their civvies and wore women's clothing! The annointed players found dresses hanging in their locker stalls when they walked into the clubhouse after the game.

Apparently it's a time-honored baseball initiation ritual. "It's tradition. It's part of the game. It's something we've all done, some of us more than once(!)," veteran co-conspirator Matt Williams said. "It's all about doing it and being part of it. It's an experience we all will never forget." For some reason, I'm unable to shake the memory of the comedy routine George Carlin used to do about baseball vs. football. Apparently he wasn't far off the mark....

- **Steroids and teens....** According to a recent survey in Elle Magazine, they found that teenage males are not the only users of anabolic steroids. It reported 0.6% of girls between the ages of 12 and 17 are also using steroids. Though most are using them for athletic performance improvement, one wonders if there aren't a few who are doing so for the physical 'gender improvements....'

- **FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)** - Israel's transsexual pop star Dana International canceled a German TV appearance Sunday, saying she had been the target of death threats. Suedwestfunk network

spokesman Arthur Landwehr said the singer backed out of her appearance on the "Always on Sunday" program, but he had no details on the nature of the threats or how they were delivered. Joachim Uhrig, a record company manager, was quoted in Germany's Bild newspaper as saying the singer continually has problems with threats.

- **LONDON, UK** — A Briton who attended dance class once as a man, then later as a woman, was banned from the class...as his MALE self! Norman Horton, 58, a former paratrooper and MP gave his female alter-ego Norma a go at the dance class. When the instructor heard about Horton's double life, he told Norman not to return. But he allowed Norma to continue classes. "I've won two awards...dancing as Norma," Horton told Reuters. "I don't know why I perform much better as a woman. Maybe the boots I wear as Norman are too heavy." Ah...tripping the light fantastic....

- Also from London....Prince Charles took his two boys out for an evening's entertainment to see a female impersonator's performance. The gender-bending entertainer apparently cracked up the Royal ones, remarking that the Papa Prince and the little Princes should dress up 'en femme.' It was the first time royal watchers had seen the three of them laughing together in a long time. These guys really need to loosen up...maybe a little stroll on the wild side?

- **BANGKOK, THAILAND** — Uncle Samphong wants you! Apparently there's a dearth of available men for the Thai army. It turns out that an increasing number of young men are having small breast implants and claiming to be transsexual (or katoeys as they're called there) to avoid the draft.

But the Army's fighting back. The recruiters now have doctors who inspect anyone showing up with breast enhancements to, among other things, "test their reaction to certain stimuli." Those with small breast implants who are found to be faking their transsexuality will be assigned to secretarial duties.

- **Is Thai too spicy?...** Five Thai transvestites are capitalizing on the Spice Girls phenomenon and playing to packed houses in Bangkok. The T-girls' stock has risen markedly since the departure of Ginger Spice (aka Gerri Halliwell) from the Spice Girls. Is there no end to this Spice Girl media juggernaut? What's next? Spicy Beany Babies?

- **TIJUANA, MEXICO** — TGs in TJ are under renewed assault from the city police department's Special Forces, reports the local newspaper Frontera Gay. The paper cited "constant arrests [of transgenders] for being dressed as women or simply wearing makeup, abuse during arrest, two and three hours trips [around the city] in police vehicles, body searches that include ripping off clothes, insults, and sexual harassment" for the officers' entertainment. They hunt [trans people] like rabbits, on the sidewalks in front of nightclubs and on the streets of the city," the paper said.

- From the land down under — a TS was arrested on drug charges and after a quick appearance before

a magistrate was sent to a supposedly "user-friendly" jail. Being a pre-operative transsexual, she was placed in a male prison; and because of her pre-op condition, she was placed in the "strict protection pod" — an area of segregation from the general population. However this segregated pod contained two other transgender inmates, as well as sixty odd male inmates including pedophiles, vicious rapists and other inmates in need of strict protection.

Because of this wink-and-a-nod regard towards transgender inmates, within three days 'Belinda' had been allegedly raped twice (orally and anally) and hung herself on December 27 of last year. The alleged rape occurred during daylight hours when the prison pod was fully staffed. Though this happened on the opposite side of the globe, it very easily could've been here. Harris County's facilities are renown for their casual disregard of the need for segregation of TG-folk in the jail population. Food for thought....

- From the 'ask and ye shall receive' department....An ardent support of the 'internet filter' has found they, too, are on the list of groups banned to young children. The American Family Association — a conservative Christian group — was surprised to learn they are grouped with skinhead, white supremacist and other hate groups by the makers of Cyber Patrol.

The company, makers of the popular internet filter (a program used to block access to pornographic or hate-oriented websites to children) decided that American Family Association's website met the filter's definition of intolerance, which includes discrimination based on sexual orientation. The site apparently had rather unkind words to say about homosexuality. Do unto others...and you can be done unto too!

- Quotable quip: "Unsuspecting tourists, particularly families here to see the monuments, have no way of knowing that they will be sharing that experience with bearded transvestites wearing nun costumes and a lesbian motorcycle gang dressed up like Xena." — Traditional Values Coalition Executive Director Andrea Sheldon in a press release about D.C.'s gay-pride celebration. How does she know those nuns are transvestites? Is she really sure the lesbian Xena bikers aren't in fact transgenders? Some people are just born to be clueless.

- Did anyone catch the Time magazine article on transgenders? It was a very trans-friendly piece and quite well-written (albeit slightly cursory on the depth of the issues.) If you haven't seen it, pick it up! Finally a bit of fair and decent press for the community!

Of course, I also liked getting to read about my friends in print. I know both Shannons (Mr. Minter from the Law Conferences, and Ms. Ware from the infamous Washington lobbying trip and subsequent 'night on the town') as well as the ever-quoted Riki Ann Wilchins. That was everyone in the article(!) Either the world's getting smaller or I'm getting bigger. Hmm...I gotta get serious about this diet. Til' next month, Chow!...uh...well, you know....



Book Review: 'Mom, I Need To Be a Girl' by Just Evelyn

By Phyllis Frye

I wish I'd had this book to give to my parents and siblings and other relatives in 1976, the year that I transitioned. Or maybe even before. I don't know if it would have made a difference with some, but I think it would have helped with most, and it would have made my life a lot easier for sure.

Mom, I Need To Be a Girl is written by a the parent of a teenaged son who soon became a teenaged daughter. The author, Just Evelyn, is a friend that I met at the second International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy in 1993. Evelyn had called me several months prior, seeking legal advice for dealing with her teenaged transgendered. As I told her then, she was welcome to the conference, but at that time we were timid about dealing with anyone under eighteen. You just never knew what the fanatic, religious right, conservatives would do, so we mostly told them to call us back when they became eighteen years old. That was 1993.

Evelyn's book, just released this month, will certainly be a good guide for parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and cousins who love and recognize that their family member is, at age eight or ten, twelve or fourteen, and has been socially trapped in the wrong gender role. There is a lot of love in this book. And there is a lot of searching and soul searching as well. I do not understand why family members feel

guilty when they learn of a loved one being transgendered, but they often do, and this book will certainly help in that area as well.

One of the things that I admire so about Evelyn is that she is not afraid to sound-off at those in the so-called "helping professional" area who do not really help, but charge a fee to transgender clients who then educate those professionals or serve as research data and are provided little actual help. Evelyn blasts several. She also takes the reader step by step through all of the challenges, including school, restrooms and gym class. She also has a good list of references in the back.

The last time I visited with Evelyn was while I was in San Diego for a conference. Just because Evelyn's daughter has grown up and gone on into the world of adulthood, does not mean that Evelyn has forgotten how to care. She still reaches out to assist community members who are deeply closeted and need someone to talk to who is safe (from police and the toughs who might assault them). She shares an extensive video library of talk shows and others where the TG issue has been expressed. She even has my appearance on the "Phil Donahue Show" from 1991.

I want to say now that I would not really want to change anything about my past life. Every cause had its effect, and if I changed

(Continued on Page 12)

Services, etc. . .

PHYLLIS RANDOLPH FRYE

Attorney and Counselor, and
Licensed Professional Engineer

B.S. Civil Engineering, Texas A & M University 1970
M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Texas A & M University 1971
Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

Areas of Legal Practice:

- Criminal Defense ---
 - Transgender Issues and Documents ---
 - Divorce and Family Issues ---
 - Wills, Power of Atty, "Living" Wills ---
- Although licensed since 1981, I have not taken additional testing, therefore the State Bar requires that I state that I am "Not Certified by the Board of Legal Specialization"

Areas of Engineering Practice:

- Civil / Structural ---

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NOTES TO DIARY: ANOTHER WEEK PASSES...

(Continued from Page 8)

Inquisition! Okay, okay enough!).

Wednesday 12:30 p.m. Hoarse from 3.5 hour presentation. Race back to airport. Same Saab SF3 prop-job. Screaming kids plus two people behind me throwing up the whole way to Pittsburgh. Note to file: investigate use of eucalyptus nose plugs as worn by pathologists during autopsies.

Wednesday 6 p.m. Several hours spent on the phone and catching up on e-mail. Observed the whole time by woman with huge unexpurgated version of the Bible, complete with alphabetic indentations like a dictionary. Going to Dayton fortunately. Upgraded on flight back to Houston which leaves on time. Choice of shrimp/pasta or chicken/pasta. Chose shrimp. Ennghhh! Wrong choice. Desert, coffee and Milano cookies are fine.

Wednesday 9:30 p.m. Arrive home finally and unpack. Two days in the office, a mammoth electrolysis session and repack to leave for Philadelphia. Have to mulch the flower beds sometime





BOOK REVIEW: MOM, I NEED TO BE A GIRL...


(Continued from Page 11)

anything, I'd not be legally, same-sex married to my wonderful Trish (silver anniversary is only two months from tomorrow), and I'd not have my wonderful son and his wife and our grandchild. But I do know that if this book had come out in the mid 1960's and if my parents had read and understood (a real key, yes) it, maybe I would not have been so fearful when they discovered my crossdressing back in 1965. It was my high school senior year when my stash of womens underclothes was discovered. You could cut my parents' homophobia with dull knife: it permeated the air. I knew that I had to tell them it was just an experiment, for I feared that the truth would have caused me to become a homeless youth and on the street at 17.

I hope that you will purchase and use Evelyn's book. Send it to any parent who is having trouble. Send it to PFLAG Chapters so maybe they will see that TG work belongs in their mission statement as well. It is a very good tool. Send \$10 (inclusive of tax and s/h) to Just Evelyn, 3707 Fifth Ave #413, San Diego, CA 92103, 1-800-666-8158, www.justevelyn.com.



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TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 6, Issue 9

Houston, Texas

September, 1998

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.

A CHANGE IS COMING !!!

By Jessi Redman

Stardate: 1999

Location: The City of Houston

Event: The Premier of the first movie ever written about, written by, produced by, directed by, cast by, and acted by "T's" (and others too!)

This could well be the Houston Chronicle headline next Summer with the release of "Everything but the Laughter." This feature full length film, is based on a true story of a Viet Nam veteran who serves his country and returns home from the hell of war to face his final demon, gender.

The film presents the story of an individual who experiences, the agony and the ecstasy of that lonely path called transition. For the first time the story is presented from the "T" Community point of view, in a way that all people will understand.

Now we will all have the chance to explain ourselves on the big screen, we can say to our friends and families, "That story is about me, maybe some of the details are a little different



Director of the upcoming movie 'Everything But The Laughter' Jessica Redman (L) and one of the stars Jenifer René (R)

but that is what my life is like."

Most importantly, this film brings each and every one of you the opportunity to put a piece of yourself into it. How? Well since this movie is being shot here in Houston, and has two "Community" members already working on it, (directed by Jessi Redman, acted in by Jenifer René), the Producer has okayed the use of "T" Community vendors and suppliers, as the first choice wherever possible. In addition, their will be an enormous need for extras and volunteers, as well as acting roles available. (A complete list of all the services and volunteers needed will be available next week)

So, tell me HousTon are you ready to do your part? If so call Jessi or Jenifer at (713) 532-3287 and if we are unavailable just leave us a message and we will call you. The Time of Change is Now!

Jessica Redman, formerly of Dallas, is a recent new resident to Houston the newest member of the Gulf Coast Transgender Community, and was recently named director of 'Everything But the Laughter.'

SEPTEMBER IS ELECTION MONTH

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Election time has snuck up on us! September 12 will be the nominations meeting, and September 26 will be the election. It's time to pause and consider who we want to lead the group into the next year. We also need to decide on some important issues facing the group, and make our voices heard on any issues we feel may improve the group overall.

There are some nominations that have been announced as of the press date (as appears at right)

While we currently have 8 people on the
(Continued on Page 3)

Current Nominees at press time:

President:Michelle Myers
.....Vanessa Edwards Foster
Vice President.....Desireé Walton
Treasurer (Open)
Secretary (?????)..... (Open)
Newsletter EditorVanessa Edwards Foster
Board Members Daniell McCleney
..... Sarah DePalma
..... Marissa Carter

MEETING SCHEDULE:

September 12 Social Meeting at:
Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM
September 26 Un-Meeting at:
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM
October 10 Social Meeting at:
Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM
October 24 Un-Meeting at:
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM

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

TATS Officers

Michelle Myers
President

Daniell Christian McCleney
Vice President

Arwen Schiesler
Treasurer

Alexandra D. Lerma
Secretary

Vanessa Edwards Foster
Newsletter Editor

TATS Board Members

Monica Roberts

Katrina C. Rose

Jessica Wicks

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

As I mentioned in the article on the front page, the elections have snuck up on us. They especially snuck up on me! Somehow I had the mistaken impression that the elections were in October. Anyway, they're here...and it's time for us all to participate!

Some of you are probably thinking you don't need the rah-rah speech and that this doesn't concern you in the least. It's easy to dismiss this, but it's really not something to be merely brushed aside if you truly care about TATS. The individuals we elect into office are the ones responsible for overseeing and caretaking the group. If we have officers and board members who are apathetic or lax in caring for the direction of the group, we end up with a group that doesn't run very smoothly.

As I mentioned both at the last meeting, and at the Unity Banquet in May, we're very fortunate in Houston. We have dynamic groups that are quite healthy and steadily improving – quite a change from just a few years ago. TATS is one of, if not the, most dynamic groups in the city...in fact the state! We didn't get there by accident. It's taken some work by folks behind the scenes, as well as that work documented on the front pages of our little newsletter each month.

That's another thing: our newsletter has garnered quite a bit of attention in the city, the state, and even around the nation over the past year! It's vastly increased our visibility from just a couple years ago. Another factor that truly sets us apart is the fact that we are one of the few transsexual support groups in the nation. I have yet to even hear of another group, though I presume we're not the only one. We've even made an impression on TCF's Gwen Smith from AOL who is currently trying to start a group similar to ours in the San Francisco Bay area. It says something when someone in a progressive place as Northern California is following the lead of a group from Houston. We've got probably the premier transsexual group in the nation...and it's more than just accident.

So how does this relate to our elections? By keeping a good set of officers and board members who are action-oriented, dynamic, capable and responsible; we'll ensure the success we've reached to date; and improve upon it. That's the



reason I've decided to run for president this year. We've made a lot of progress over the past year, and we need to continue this and improve upon it. It's important that the group doesn't start losing steam now.

Michelle has done a great job over the year. Her involvement in HGLPC, Q-Patrol and other side projects are demanding her time, though. We need to have someone who can devote the time to communicate, and encourage others to participate in TATS. I've

also decided to run for editorship as well, holding joint office. It's not without precedent in TATS, and is something I feel capable of.

This past year, presiding over GCTC required me to do both duties from March through July (not to mention running the Unity Banquet and doing the TATS newsletter simultaneously.) We've had increased readership from last year, our advertising space has increased from 5 slots to 13, and most importantly a newsletter was produced each month on a timely basis – a problem in years past.

It's a source of pride to put out a good quality product, and improve on it a little each month. I've still got more plans ahead for our newsletter. Though it's a time consuming job, I've truly enjoyed editing the newsletter this year. I thank you for the opportunity!

One last thing, I want to commend all the members who stood up to run for office last year. I look forward to working with whoever has courage enough to run for office next year.

Articles in this newsletter may be reprinted by other non-profit TG groups provided a copy is sent to TATS within 2 months, and proper credit is given the author. Opinions contained in this newsletter are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of TATS.

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) 827-5913 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

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:
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A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

Emily Alford

Sarah DePalma; President, TGAIN

Jessi Redman

Katrina C. Rose

for forwarding humor

Clare Howell; editor, GenderPac

for submitting humor

Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV

for submitting photo

Jenifer René

for submitting photos, scanning & miscellany

Katrina C. Rose, a great big thanks!!!

Ride the Highway West (and North, and East, etc.)

By Katrina C. Rose

I can't guarantee that my disposition will improve immediately, but Kat has not only finished law school, but has taken the bar exam. Oops – that might be a bit hasty. It may well have taken me.

In either case – its over (unless I get to do it again in February. Ack!)

Of course, even after completing the exam, the stress/pressure/insanity was still there. Back in the bad old days (translated: days of maleness and engineering and employment), after heavy duty periods of stress/pressure/insanity I'd throw my cameras in the car and head out on the road.

Lots of little annoyances got in the way of doing that over the last few years – law school, transition, yadda yadda yadda....

However, I wanted to do a trip out west – somewhere – of some sort following the bar exam, but I wasn't sure how I could realistically swing it financially. Luckily, another TATS member, Jennifer Lytwyn said that she was wanting to head out west – to Denver – for a few days. Jennifer's mission: snagging a car. Kat's mission: snagging a piece of the past.

Teamwork.

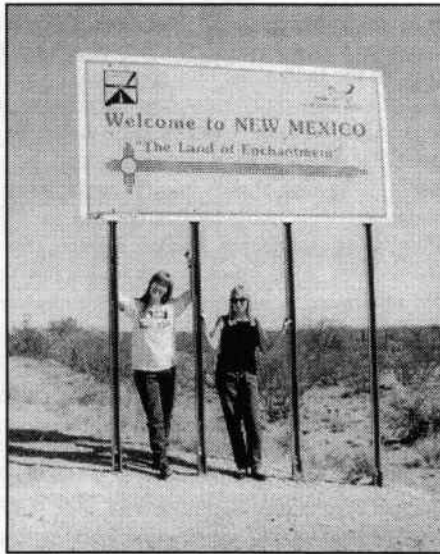
Okay, you're saying – the car concept seems simple enough, but what the hell are you talking about with a 'piece of the past'?

Well, it may seem sappy, but I wanted to visit a spot to which Katrina has never been, but that the old version of me had been a few times. The spot? A roadside park near Cloudcroft, NM. Yeh – it sounds stupid, but a few months ago I ran across some photos of me and my parents that were taken at this spot – almost exactly thirty years ago.

I had to return. I don't really know why – but I did. I just needed to let the real me visit a little spot near the edge of nowhere (Cloudcroft is a ski resort, but its just a few miles from the desert, and miles and miles of miles and miles) where some pictures of the old (yet young) me were taken so long ago – pictures that I see any time I look at the old photo album.

I got a bit weepy. I couldn't help but play over and over in my mind a line from the Pink Floyd's song *Time* – "And then one day you find ten years have got behind you." Ten years is a long time. Thirty is, well, longer. (I am Kat, Queen of the Obvious.) But, I took my pix. Ergo – mission accomplished.

Of course, that was on the second of nine days away from Houston. What other sights were seen by the traveling TATS brigade?



TATS' Traveler, Katrina Rose (L), and Jennifer Lytwyn in the Land of Enchantment.

Lots of rocks (for Jennifer to take pix of to show her students.)

Lots of old buildings (for me to take pix of.)

Lots of animals (again – for me to take pix of.)

Lots of corn (don't ask – or I'll show you a picture of The Corn Palace, Be afraid. Be very afraid.)

And...Montrose.

South Dakota, that is. No swimming pools. No drag queens.

While Jennifer was in Denver getting re-acquainted with an old friend and a new car, I went out cruising through the heartland to take more pictures and to blow off more steam. While in eastern South Dakota, avoiding the

madness of the Sturgis biker rally at the other end of the state, I ran across a sign pointing to Montrose.

I followed.

The city limit sign said that Montrose has a population of 425. I saw no signs of life at all. Yes – I saw some

people, but, still, no signs of life. There is a difference. Houston's Montrose may be hot, humid and occasionally victimized by bashers – but, upon viewing that as an alternate Montrose universe, I looked forward to getting back to the Texas version.

Of course, when we got into Texas on the return swing and saw a bank thermometer that said 106°....



A Rocky Mountain "Hi" from Kat.

SEPTEMBER IS ELECTIONS

(Continued from Page 1)

board, and one proposal to bring before a vote is to reduce that by one slot. This will give us an odd number for tie-breaking on board votes. A potential solution would be to eliminate the Secretary position. It would be easily accommodated to divide the Secretary's duties (which involves keeping an ear on the TATS line and giving information to prospective members) between the board members. Another option could be to have one person run for two officer's spots.

There will also be discussion on the impending subscription increase – likely from the current \$10 to \$15 annually. Much as we hate to do so, because of increased postage due to the size of our newsletter (in the 10 to 14 page range) we must if we're to continue the newsletter in its current form. Indications from TATS' president are that our treasury has depleted noticeably over the course of the year.

There may also be more issues discussed at our nomination meeting Sept. 12 to be brought forth to election.

Of course, the election of our officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor (and perhaps Secretary) as well as the 3 board slots will be the paramount item on the election agenda. If you've ever thought about running for TATS office, now is your chance to do so.

As always, participation is the key. There is a little work involved – especially for the officers. But with a little effort from all those who take office, we can continue to make this a group in which we can all be proud to be members.

MORE WAYS TO REJECT PICKUP LINES

Submitted by Holly Foster Wilson

Man: "I'd like to call you. What's your number?"

Woman: "It's in the phone book."

Man: "But I don't know your name."

Woman: "That's in the phone book too."

Man: "How do you like your eggs in the morning?"

Woman: "Unfertilized! Go away!"

Old Geezer: "Where have you been all my life?"

Young Girl: "For the first three-quarters of it, I probably wasn't born yet."

Man: "I really like your type."

Woman: "Sorry, I don't date outside my species."



God Is Love **HATE?**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

As a rule, I usually leave the clock radio on while getting ready for work in the morning and – as always – have it tuned to KLOL's morning show. While readying for work, I heard one of the DJ's of Stevens & Pruett mentioning having *Fred Phelps* as their guest interview that morning. Disbelieving at first, I listened and – sure enough – they were talking about the Fred Phelps from Topeka, Kansas. He of the graveside protests, of the [www.godhatesfags](http://www.godhatesfags.com) website, of the vitriolic denunciations of anyone not of like mind....

It took awhile to believe they were really having him interview on a rock radio morning show – I couldn't see the connection. But it spiked my interest enough to listen in myself to hear first-hand what this man is all about.

Surprising as it was to have Phelps on KLOL, his interview was as unsurprising. First he warned Stevens & Pruett about saving their souls before they burn in hell because Texas had become a "sodomite loving state!" In fact, he stated that "sodomites control America. We got a sodomite in control of every statehouse in every state in America." Politicians and "fags," he claims, were "peeing on peoples' legs and telling them it's raining." As a result he flies a flag at his compound "upside down. It's the international sign of distress." *What a patriot....*

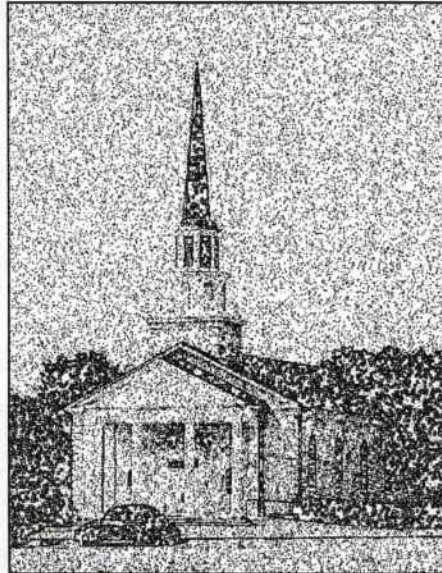
His tirade then turned to those of Judaic faith, asserting that "the only *real* Jews are Christians," and inferring that most Jews are "fag lovers," ad nauseum. During one part of his vitriolic spew, he relegated to using cuss words which brought forth the question from DJ Jim Pruett "your a preacher...why do you cuss?"

His answer was rather amusing: "That's old-time religion! In the old days, preachers used to use 'colorful' terms...." At about that point, the Eddie 'the Boner' Sanchez and the rest of the Stevens & Pruett team started throwing back contradictions to what he'd said up to that point, which brought a rather predictable response: he hung up. If you can't win the argument, run.

But KLOL's morning team wasn't so easily rebuffed. They managed to talk him into yet a second round of Q&A, by asking why he hates so much. This brought forth a rather curious answer: "God hates people!" He referred to the first chapter of Romans which, in the final half, refers to the sinful nature of man and where "God gave them up unto vile affections..."¹ The passages immediately following refer to homosexuality, which seems to be a fixation of ir-Reverend Phelps. Curiously, Phelps didn't see the passage at the beginning of Chapter 2 of

Romans where it states that one who judges someone else, also condemn themselves because they do the same thing they condemn.²

"God especially hates fags," Phelps continued. After protests from the radio hosts, he argued, "If he loves them [fags] so much, he sure has a funny way of showing it!" punctuating the statement with obligatory references to AIDS. Finally, in inimitable Phelps fashion, he informed that "God *laughs* every time a fag dies." He referenced a passage in the first chapter of Proverbs saying "I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" and continuing about when their need and distress is greatest, they'll call on God and He won't answer.³ Since the passages were in reference to all non-believers and anyone of evil heart, how this was construed by Phelps to be strictly perti-



nent to homosexuals wasn't clear. What was made clear was that Phelps has a serious hard-on for the homosexual community.

While the Stevens & Pruett team tossed back verses that contradicted what Phelps lobbed, he was blithely myopic in his mindset. Anyone he deems as sexually depraved is a target for this one-man jihad (and just because we weren't specifically named, don't think that disallows the TG community!) Further, anyone he sees as abetting us – even peripherally – is the enemy, too. Thus his graveside protests of such luminaries as Bill Clinton's mother "mother of don't ask–don't tell," arch-conservative Barry Goldwater "he had a homosexual grandson [and didn't publicly disown him]," and Frank Sinatra (!) "for promoting the homosexual agenda." Ironically, Sinatra was a rather well-known ho-

mophobe. I'm sure Ol' 'fag-lovin' Blue Eyes was spinning in his grave while the Phelpsites were dancing on it. Maybe they had him confused with Frankie Goes To Hollywood....

Though Phelps is a voracious protester, he hasn't yet resorted to violence. *Yet....* Nevertheless, the national watchdog groups consider him and his church to be a hate group. Of course, this type attention makes him a bit of a legend to those of like agenda. The more his foes battle him, the more he's martyred to his followers. Although he's not become physical in his confrontations, for those unfortunate few who *have* crossed him, he's been virulently litigious. And Phelps has armed himself well – 11 of his 13 kids are lawyers! Lots of free, and rather effective, ammunition! Phelps himself was once a lawyer in Mississippi before being disbarred for reasons unknown. No doubt for "being a 'good Christian....'"

The sad aspect of all this is that he represents Christianity and the Bible in a poor fashion. The Bible was not created to be used as a weapon. To Phelps "God hates the sin and hates the sinner too." Taking his theory at face value, and considering that we all sin at one time or another, that means the entire planet is doomed from the get-go! Why even listen to his demeaning snake-oil sales pitches? We're already doomed! Why bother?! As any good salesperson will tell you; if you represent something (in this case, Christianity), and you turn people away from you and make them hate you, your doing a piss-poor job of selling your product. Pardon my 'colorful, old-time religious' terminology.

I also beg to differ with Fred Phelps on the the issue of God's hate for us. While I've never seen God's hate spelled out directly, I've seen direct quotes to the contrary: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins...hath raised us up...in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."⁴ or "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish." The next verse even states that God didn't send his Son to condemn us, but so that we might be saved.⁵ It's a bit more charitable than Phelps' choice of verses.

The argument may be made that both Phelps and I are selective in our usage of biblical verse. True. But I tend to find more consistency with the teachings of God's love, as opposed to the focus on His hate. As for castigating those with whom we take issue, I think Jesus himself said

(Continued on Page 5)

¹ Romans 1:26

² Romans 2:1

³ Proverbs 1:26-28

⁴ Ephesians 2:4-6

⁵ John 3:16-17

A TRANSGENDERED RESPONSE TO DALE CARPENTER

By Sarah DePalma

"People fail to remember that it was the drag queens and the street people and the transgendered people that were always in the front lines risking their lives. When the Gay Liberation Front of New York proclaimed our community, the drag queens and transvestites – at that time we were drag queens and transvestites – we were the vanguard of the revolution. We were the front lines. We are the ones who would go to jail. We were the ones always waiting for the police cars. We were the ones getting our asses kicked while everyone else ran the other way...If it wasn't for us, under the names of Marsha P. Johnson and Ivan Valentine, and all the others who were there to fight beside me, we would not have what we have today.

I'm going to continue saying what I have to say and that's the way I feel, but it really hurts when your own people turn away from you. When I first started in this movement all of my friends kept saying to me, 'Sylvia, the oppressed will become the oppressor.' And that is what's happened in this community, but I refuse to give up. We have to keep pressing ahead because they as gay men and women are going to oppress us if we allow it."

As many readers already know, I am a co-host on "After Hours" on KPFT radio. The quote above is from Sylvia Rivera who was a recent guest on the program.

For those not familiar the history of the Stonewall riot, Sylvia is widely hailed as one of the chief instigators of the riot and subsequently became known as "the person who threw the first stone at Stonewall". (For the record, Sylvia said they could not find any stones to throw so they threw coins instead.)

Sylvia and Marsha P. Johnson were both self described "transgendered drag queens." Unfortunately Marsha, a proud transgendered person of color, has since passed away. A female-to-male organization called American Boyz, recently honored Sylvia as "the mother of the transgender movement." Even several months after receiving the honor, simply discussing the award brought Sylvia to tears.

Sylvia related during the interview that contrary to popular myth, the Stonewall bar was not a drag bar. She stated several times that drag queens were not welcome because they were considered bad for business. She also related a story the on the night of the first riot, several people running from the police had the misfortune to pick a bar for "Fire Island" gay men as a hiding place. Instead of helping them to hide, the rioters were held until the police could arrest them. One patron reportedly told the police, "We don't care what you do to them. Drag queens are not us." (A similar account of this incident can be found in an excellent book

called, "Stonewall" by Martin Duberman.)

Regardless of whether this story is fact or urban myth, it is illustrative of the historical relationship between transgenders and conservative gay men and women. During a recent flap with the Log Cabin Republican (LCR), a Republican leader was quoted as saying, "We don't allow cross dressers or transvestites either."

An organization with integrity and a genuine sense of justice would have exposed this bigot for the ignoramus he is. Afraid of being labeled sissies, and unwilling to attempt an education attempt with the right wing leadership of their party, Dale Carpenter and his LCR buddies chose to cast aspersions on transgenders. Like their "Fire Island" predecessors, gay conservatives are still trying to hold transgenders until the police arrive on the grounds "transgenders are not us."

The truth is that I respect Dale personally and the LCR in general. To the extent they expose the right wing nuts in their party for the bigots they are, the LCR does the entire queer community a great service. Under different circumstances my organization, the Texas Gender And Information Network (TGAIN), would love to work with them on issues of mutual concern. Unfortunately the LCR wants desperately to be accepted by the leadership of the Republican Party and they are perfectly willing to sell transgenders down the river if that is the price of admission.

Just as Native Americans were cast in the role of "savages" not worthy of keeping their own land, transgenders have been cast troublemakers to be eradicated from the gay/lesbian movement at all cost. The LCR has a problem however; this is 1998 not 1850. As more and more transgendered people begin to reclaim their place in what I prefer to call the more historically accurate transgender/gay/lesbian/bisexual movement, Dale and his LCR buddies are losing their credibility. From Lavender Law to the National Gay/Lesbian Task Force, transgenders are gaining their rightful place in organizational mission statements. To a much smaller extent that bastion of wealthy white gays/lesbians, the Human Rights Campaign, has begun to offer political assistance to the transgender rights movement. Even the Houston Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus has a transgendered woman as their treasurer.

Dale and his LCR friends can keep begging for entrance into the Republican Party until they turn red, white and blue. Gay conservatives have been on the wrong side since the first day of the Stonewall riot. Virtually no one listens to them and no one really cares what they have to say.

Attacking transgenders will not help them further their case. It simply helps us to understand both how much and how little has changed from the days of the "Fire Island Gays" to the days of Dale Carpenter.

Parables To Live By!

Submitted by Holly Foster Wilson

- ♦ "I offered to pay my lawyer for what he's worth but he won't work for nothing!"
- ♦ Never put off until tomorrow what you can avoid doing altogether.
- ♦ Indecision is the key to flexibility.
- ♦ Inflexibility: the hallmark of the tiny mind.
- ♦ If at first you don't succeed, to heck with it. Do unto others – then run!

GOD IS LOVE HATE?

(Continued from Page 4)

said it best: "Love thy neighbor as thyself."¹ Maybe Fred Phelps doesn't love himself...you know, the 'God hates people' stuff...

While Phelps is a rather hateful individual, he's not the most serious religious threat to the GLBT community. Through all of his bombast, and in-your-face tactics, he's taken as an extremist zealot by the mainstream. Stevens & Pruett's Lori Kendrick said "He is, I think, the most insane person we've ever had on the air," while Jim Pruett added "probably one of the most dangerous...on the planet." Phelps' group is pesky; but it's nowhere near as insidious as the Focus on Family types who cloak their aggressive religious agendas in more political, user-friendly framing. They're the ones who are polished, are well-connected, and have the funding to do the most damage. Most frightening of all, they have the ears of Congress.

Fred Phelps, on the other hand, will always be a fringe-rider and will receive all of the credibility afforded to his ilk – virtually none outside of his flock. In the meantime, he'll continue being the point-man of the foot patrol against sexual depravity; searching quixotically for his next battle. Quoting from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians (yes, the same author who wrote the quote Phelps uses from Romans) "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."² In other words: "Give it a rest!" Phelps' incessant focus on homosexuality, though, leaves me with the thought (to paraphrase the bard): he doth protest too much!³

¹ Matthew 22:39

² Ephesians 4:31-32

³ Hamlet, Act III by William Shakespeare

TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- Has Houston gone Hollywood? First it was Jenifer René wrapping up her first featured role in "Killing The Badge" – an indie film shot here this Spring & Summer. Then it was Katrina Rose getting her first acting gig in a student film in Austin recently. Now the biggest news of all: a full-length movie written, directed, and featuring TG's will be shot here in Houston. Talk about having stars in your eyes! Attend any T-group meeting in the not-too-distant future, and you will.

The debut announcement of "Everything But The Laughter" was made at the August GCTC meeting. The movie, an autobiography of Vietnam Vet turned transsexual Anna Marie Rosenberg is scheduled to begin shooting in October. Semper Fi!

- Speaking of Anna Marie Rosenberg, she not only has moved production of her movie from Dallas to Houston, but has also moved her residence here from San Antonio, as of the night of the last TATS meeting. Those of you who stayed around late got a chance to meet and greet our newest resident star. Those of you who didn't, make a point of seeing her – and her assistant Julie Kirks – at one of the next meetings and make them welcome.

- Last bit about the movie — director, Jessica Redman and starlet Jenifer René, who'll play a prominent part in said movie, are partners in more than just the movie. They're soon to be life-partners too! Wedding bells will chime (or maybe they won't...it's a Celtic ceremony called a 'handfast') on September 20. Congratulations to the wives-to-be!

- Disney producing gender-bending film?...they've just begun production on a television movie, "In Your Shoes," starring Vivica A. Fox, and David Alan Grier. The movie, airing during the 1998-99 TV season (no pun) on ABC's "The Wonderful World of Disney," is described as "a topsy-turvy, gender-bending comedy in which a pro quarterback dad and feminist mom literally exchange personalities – but not bodies." Would've been more fun the other way around. Imagine having Vivica Fox's body....

- Speaking of trans stuff on TV (again, no pun), the long-awaited show Transgender Revolution is scheduled to air on the A&E Network on September 21. It will take an in depth look at transgender phenomenon in America. Photographer Mariette Pathy Allen is the consultant for the special....

- From Kat Rose, word of a new GLBT magazine – and they're *serious* about 'T'...The current issue of Alternative Family Magazine (Aug-Sept issue) features a lengthy article on transgendered parents. The author? Yours truly. I'm plugging the magazine as well as myself. They not only include the word 'transgender' on their cover, but obviously are willing to devote space to our issues. The magazine deserves our support. I'm proudest not that they used my words but that they used not only a photo of, but one taken by, our late friend Dee McKellar."

- "It's 2:00 AM. Do you know what gender you are?" That was the title emblazoned across this month's issue of the Utne Reader. Friend Sarah DePalma alerted me to the 'thinking man's (or woman's) Readers Digest' which featured over a half dozen articles with gender themes. It even has an article by the ever-prolific Kate Bornstein. Hot on the heels of the Time Magazine article, no less! We're becoming – as they say in the business – good press.

- And now, the bad press.... The Big Apple tabloids had a field day with the recent murder of a transgender in New York. The New York Post described the victim as a "'Sodomasochism master' and crossdressing prostitute" who had "turned his tiny Greenwich Village studio into a sleaze emporium." The Daily News apparently wasn't much better.

According to the New York Times; the body of Fitzroy Green, a native of Jamaica, was found in a Greenwich Village apartment with numerous stab wounds. The police reports said the suspect, Eric Carolina, became enraged when he discovered the male genitalia on his date. Even though it appears a gender-biased hate crime, those charges have yet to be filed.

- In a follow-up to an earlier tidbit, West Hollywood CA has made it official, voting unanimously to approve the anti-discrimination amendment to include transgenders! They now join the state of Minnesota, and the cities of Seattle, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Iowa City, Evanston IL, and Cambridge MA.

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Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

Areas of Legal Practice:

- Criminal Defense ---
 - Transgender Issues and Documents ---
 - Divorce and Family Issues ---
 - Wills, Power of Atty, "Living" Wills ---
- Although licensed since 1981, I have not taken additional testing, therefore the State Bar requires that I state that I am "Not Certified by the Board of Legal Specialization"

Areas of Engineering Practice:

- Civil / Structural ---

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STUDY: GENDER IDENTIFIED AT BIRTH

[CHICAGO, IL] In a case that resembles the "John/Joan" study last year at Johns Hopkins, a Canadian male infant, whose penis was irreparably damaged during circumcision, was surgically reassigned as a female and has successfully adapted to life as a woman. Now 27, the unnamed woman describes herself as bisexual and, as of last summer, was in a relationship with a woman.

The findings in this case, published in the July issue of the Journal of Pediatrics, seem to contradict those of the Hopkins study, in which a male was surgically reassigned as a female because of a similar circumcision accident, but could not adapt to life as a female. "John/Joan" rebelled against his female socialization and began living as a male at age 16, leading some observers to conclude that gender identity is set at birth.

The significant difference between the two cases is when the sex reassignment was performed: at 21 months in John/Joan's case and at 7 months in this case. The results of this case have led researchers to speculate that there may be a "window of time" after birth before gender identity is realized.

Said Kenneth Zucker, one of the authors of Canadian study, "When you think about the fact that this person was an entirely normal biological male prior to the circumcision accident, this case may shed insight on how malleable someone's gender identity is."

John Bancroft, Director of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, commented that the two studies show how "...we are very much in the dark" when it comes to understanding how gender identity and sexual orientation develop

*Provided by Clare Howell, editor,
GenderPac's 'In Your Face'*

Anti-Hate Crimes Act Deserves Our Strong Support

By Emily Alford

As most people in the United States know, Senator Edward Kennedy has introduced a bill in Congress to provide nationwide coverage against crimes motivated by hate. His action was motivated by the ghastly race killing that took place recently in Jasper, Texas. Any transgender must be aware that that kind of thing can happen and has happened to us too. I need only cite the case of Brandon Teena.

Wondering whether the Senator ought to be encouraged to extend that coverage to transgender people, I looked up the text of the bill on the U.S. Congress Web Site [<http://thomas.loc.gov>]. The bill is S.1529.

To my delight, I found that it already does protect us, at least in its draft form. The bill specifically notes that "the incidence of violence motivated by the actual or perceived race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or disability poses a serious national problem." It adds that "such violence disrupts the tranquillity [sic] and safety of communities and is deeply divisive." It notes as well that "many states have no laws addressing violence based on the actual or perceived race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or

disability while other states have laws that provide only limited protection."

The bill provides stiff Federal penalties for such crimes... [S]ignificantly, it does so in two clauses, one extending protection in cases involving actual or perceived race, color, religion, or national origin, and the other extending protection to cases involving actual or perceived religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

It [is] absolutely imperative that this bill become law in roughly the form that Senator Kennedy proposes. It also seems to me that this is an instance where every single transgender person in the United States can make an input. Given the bill's high purpose, and the circumstances that led to its proposal, it deserves endorsement on general principles. I think it has a strong chance of enactment, given its bipartisan co-sponsorship that includes not only Senators Diane Feinstein (D-CA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Thomas Torricelli (D-NJ), but also Arlen Specter (R-PA).

So write...to any of the bill's sponsors, to your own United States Senators, (or) to your Congressperson, noting the Senator's bill and asking that it receive support in the House of Representatives as well. This is a historic moment, and it must not be lost.

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'FOCUS ON THE FAMILY' TRASHES TRANSGENDER PARENT

Submitted by Katrina Rose

[NEW YORK, NY] In the August 23rd issue of 'Focus on the Family' magazine, an article titled 'Defending the Family in the Public Square' begins, "The Christian mother of two young boys divorces her husband after he undergoes a sex-change operation and moves in with another surgically altered man. The former husband demands visitation rights with his sons; the woman goes to court to stop him. She wins custody, but a judge says the father, who has renamed himself Susan, can have lengthy, unsupervised, face-to-face visits."

The article then details how the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) fought and won in court to have the deviant, Susan, kept away from her children. The ADF was founded by "Christian" ministries to contest homosexual adoption and custody cases.

They offer intensive training in custody and family law to attorneys who volunteer to defend "religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, parental rights and the traditional family."

The article closes with a plea to "God's people" for donations and lawyers to help defend the traditional family.

Apologies From The Editor

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Please accept my apologies for the delays in getting out the last two newsletters. Several months back I had relinquished the copying and mailing of these to another member. In July I had fielded questions regarding the newsletters and promised to inquire about them. After a cursory explanation, I assumed the newsletters were later mailed out and received by all (except me.)

When August rolled around, and I started getting more comments about newsletters not being received, I asked again at our August 8th meeting. I discovered then that neither July or August's newsletters had been sent. After assurances that they would be copied and mailed, I again assumed they were sent.

After receiving more complaints during the next week and a half, I decided to intervene. I got a chance to stuff July's newsletters at her house and mailed them on the spot, and got the August originals back and began copying them and mailed them out late on the 24th.

I want to thank those of you who were patient with me during this period. The newsletters were actually published on time, but I realize by the time they got to you, it was 'old news,' so to speak. This situation was beyond my control, however I should've intervened much sooner. For this, I fully apologize to all who receive our newsletter, and promise to do my best to see this doesn't repeat in the future.

In addition, I need to apologize to Gwen Smith for inadvertently cutting off the last three paragraphs of her article "Julia Morgan: The Looking Glass." Somehow in my hasty editing, I managed to delete those lines, the text of which follows:

My situation and Julia's share many things in common. I am hoping for my first and second surgery referral letters soon, and have reserved a surgery date, in spite of some strong financial difficulties that could change these plans. I've always been a strong, independent person - and yes, one that some might even call headstrong at times. Yes, I have even contemplated suicide as a way out, at times.

How much different am I from Julia, really? How different are we all?

Many in the community, without knowing much about the circumstances of the incident, have been quick to vilify Julia, and try distancing themselves from being seen as being in any way similar to her. Yet, with only a little speculation - if I didn't feel I had other options, if I was living with the additional stresses that Julia was, and so on - I cannot honestly say if I would react all that differently than she did. And that is a frightening mirror to gaze

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TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 6, Issue 11

Houston, Texas

November, 1998

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.

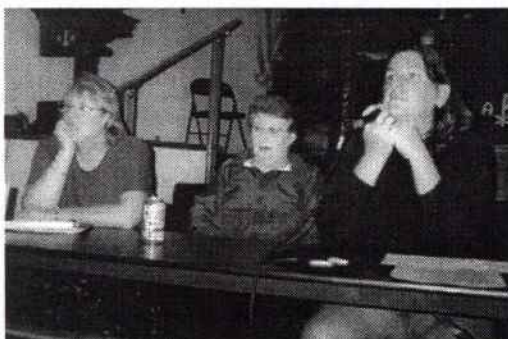
TATS PANEL SPEAKS AT M.C.C.R.

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Another panel of TATS members spoke before a group at Houston's Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection on October 4. It was yet another discussion in the series of panels of local organizations and institutions in an effort to outreach to and, most importantly, inform those outside of our community about ourselves.

The meeting came in response to an announcement made last August by the church staff that (in an effort to learn more about the transsexuals among their congregation) they would bring in an instructor from University of Houston to speak before the church elders. TATS members and church congregants Crystal Erwin and Jessica Wicks took exception to that announcement. They countered that there were a number of transgenders of note in the community who could more effectively do a better job of enlightening them on transsexual issues.

We quickly put together a group of panelists and submitted bios and were rewarded with an audience before not only the church staff, but also members of the congregation as well. As a result, MCCR cancelled the scheduled expert and relied on the real experts - those of us who live it!



Panelist Marie Gallagher (with microphone) fields yet another question at MCCR as Jessica Wicks and Sarah DePalma listen in.



Panelists at MCCR (L-R): Jessica Wicks, Sarah DePalma, Marie Denise Gallagher, Vanessa Edwards Foster & Michelle Myers

Pastor Carolyn Mobley introduced the panel: coordinator/moderator Vanessa Edwards Foster, co-speakers Jessica Wicks and Marie Denise Gallagher and panelists Michelle Myers and Sarah DePalma. After a short definition, and a discussion on the history of transgenderism by Jessica, and of medical issues by Marie; we launched into an active question and answer session. The audience (which included some other members of the local transgender community) was both accommodating and interested. There were a number of very good questions asked of the panel, and we openly provided all information we could. As usual, the Q & A session extended the length of our visit and could easily have gone on longer.

A brainchild of mine from last year, the panels are a great way to educate others on who we really are, and education is the most effective way to end prejudice. Once they know us, it's harder to hate us!

TATS MEMBER FATALLY SHOT

Despondent Victim Left Police No Choice

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

TATS member Stephanie Rhyne, 35, was shot and killed at her home in the Clear Lake area by Houston Police on October 3, 1998. The shooting was a result of police responding to a call and being faced by Stephanie pointing a loaded gun. Evidently Stephanie was despondent and wished to take her life - in this case at the hand of the police.

Police were initially called to Stephanie's residence about 2:00 that Saturday afternoon in response to a possible suicide attempt. Upon arriving, the officers spotted Stephanie in the back yard with a pistol down at her side. When he attempted to talk to her, she fired the pistol into the ground. The officer then retreated to the back gate at the side of the house.

Stephanie then followed the officer around then repeatedly ordered Stephanie to drop the gun. Stephanie responded by raising the

(Continued on Page 8)

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| November 14 | Social Meeting at:
Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM |
| November 28 | Thanksgiving Meeting at:
Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM |
| December 12 | Social Meeting at:
Desirée Walton's @ 3:00 PM |
| December 26 | Meeting cancelled:
(see editor's column for details) |

T. A. T. S.
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HOW TO REACH US:

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or for any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 827-5913 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

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:
http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Well, it's been an eventful month! Our new electees have served their first full month now, and we've also held our first board meeting. In keeping with true TATS tradition, it was a rather informal affair with only two issues brought up for a vote.



One of the issues was increasing the newsletter subscription fees – which passed. Effectively immediately, the newsletter subscription rates will be set at \$15 per year. As you can see, we've raised more than just the subscription rates of the newsletter over the course of the year – we've also the size of the newsletter as well as the number of exchanges with other groups (as a result of our newfound 'popularity' for lack of a better word.) We've also increased the number of advertisers and have striven to increase the quality of the newsletter over the course of the past year as well. We hope you'll agree.

Another item brought up before the board was whether to hold a meeting the day after Christmas. Personally I had no problems hosting a day-after meeting. The consensus of the board, however, was to cancel December's fourth weekend meeting. Chances are, we'd all be too busy exchanging gifts and eating leftovers to bother with attending a meeting that day. Speaking of leftovers, though...we will be holding a meeting the weekend immediately after Thanksgiving at my place (as usual). So if you've got any really good leftovers – or just feel like getting in the kitchen and cooking something else up – bring it on over to the meeting! It'll be our 'feast after the feast.'

While I'm on the subject of feasting for the holidays, I wanted to mention to you that I've got a cool place to be during the holiday season...outside! No, seriously. I've got a friend who I work with that runs Angels Amongst Us. This is an organization that Deborah Miner created to collect toys for various charity events during the Christmas season. They set up an giant inflated Santa, collect toys, and then distribute them with Toys for Tots (the Marine Corps' promotion), Navidad en el Barrio (done with the Canine Unit of H.P.D.), and also parties with the kids at M. D. Anderson Cancer Hospital. I plan on doing a number of these events as my

time permits, and if anyone else would like to help – let me know. I'll give you all the details.

We also had a bit of tragedy befall our group, and the nation, this past month. As the front page showed, we lost a member of our group in a bizarre shooting. Stephanie Rhyne was not a very active member of our group, but she was no less important to the group than any of us. I remembered her return to attending the group meetings early this year. It was (of all things) an article I'd written in the newsletter that struck her renewed interest in the group. She'd mentioned to me that she wanted to remain active in the group again.

Sadly, though, she dropped back out again a few months later. Around Labor Day, I began wondering whatever happened to her and thought about contacting her. It was only a short month later when I heard the news report, and worried it might've been a TS involved in the shooting. More tragically, I found it was someone I knew.

Additionally Matthew Shepard was killed in an infamously, brutal murder. Just in case anyone had gotten complacent in their security, this threw ice water in their face. It's easy to believe we've made all this progress – and it's true, to an extent. We've made exponential gains in being able to live our lives rather blithely. Being transgendered, or gay, or lesbian doesn't mean being quite the pariah anymore. But don't take that to mean we've 'made it.' The Shepard tragedy, and a couple other subsequent incidences, have driven home the message: We've got a lot of work still ahead. We ain't there yet!

As a result, I want to remind you all about remaining vigilant and being active politically. We still plan on our first ever Transgender Lobbying Day in Austin early in the next legislative session the last weekend of January. This event will kinda be like Lobbying 101 – a primer on how to lobby your elected officials. Just don't let this intimidate you. We all have to start somewhere! And remember, these are you're elected officials and they work for you.

A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

Christopher Morgan, London U.K.

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Deborah Bell

Katrina C. Rose

for submitting humor

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for forwarding articles

Brandon Wolf

for submitting & scanning photos

Katrina C. Rose...a big THANKS!

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What Does a Gender Outlaw Do For Fun? Coastin' With Kate Bornstein

Living in the Land of Out has its disadvantages as well as its advantages. Yes, I've experienced – and continue to suffer through – my share of employment discrimination. But, that's nothing that a courageous judiciary – one willing to brave Tom DeLay's ridiculous impeachment threats – couldn't cure with one fell swoop: namely, an honest interpretation of Title VII that covers sexual orientation and gender identity (translation: keep voting for Democrats – its our only hope.)



Kat Rose (L) & Kate Bornstein at Coming Out Day.

But, being out certainly has its advantages – being out and in the media even more so. Recently, as part of my duties with the *Texas Triangle*, I had the opportunity to chat with a person who, though I won't refer to her as an idol or any such embarrassing phraseology, certainly did inspire me considerably several years ago when I was locked deep in my closet.

I'm speaking of gender Kate Bornstein, author of *Gender Outlaw* and, more recently, *My Gender Workbook*. Kate is a brave, outspoken gender advocate, but I caught her in a moment of nervousness.

"I've never spent time in what might be called the heartland, okay? And I'm at once honored beyond words, and nervous out of my mind."

The heartland she refers to is Dallas. She was tapped to be the featured speaker at the Dallas Coming Out Day festivities – which took place at the Texas State Fair for the first time this year as an official



Kate Bornstein at the State Fair

coming out into some new aspect of the new identity which we're occupying. Every day I come out new as something."

For someone as out as Kate is, the opposite of out – blending into the woodwork as transsexuals who don't do so refer to it somewhat derisively – is a delicate issue, but one that she neither disses nor dismisses in the slightest. "Fading into the woodwork may be exactly what some people need to do."

"But that doesn't mean everybody needs to."

(Continued on Page 7)

MY IMPRESSIONS OF AN OUTLAW (...Or Kate Does Dallas...)

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

On October 11, I found myself in Dallas with Katrina at the Texas State Fair's Coming Out Day ceremony. Kat had an interview with the inimitable Kate Bornstein, and was searching for company to help share the drive and keep her company. I decided to tag along. It was a great opportunity to see (and perhaps meet) the lady behind the legend.

Kate being an icon in the transgender community, I had at least some preconceptions of what I expected her to be. Since I'd never read any of her works before venturing up that day; my expectations were obviously limited.

So Katrina, our Dallas friend, Geri Aultum, and I headed for the State Fairgrounds on a gorgeous sunny Sunday morning and found seats front and center – right in front of the speakers' podium. About 15 minutes after arriving, we got our first glimpse of Kate Bornstein (-stein as in Frankenstein...and what a creation she is!) My first impression was...she was older than I expected! From what I remembered from her appearance on a talk show (Geraldo or Sally?), I was under the impression she was more my age

– fortyish. In fact, she was more the Woodstock generation.

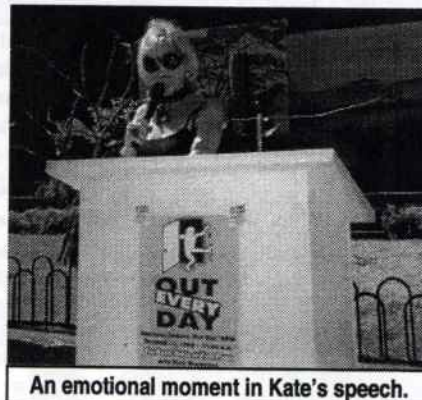
Kate then strolled to the podium to survey the gathering. (I hesitate to call it a crowd – it was fairly sparse.) Sadly, Katrina, Geri and I were the only T-folk who attended her speech. (Where was the Dallas community!?) Then, in another unexpected turn, she mentioned she was scared about how her speech was gonna go! She fretted about how she would be received by the crowd – especially considering the low crowd turnout. Hearing that was at the same time endearing and mildly disappointing. When you find your heroes are merely human, it distorts your perspective. At same time, she was tangible instead of an icon

or an image. She was a very down-to-earth, engaging (and as Katrina alluded to) fun person to visit with! Whatever disappointment was outweighed by discovery.

The speech that she was fretting over was attention-grabbing. With her background, she knows how to command an audience. I wasn't initially struck by her acting ability (Partly because she wore sunglasses – it's hard to emote without the eyes). More impressive was her style of speaking. Starting slow, she settled into pace and gained momentum as she continued. Her oratory style

had the rhythmic cadence of a poet – and not at all by accident. I understand she used to recite her poetry at the coffee-house 'A Different Light' during her San Francisco era.

The first set was about her mother's coming



An emotional moment in Kate's speech.

(Continued on Page 7)

PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT ON MATTHEW SHEPARD TRAGEDY

By U.S. President Bill Clinton

I was deeply grieved by the act of violence perpetrated against Matthew Shepard of Wyoming. The Justice Department has assured me that local law enforcement officials are proceeding diligently to bring those responsible to justice. And I am determined that we will do everything we can and offer whatever assistance is appropriate.

Hillary and I ask that your thoughts and your prayers be with Mr. Shepard and his family, and with the people of Laramie, Wyoming. In the face of this terrible act of violence, they are joining together to demonstrate that an act of evil like this is not what our country is all about.

In fact it strikes at the very heart of what it means to be an American and at the values that define us as a Nation. We must all reaffirm that we will not tolerate this.

Just this year there have been a number of recent tragedies across our country that involve hate crimes. The vicious murder of James Byrd last June in Jasper, Texas and the assault this week on Mr. Shepard are only among the most horrifying examples. Almost one year ago I proposed that Congress enact the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Our Federal laws already punish some crimes committed against people on the basis of race or religion or national origin, but we should do more. This crucial legislation would strengthen and expand the ability of the

Justice Department to prosecute hate crimes by removing needless jurisdictional requirements for existing crimes and by giving Federal prosecutors the power to prosecute hate crimes committed because of the victim's sexual orientation, gender, or disability. All Americans deserve protection from hate.

There is nothing more important to the future of this country than our standing together against intolerance, prejudice, and violent bigotry. It is not too late for Congress to take action before they adjourn and pass The Hate Crimes Prevention Act. By doing so they will help make all Americans more safe and secure.

Parker Renews Call For Stronger Hate Crimes Laws

Submitted by Deborah Bell

City Councilmember Annise Parker urged the city to vigorously lobby for strengthening the state's vague hate crimes law.

"Once again, it takes a brutal hate crime to highlight the need for legislation and education. We cannot let Matthew Shepard, James Byrd Jr. and Paul Broussard die in vain," Parker said. Openly gay Shepard, 21, died Monday in a Wyoming hospital after being pistol-whipped and tied to a fence in near-freezing weather. Byrd, a 49-year old African-American, was dragged to his death June 7 in Jasper in a crime that shocked the nation. Houston banker Paul Broussard was murdered in 1991 by a group of affluent suburban gay bashers in a case that prompted cries for local and state hate crimes laws.

In July, Parker addressed City Council about the need for adding hate crimes legislation to Houston's state legislative lobbying agenda.

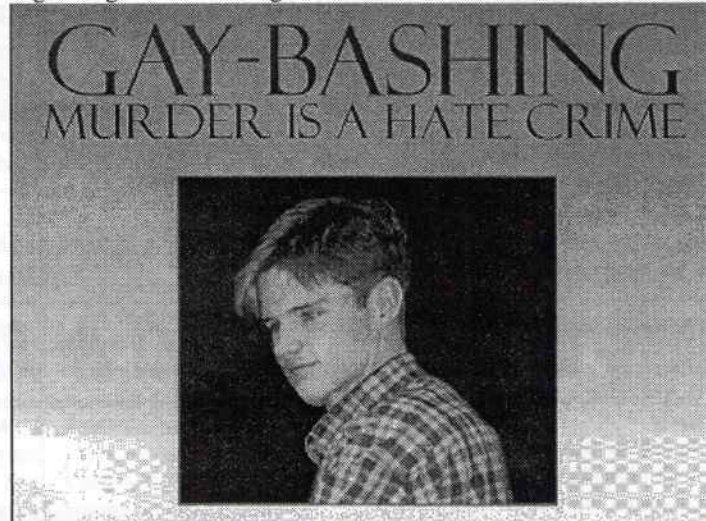
After the murder of James Byrd, Parker

joined US Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee in sponsoring a local civil rights/hate crimes forum. State

two votes in the House.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which would add sexual orientation, gender and disability as protected classes, is also pending in Congress.

Parker applauded Mayor Lee Brown's hate crimes initiative, which includes a hate crimes coordinator and hotline (713-308-8737) as well as a new emphasis on collecting accurate hate crimes statistics. "I urge anyone who cares about human rights to lobby their state and federal representative for stronger legislation. And, in the name of those who died such horrible deaths, to vote for candidates who support hate crimes legislation."



Sen. Rodney Ellis, author of the Texas Hate Crimes law, and City Council Member Jew Don Boney also began conducting hearings about enhancing the state law. Ellis filed legislation in 1997 to strengthen the state law, but it lost by

WYOMING CAMPUS REACTION TO SHEPARD HATE CRIME

By Lara Azar, Univ. of Wyoming 'Branding Iron'

An attack that took place in Laramie this week leave many to wonder if hate crimes still exist. Matt Shepard, a 22-year-old University of Wyoming student was found beaten into a coma and left tied to a fence to die. The brutal crime leaves the campus and community shocked and appalled.

"You think growing up in Wyoming you're immune," said Jennifer Zakotnik, a UW junior. "You know you're not going to be affected by things like this, but you are."

Others are less surprised.

"I think in all places, regardless of where you are, hate crimes are going to exist—even in Wyoming," said Kris Williams, a junior. "It's unfortunate, and we're not even sheltered by that. Hopefully it'll force the students to take a strong look at each other, a strong look at where they stand on a lot of things, what they represent and really open up some issues on what the students of the University of Wyoming feel. Sometimes we are not the most politically active school."

Ryan McCoy, a senior, agrees. "It's not all that surprising because hate is every-

where...murder is pretty good to get them on, but that's disgusting."

Tracee Wagner, a senior, said, "I was in theater with him (in high school) and he always had a very broad outlook on everything. The whole thing is ridiculous."

"It could happen to anyone," said Dan Woolcott, a senior. "I could be accused of being (gay) and beaten to death."

"We are deeply saddened when one of our students is involved in something like this," said Stephanie Olson, vice-president of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming.

STONEWALL II: POLICE TURN VIOLENT AS 5,000 TAKE TO STREETS!

Silvia Rivera Arrested Once Again

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

NEW YORK, NY – "It was Stonewall Two!" said one witness describing police response to the memorial march and vigil held to remember Matthew Shepard. Writer Randolfe Wicker, of New York's GayToday, reported seeing "police brutality up close, beatings, clubbings, arm-twistings" as well as numerous arrests.

The marchers had gathered to protest recent hate crimes and the violent homophobic moods preached by hate-group-fundamentalist 'Christians' such as Rev. Fred Phelps' God Hates Fags. However, the City of New York refused the vigil holders a parade permit. Police initially expected no more than 200 marchers, but were quickly overwhelmed as a giant crowd estimated at between 4,000 and 5,000 surged down Fifth Avenue after gathering in front of the Plaza Hotel in midtown Manhattan.

Their original plan had been to march down 5th Avenue from 59th to 25th Street to conduct the candlelight vigil at Madison Square Park, but that plan went awry. The crowd, carrying candles and signs saying "Matthew Shepard: Another Death Caused by Homophobia!" began marching down 5th Avenue.

As the crowd grew, the police became alarmed. At one point, they apparently warned the marchers to stay out of the street as they marched. Silvia Rivera, a Stonewall Era veteran, was marching with a crowd that then began chanting "The Streets Belong to the People!" As vast numbers of lesbians and gays overstepped the sidewalks, a phalanx of law officers set upon them. Ms. Rivera, kicked and drug by police, was among the first of those arrested.

Anti-Violence Project members handed out silver whistles which were later blown loudly by protestors to thwart police when they tried to communicate alarm on walkie-talkies. The marchers, containing themselves to the sidewalk, continued on.

The police were overwhelmed by the sheer numbers, but decided to take control. At one point the crowd was directed west toward 6th Avenue. Police attempted to blockade the crowd from 6th Avenue, but crowds managed to avoid the barricades by detouring through a construction site. Traffic on the Avenue of the Americas (6th) was brought to a complete standstill.

After police began heavy-handedly arresting some of the marchers, march organizers directed the crowd back toward 5th Avenue again.

Police had decided to take a stand again and were lined up at 42nd and 5th Avenue, so organizers linked arms again and directed the masses to return west yet again at 43rd Street.

"That's when it got ugly," Wicker said. "All exits were closed. Five thousand people were trapped on 43rd near 6th Avenue...[organizers] sat down holding hands. That's when police on horseback marched into the crowd clubbing and trampling and arresting people. We were pinned like cattle for about 45 minutes."

At this point the marchers were divided, but approximately 80% went

(Continued on Page 9)

Local Vigil For Shepard 'Peaceful'

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

As rain lightly fell, a crowd of some 300 mourners gathered to remember Matthew Shepard. The vigil was held at the serene, monolithic courtyard beside the reflecting pool at Rothko Chapel in the Montrose. The entire gray, rainy weekend was a fittingly pallid backdrop to match the mood of those who turned out in tribute.

Organizers for the event (Stonewall Democrats, Log Cabin Republicans & the Houston Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus) were originally hoping for a crowd of over a thousand until the weekend weather drastically dampened expectations. The crowd who showed up, though, was much higher than was expected at the beginning of the Sunday evening vigil. As an intermittent light shower fell, the crowd wandered in; stoic but intent.

Uncooperative as the weather may have been, the event itself was quite uneventful as far as protests or controversy. We had a couple volunteers who worked perimeter security: coordinator (and city council staffer)

Terrence O'Neill, and TATS member Jessica Wicks. Thankfully, there was no trouble to report. A rather visible police presence – and probably even the weather itself – kept away anyone who may have had thoughts of creating problems. The bucolic setting, the moderately hushed crowd, and the feeling of security set a near-perfect environment for the occasion.

In a shocking, yet poignant touch, a replica of the split rail fence to which Matthew was tied was placed to the right of the stage. It was a stark, visual symbol of why we were there. While moving the flowers and stuffed toys from the Montrose Blvd. memorial to the chapel before the vigil, I must admit the sight of fence initially disturbed me, and emotionally ripped me raw. As calm settled back in and I looked at it, with the flowers, wreaths, notes, and rain-soaked stuffed bears at its base, it struck me as a fitting marker for the occasion. Lou Vanech, who created the replica at organizer Gary Van Ooteghem's request, called it a "rough-hewn, universally recognized, and... perfect symbol" to commemorate the incident.

As master of the ceremony, city councilmember Annise Parker, began the memorial; I hurried to my

(Continued on Page 9)



Vigil volunteer Vanessa Edwards Foster (to right of stage) listens intently to speakers: (L-R) councilmember Annise Parker, mayor pro-tem Jew Don Boney and KHOU Channel 11's Dan Meador.



NGLTF Dir. Kerri Lobel (right) gives an impassioned speech as she and Annise Parker huddle under the umbrella (held by Clarence Bagby at rear.)

Exit, Stage Exodus

By Katrina C. Rose

I'm not sure what annoys me most about the Paulks, America's first family of sexual orientation fraud: the lie they espouse regarding a 'cure' for homosexuality or John Paulk's claim that he actually was homosexual.

Oh, I'm sure that he had sex with men (despite a report I saw recently that his wife, Anne, may well never have actually had any lesbian lovers, just emotional relationships with women.) If you've ever seen photos of John's femme alter ego, Candi, (as shown on *60 Minutes* and elsewhere) it should be painfully obvious that he's a transsexual in denial.

But, don't think that this will be a column cutting the whiny Exodusmeister slack because of any transsexual commonality. Quite the contrary - I'm stating that this should be just one more chunk of evidence that we are all in the struggle for equality together. No favorites. No exclusions.

In fact, it's really not about the Paulks at all. I mention them because of a book that I recently ran across - a book that is now twenty years old and probably long out of print. The book of propaganda in question is *Perry - A Transformed Transsexual*, co-scribbled by Perry Desmond (the allegedly-transformed one) and Dr. R.L. Hymers (affiliated at the time with an outfit called 'Love in Action' and the author of a book called *The Deliverance Book - How to Cast Out Demons*.)

The promotional blurb on the back cover is ample indication of the slant of the book as a whole: "Escape from homosexuality is a supernatural process. Return from transsexuality is a miracle!"

The author of the blurb? Pat Boone. (There are also words of approval in the book for Anita Bryant, who was riding high on a crest of hate following her then-recent Florida crusade - but, that is fodder for another discussion.)

I mentioned my finding the book to my good friend, West Coast TG activist Gwen Smith. She said that she'd long been searching for a copy of it - not just for the obvious reason of keeping up on anti-TG (as well as anti-gay) propaganda, but also for a more personal reason: when Gwen transitioned on the job several years ago, an excerpt from this tract of trash was mailed to her - at work - by a local church.

It didn't out her - she was already out. But, the message was clear nevertheless: that Gwen was headed down the wrong path and that she could be saved if she simply wanted to be. "Although they became the recipients of a rather angry letter from me, they also left me scared," Gwen remembers. "I had no idea if this was only the opening salvo in a fight over my life, and if it would lead to bigger troubles in my



The Paulks in a photo from a PTL Club promo. That's John (aka: Candi) on the right.

workplace."

As it turns out, it was the only problem she had at work. Still, she'll never forget the underlying message, "I would go to hell - or at least get into drugs, prostitution, and mental hospitals - for my 'gay' behavior."

Of course, much of Perry's story is one that any transsexual knows well. The despair of adolescence: "Oh, God! Where can I go? Who can help me? I'm really supposed to be a girl, that's what's wrong. I was cheated...by somebody! I'm a girl trapped in a boy's body! Oh God! Who can help me?"



John Paulk's former alter-ego, Candi

Likewise, bits of it should be recognized by anyone who grew up male - gay, straight or TG - who other males deemed to be not male enough: "Perry is a fairy!" and "Aren't you in the wrong bathroom, Perry? Shouldn't you be in the girl's?"

An attempt at marriage. An attempt to do the military thing. An attempt to be someone who you are not - whoever or whatever that may be. Yes, gays and TGs alike have danced that dance.

Other parts of Perry's story are unique to transgendered people of course. Employment opportunities limited to drag performing and cabaret side shows. Genital surgery. Genital surgery *without the benefit of aftercare*.

Perry's surgery was in August of 1972. By February of 1974, Perry became convinced - primarily by various hawkers of pseudo-religion - that God had not made the mistake. Instead, Perry had.

Now, please do not mistake my message here. Yes, I'm agnostic. If you wish to engage me in a discussion of the merits of certain faiths, then drop me an e-mail - but, I do not disparage anyone's faith here or get into a discussion of Religion X vs. Religion Y. I do, however, disparage lies that rest on an allegedly-divine foundation.

Gays and transsexuals lead happy lives as gays and transsexuals both with and without religion. But neither gays nor transsexuals can be cured. Stories of queers succumbing to whatever despair exists in their lives cannot be judged until there is a level playing field - that playing field being a nation free of legal and economic impediments that limit the lives of sexual and gender minorities.

I confidently predict that in a world where there are no laws consecrating discrimination against us, few - if any - queers will ever wind up in the clutches of groups like Exodus.

Even so - what angered me most about the Perry's book was not the general concept that homosexuals and transsexuals can be cured.

And - it wasn't the Pat Boone quote.

And - it wasn't even the sad phrase that Perry used to describe himself after he became hooked on religion: "A Eunuch For The Lord."

Rather, it was one of the pictures of Perry - taken sometime after becoming said "Eunuch For The Lord" at Mardi Gras - with a woman. The other person in the photo is listed as "Sid (Jody) Ford." Judging from the reference to Jody as a 'he', I will assume that she (I refuse to call this person 'he'; I do so to Perry reluctantly, and only because that is the name he is known by) was another transsexual.

(Continued on Page 11)

COASTIN' WITH KATE....

(Continued from Page 3)

Bornstein was the first person who I ever heard use the words 'transsexual' and 'lesbian' together. For a woman like me – one initially cursed with the word 'male' on my birth certificate but who also likes women – hearing someone else being out about being both transsexual and lesbian went a long way to saving my sanity. One of the achievements of gender outlaws like Bornstein has been enlightening people to the fact that sexual orientation and gender identity, albeit linked in how they are used to discriminate, are, in fact, two separate things.

"Unlike the simplicity of 'I'm gay/I'm lesbian' – which, as complicated as it is – you know, 'I like girls/I like boys' – very simple like that. Changing your identity – discovering your gender identity – which answers the question 'Who am I?' also means changing a whole lot of other things. And as we're discovering, I think, what is the transgender experience, 'cause we've never had an opportunity to talk about. So, whereas ten, twelve years ago, yeah I came out and said 'transsexual lesbian,' and it turns out to be one of the first few times that's been talked about, there's a level of the culture that says yeah, 'transsexual lesbian,' so what? And there's still a larger level of the culture that goes WHAT!?!?! Both of those are operating at the same time."

"What's interesting to me is that we're coming out every day to the broader culture as a movement." And one of the ways that many of us come out in some form is via the internet. Bornstein doesn't spend as much time in cyberspace as she used to (in addition to her two gender theory books, she's the co-author, with Caitlin Sullivan, of *Nearly Roadkill*, an 'info-bahn erotic adventure'), but doesn't diminish its continued role – far from it, in fact. "We've got an information superhighway. What we used to have was an information RFD. So it makes all the difference in the world because the trans-

sexual experience begins with the acquisition of information."

And people want to acquire all sorts of information on the net – sometimes, that of a rather personal nature. A few hours before I chatted with Kate, I was in AOL's transgender chatroom – The Gazebo. Always looking for ideas, I asked the Gazebros there if there were any questions for Kate. The only one offered up was 'Ask her when was the last time she had sex.'

Despite some trepidations, I asked her.

"But that a good question," she said., "Trannies don't talk about sex. Gays and lesbians don't talk about sex anymore, except to say do it safely. Or that we want to be married when we do it. You know, this whole movement has gone so far middle-of-the-road, that it needs to come out more every day. We need to start talking more about sex."

"We're moving more and more mainstream, and that's a good thing. But we've been giving up the fun stuff in order to do it and that's just silly."

Well, that gave me the perfect opening to ask my own somewhat off-the-wall question – one that I'd been planning to close the interview with: what does a Gender Outlaw do fun?

"I'm trying to put fun in every aspect of my life." She's done a good job so far, I'd say. At the Coming Out Day rally, she described herself



Kate nervously contemplates the crowd before her speech at 'Coming Out Day' at the Texas State Fair.

to the smaller-than-expected, yet incredibly enthusiastic crowd as the good Jewish boy from New Jersey who grew up to be the girl of his dreams. All humans should be lucky enough to have that much fun with their lives. But, Kate isn't stopping there.

"When I get off the phone I'm going to play with the pup dog or kitty cat here. I'm trying to put fun into my writing, I'm trying to put fun into the way I walk down the street and flirt with anything that'll flirt with me."

Not enough fun? There's more.

"I'm trying to find fun in the fear I've got to living up to what social position I've got, what access to media I got. I find a lot of fun in discovering the pleasures of my body with my new girlfriend. I find a lot of fun in discovering things like I've got a g-spot and the surgeons didn't put

it there. What's it doing up inside a man's body – but that's what this is, a man's body – where he couldn't touch it even if he wanted to. Does that mean that genitals are really not the markers of gender and sex that we thought they were? I'm thinking so. I'm having fun with realizations like that and having fun with trying to figure out what to do with those realizations."

"I'm trying to put fun in this interview," she said.

You definitely succeeded Kate – not just for you, but for me as well.

MY IMPRESSIONS OF AN OUTLAW....

(Continued from Page 3)

to grips with her son / daughter before death. She recalled the funeral scene, with other older Jewish ladies who'd attended Mrs. Bornstein's funeral coming up to this tall, blonde, unfamiliar woman and asking "So... Who-a-yew?" When Kate replied "I'm her daughter!" she laughed, recalling the response of the gaggle of blue-hairs in a gossipy conference: "She didn't have a daughter! She had two sons!" "It must've been another marriage she didn't mention..." "Heaven forbid, she couldn't have cheated on Paul..." etc. This began the story on how ultimately she answered that question...not so much to others as much as herself.

By the end of her first set, she laid her emo-

tions bare for all to see and inspect when recalling her mom's last words to her. In a morphine haze on her last days, her dying mother asked the question "Who-a-yew, Albert?" Choking back tears, Kate answered "I'm the son...you've always loved, and the daughter you never had but always wanted." In a poignant last bit of clarity, her mother replied "Good! I never wanted to lose any of you!" It was a very moving ending for all in the audience. I'm not sure, though, that her emoting at the end was really acting. This was real emotion: raw, exposed...like viewing a tooth split in half down to the nerve. The pain was palpable.

Kate prefaced her second set with a zen proverb (also mentioned in her book *Gender*

Outlaw): All roads lead to nowhere – take the road with the most heart and the most fun. Thus began the second speech about Texas and its image. Kate found herself both intimidated and attracted her to our enigmatic state. It was a place she observed that people work hard, play hard, shoot straight, but also walk on the wrong side of the line. She was most impressed with the outlaw image (real or imagined) that Texas wore like a badge of honor.

This segued into her being a 'gender outlaw.' Having the courage to be what one chose to be, damn the consequences – that was the spirit of the outlaw. From here she documented

(Continued on Page 9)

Suicide By Proxy: Are Police 'Enablers?'

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Stephanie Rhyne's recent death at the hands of the local police brings up a disturbing trend: suicide via police shooting. This means an individual who is distraught enough to be suicidal, but for varying reasons decides to have police terminate their life. What they do is to create a situation that will require police intervention, and once authorities arrive on the scene, put the unwitting officer in a 'shoot-or-be-shot' situation. As a result, the officer - by proxy - enables the person to commit suicide without doing it themselves.

This phenomenon was recently documented on an episode of 20/20 earlier this year - and one wonders whether might've actually planted seeds for others to follow. The reasons for using police to accomplish this are numerous:

For some, they consider suicide a mortal sin; but can spiritually justify their death if they can get someone else to 'do the deed' for them. There's usually no animosity held toward the authorities; it is merely a way to avoid committing a mortal sin, biblically speaking, by taking their own life.

Some individuals who are perpetually in trouble with the law might take this avenue in order to emotionally punish the department for years of harrassment. They realize the emotional toll they can inflict on the shooting officer, as well as the increased scrutiny and associated pressures. Since they feel they've reached the end of their rope, they want to take one last jab at their antagonists before letting go.

Others may hold a martyred view of themselves, and in a skewed sense of pride, deem it better to go out in a blaze of glory (or gunfire as it were.) Again, there's likely some inherent animosity towards law enforcement in general. In a last act of (self-observed) bravado, they feel they'll be looked upon more favorably by their peers if they go out in this manner. It's an attempt to self-induce a legendary legacy for themselves. Most often, these folks will wait for cameras and media presence to document their self-glorious deaths.

And finally, there are those who pursue this method simply because they're there. The individual wants out of life, but is scared to take that final step. They also realize police will respond to emergency calls, and (as all the above categories know) will take appropriate steps to protect

themselves in the case of impending danger. Therefore they have someone who will give them that last nudge over the precipice.

The saddest factor in this equation is the law enforcement officer who's put into a situation where he has to kill. Police are human beings, too. These are not people who were hired to be executioners: their primary job is enforcing the law. Having to take another person's life carries with it an emotional toll - some situations more than others. Being put in a situation where they have no option but to shoot, and especially when it's so senseless, an officer gets walloped with an extra helping of guilt.

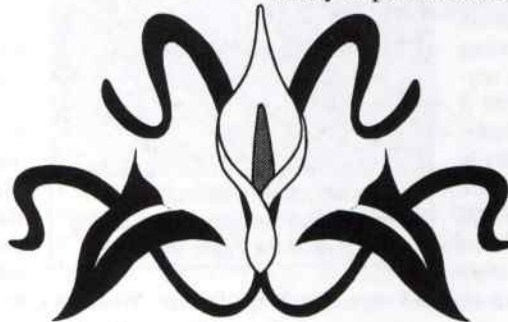
Even though the officer at the scene killed Stephanie Rhyne, there should be no fault found with him. From all appearances, Stephanie had made her mind up to end her life. The officer merely responded as he was trained. Should we

fault Stephanie? The specific reasons for this episode are unknown. But certainly it's testimony to the difficulties faced in the transition process by virtually all transsexuals. Some fare well, others do not.

For the third time this summer, we've heard of transsexuals taking their own lives in varying fashion. And again, there will be some self-reexamination from the local TG community. Stephanie had reached a point where she had little need for attending our meetings. At last report, her transition was proceeding well, she was blending into general society without any apparent problem, and she felt little (if any) need for the social support structure of the group. In general, she was getting on with her new life.

Was it a ruse to throw us off and ensure her privacy? Or was it true at that time, but substantial recent events upset the balance in her life? We may never know.... But maybe we were partially at fault. Perhaps we should all do more to reach out to our present and past members. One thing for certain - when in the throes of deep depression, isolation only intensifies the feeling. Had we made the effort to keep communication open with an isolated sister, would that have prevented this tragedy? Maybe not. But there's a chance that it could have changed things.

And that's a chance we ought to take.



TATS MEMBER SHOT, KILLED

(Continued from Page 1)

gate after him. One of the three officers on call then repeatedly ordered Stephanie to drop the gun. Stephanie responded by raising the cocked, fully loaded pistol and pointing it at the officer. The officer then fired one shot into her abdomen. She was rushed to Ben Taub Hospital where she later died.

According to our sources, Stephanie was "distraught" over a recent breakup. The newspaper also mentioned the fact that she had recently quit her job in the medical field. Apparently Stephanie had moved in with a roommate in Clear Lake a few months ago. Little information was given about the roommate, or whether he or she was involved in the incident prior to the call to police.

Remains of Missing FtM Identified

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — A skeleton found hidden on the remote estate of a missing FTM millionaire has been identified as the missing's remains. Authorities said that champion dog breeder Camilla Lyman, had been murdered. The body was later dumped into a septic tank.

Lyman, who dressed like a man and called himself Cam, disappeared from his Victorian house in Hopkinton in 1987. The daughter of an affluent Bostonian, Lyman was reported missing when her brother filed a missing-persons report in December 1988. Lyman was fifty-four years old when he disappeared. As yet, police have few clues.

The skeleton was discovered in Lyman's septic tank on Sept. 24, 1997, by two men who had purchased the 40-acre estate. A fellow dog breeder who took care of Lyman's business affairs, George O'Neil, said at the time it was not unusual for him to leave home for extended periods. He had little contact with his family.

Little police work was done to find Lyman after he vanished. The first real investigation into Lyman's disappearance was opened early last year by John Scuncio, shortly after he took over as police chief.

After Lyman disappeared, his spaniels and property were maintained by O'Neil. He was one of Lyman's few close friends, had power of attorney over his affairs and was the sole beneficiary in his will, according to a probate hearing. O'Neil has denied having anything to do with Lyman's disappearance.

A private investigator hired by Lyman's siblings to locate him, has been assisting police in attempting to locate as much as \$4 million in stocks and other assets. His "fairly extensive" stock portfolio "disappeared," reduced to "a couple of stocks," he said.

MY IMPRESSIONS OF AN OUTLAW....

(Continued from Page 7)

her own ongoing self-discovery and an innate desire to push beyond the limits. On Coming Out Day, she spent time questioning all perceptions of sexuality – especially the ‘alternative lifestyle’ views.

She mentioned gay and lesbian reactions to “omnisexuality” and their difficulty in accepting it. Transgenders also, according to Ms. Bornstein, have given up their sexual activity – their sexuality, their fun – in an effort to become acceptable to society in general. Kate held up the mirror with images that – much as we may not

want to admit – were true. For all our ‘progressive attitudes,’ we still had some reservations about them being challenged. We still held some prejudices, we still limited ourselves.

That’s one thing that Kate Bornstein doesn’t do: She does *not* limit herself. She’s open to experience anything and everything. And she has! It’s the best approach to attempt living the fullest life possible. It certainly won’t be boring, and chances are you’ll have some fun along the way. And if you’re ever having a party, that’s the kind of person you want to invite. “So...who-a-yew?!?”

HOUSTON VIGIL, PEACEFUL....

(Continued from Page 5)

assigned position at the side of the stage and scanned the crowd. Numerous familiar faces, numerous unfamiliar...gay, lesbian, straight, transgendered, bisexual...black, white, hispanic – the entire racial spectrum...politicians, clergy, private citizens...all were there in one singular mind. Even both sides of the political spectrum were in attendance; such as Harris County’s GOP Party Chairman, as well as Log Cabin Republican head Dale Carpenter (who thoughtfully offered me use of his umbrella during the speeches), and our elected democratic state and U.S. reps. It can’t be described; it was a special moment that had to be experienced.

After one of our local rabbis had given the opening prayer, Annise began a very moving speech describing Matthew’s treatment at the hands of his attackers. In an emotion-tinged voice, Annise gave what arguably was the speech of her life. She made an impassioned plea to strive for an end to such hatred. “This is a

human being we’re talking about!” she cried while remembering the extremely inhumane treatment Shepard was given by the killers. She finished up by stating that we all had to send a message that this type of hatred – not only of Matthew Shepard, but also of James Byrd’s dragging death behind a pickup in Jasper earlier this year – would not, and should not be tolerated.

After the moving opening speech, the crowd was transfixed for the duration of the memorial. Speakers for the remainder of the ceremony included State Rep. Debra Danburg, Rep. Party Chair Gary Polland, Judge Al Green, National Gay/Lesbian Task Force executive director Kerri Lobel, mayor pro-tem Jew Don Boney.

Wrapping up the ceremonies was MCCR’s Carolyn Mobley; who led us in a final prayer, then intoned a chant which merged into an impromptu song. Joining Annise and Carolyn up on stage to finish the memorial was U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, who echoed the sentiments

Getting a little crazy with an ‘outlaw,’ Kate Bornstein (L) and Vanessa Edwards-Foster take a self-photo while being photographed.



to find a way to end the hatred, and invoked the crowd to urge their elected officials to pass the proposals for hate crime legislation nationwide.

It was a beautiful and moving vigil, but we should not forget the real purpose of the moment. There is still a lot of bias and violence out there. It’s up to us all to be vigilant with our elected officials and let them know we will not support them if they turn their backs on us. We can’t allow this to fade into apathy...next time, it could be one of us!

STONEWALL II: NY VIGIL

(Continued from Page 5)

back to 5th Avenue and continued downtown stopping all mid-town traffic. At about 8:30 that evening, the crowd arrived at the site of the candlelight vigil – Madison Square Park – even without a speaker system, and having most of their scheduled speakers arrested. Some of the notable arrests included Ms. Rivera (one of the instigators at Stonewall); Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*; and lesbian poet and activist Minnie Bruce Pratt.

News coverage by the media was mixed, with the CBS affiliate slanting the story towards the police version and the NBC and FOX channels spotlighting the misbehavior of the boys in blue. While it was certainly not a fitting tribute to the memory of Matthew Shepard, it’s a sad reminder of how far we all have yet to go.

How To Cook A Turkey

Submitted by Holly Foster Wilson

- Step 1: Go buy a turkey
- Step 2: Take a drink of whiskey (or scotch)
- Step 3: Put turkey in the oven
- Step 4: Take another 2 drinks of whiskey
- Step 5: Set the degree at 375 ovens
- Step 6: Take 3 more whiskeys of drink
- Step 7: Turn oven the on
- Step 8: Take 4 whisks of drinky
- Step 9: Turk the bastey
- Step 10: Whiskey another bottle of get
- Step 11: Stick a turkey in the thermometer
- Step 12: Glass yourself a pour of whiskey
- Step 13: Bake the whiskey for 4 hours
- Step 14: Take the oven out of the turkey
- Step 15: Take the oven out of the turkey
- Step 16: Floor the turkey up off of the pick
- Step 17: Turk the carvey
- Step 18: Get yourself another scottle of botch
- Step 19: Tet the sable and pour a glass of turkey
- Step 20: Bless the saying, pass and eat out

REAL STORIES OF THE NON-TECHNICALLY INCLINED

- 1st Person: “Do you know anything about this fax-machine?”
- 2nd Person: “A little. What’s wrong?”
- 1st Person: “Well, I sent a fax, and the recipient called back to say all she received was a cover-sheet and a blank page. I tried it again, and the same thing happened.”
- 2nd Person: “How did you load the sheet?”
- 1st Person: “It’s a pretty sensitive memo, and I didn’t want anyone else to read it by accident, so I folded it so only the recipient could open it and read it.”

A Tribute To Sister Mary Elizabeth *By Shirley Bushnell*

(This is a speech describing the winner of the LA County TG Task Force's annual Outstanding Service Award - Editor)

Today, I will tell you about a person who is a role model for me. I would like for each one of us here to take on the role of a parent. Imagine yourself with a male child 8 years old. He says "Mom, Dad, I really need to talk to you. You know what I want to be when I grow up?" As parents you listen intently. Your son then says; "Mom, Dad; I want to be a Nun when I grow up." After careful consideration as parents, and making sure you have "family values" in mind; you promptly put your son into the Baptist church.

So today it is my honor to tell you more about this individual who did grow up and become a Nun. She has the distinction of having served in the U.S. military as both a man and a woman. She began her military career as a man: Michael Clark, a stalwart Cold War-generation Southern Baptist in 1957. She was in Navy for 17 years, and you could find her flying missions into Vietnam in 1968.

Shortly after leaving the Navy in 1974, she underwent a sex-change operation and became Joanna M. Clark. In 1976 she enlisted in the U. S. Army Reserves as sergeant first class and served for 22 months. She disclosed her medical history to local recruiters and her enlistment was voided by the Army. She sued the Army in 1978 alleging that her dismissal was a violation of her right to due process and equal protection. After a series of appeals, she was given credit for military time served and a honorable discharge.

In 1976 she helped to found the Gender Dysphoria Program of Orange County. From 1980-1983 she served as founding Chairperson of the American Civil Liberties Union's Transsexual Rights Committee, and she was responsible for the enactment of California's Transsexual birth certification legislation and the defeat of SB-2200, which would have prohibited MediCal funds from being used for sex reassignment surgery. In 1986 she took over the Janus Information's Facility's worldwide information/referral service for gender dysphorics and helping professionals.

In December of 1987, she co-founded the Sisters of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. At a candlelight service at St. Clemente's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church in San Clemente, California, Joanna Clark took the veil and vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; becoming Sister Mary Elizabeth. The Episcopalian Church never recognized her officially. However, this year on Easter Sunday the American Catholic Church ordained Sister Mary Elizabeth as the Reverend Mother.

The Sisters of St. Elizabeth of Hungary inherited a herd of Black Angus cows from a charitable farmer in Stover, Missouri. Sister Mary Elizabeth was lucky enough to draw the straw and went off to herd the cows. I want each one of us now to place ourselves in a town of 1,014 people and you are outnumbered by the cows. The telephone system used old-fashioned party lines - where up to five people shared one phone line. The nearest hospital was 40 miles away, and you could barely get TV signals from the national networks. Can you see yourself in that town? You live in that town and you are HIV-positive, and you wanted information... But if anybody in the town found out, you knew it was a quick way to get your farm burned to the ground.

Sister Mary Elizabeth met two people who were HIV-positive in that town and they were desperate for information. She realized that an electronic bulletin board could provide up-to-date HIV information and could do it privately. So in 1990 from the bathroom of her parents trailer in San Juan Capistrano she went on-line with AIDS Education General Information BBS. So began her vision of having a free access bulletin board with anonymous logon providing HIV information.

Sister Mary Elizabeth wanted to publicize, for free, the gossip, trends and breaking scientific discoveries from thousands of AIDS research institutions and community groups. This idea met with resistance from the AIDS establishments. For a year, the National Library of Medicine charged Sister Mary Elizabeth \$18 an hour to search its AIDS drug database, a bill that quickly added up to hundreds of dollars. She posted this information and soon discovered that government agencies were tying up her lines, downloading information for free instead of paying the National Library of Medicine. So she fired off a letter to Vice President Al Gore saying: "This is ridiculous. I'm paying for this stuff, so they can get it for free.....The (National Library of Medicine Information's belongs to us anyway - it was purchased with our tax dollars - and is being sold back to us." Vice President Al Gore's office resolved the problem and she was granted a free "access code", and later free access was granted to the general public.

Today Sister Mary Elizabeth runs the worlds largest and most comprehensive interactive computer library on HIV and AIDS - AIDS Education Global Information System, or AEGIS. I want you to step into Sister Mary Elizabeth's parents home, where for years there has been no sofa in this San Juan Capistrano living room. It had to go to make way for the bank of computers, so that Sister Mary Elizabeth can do

her chosen work among the afflicted, the curious, the dying. Updating the AEGIS website can take Sister Mary up to 18 hours a day as she researches articles and rewrites them into the language of the Internet. Can anyone in this room today say that they handle routinely 40 to 307 visitors an hour, many whom stay for hours to search the latest medical bulletins?

Let me relate to you what James Allan Maytum, who logs on daily from Valencia, Spain says. In 1992 he found out he was HIV-positive, and his drug therapy produced toxic reactions that nearly killed him in 1995. A new mix of drugs restored his health, but another toxic episode sent him scrambling to the computer, where he found AEGIS. Ten days later, he received a large package of information on drug therapies from Sister Mary Elizabeth that he brought to his doctor. The new drug combination worked. He says "What can I say, than I sort of feel that I owe my life to AEGIS and Sister Mary. She's truly God's messenger. She's achieved what really is the largest and best HIV-AIDS database in the world."

Sister Mary Elizabeth often says don't write about me - I'm not the story. My work is the story. Today we all know the story and work of Sister Mary Elizabeth.

CHURCH SHAKEN BY TRANSGENDER PRIESTS

By Christopher Morgan, London Sunday Times

The Church of England is facing fresh controversy over the revelation that two women priests began their ministries as men and that the number of transsexual and transvestite clergy is growing. Two other priests are having sex change treatment, church sources have admitted. One has been forced by his bishop to take indefinite leave, but intends to seek a fresh appointment after his operation, as a woman priest.

Many of them meet regularly with a number of lay Anglicans as part of a secret group called Sibyls. They hold private church services wearing female clothes.

The conference's steering committee has received a confidential paper on transsexual clergy. It is believed to highlight the number of clerics who have changed gender or wish to, and calls for an open church discussion. At least 21 clergy members in the Church of England consider themselves to be "transgendered", including three who are considering a sex change in the future.

How Do You Spell T-R-A-N-S-P-H-O-B-I-C?

By Katrina C. Rose

I recently caught a whiff of a rather noxiously-scented wind.

The wind came from Canada, so you can imagine just how noxious it was for me to smell it as far south as the suburbs of Houston, Texas.

The noxious compound in the wind was an article from Ottawa's *Capital Xtra!* credited to Andrew Griffin: "TBLG* and GLBTC's alphabet soup: How do you spell M-I-S-G-U-I-D-E-D?" Had there been no by-line I would have assumed that Dale Carpenter was on a road trip north of the border and spreading his message o' transphobia to the Dominion.

Griffin's article regards the arrangement of the letters in the name of a group formed this year by the Canadian Federation of Students, the TBLG* Constituency Group – the star representing those not included among the words 'gay' 'lesbian' 'bisexual' and 'transgendered' (an interesting innovation in my opinion.)

Also significant is the order of the letters: TBLG rather than GLBT.

Apparently, CFS made a determination that such an ordering represents a descending order of oppression. And, apparently, Griffin has a problem with the order. "How was this ranking arrived at? What factors were used to determine that level of oppression?"

What next? Asking if they are now or ever have been members of the Communist Party?

Well, as much as I would like to say that such an ordering is, ultimately, meaningless as we are, irrespective of whether he can fathom it, fighting the same fight – I can't. Ravings of people like Griffin prove that there is an inverse hierarchy of oppression. Transgendered people not only have our basic human rights sodomized without lubrication by the religionists but also have our place in the quest for equality regularly assailed by a vocal minority of gay men and lesbians

Now, this does NOT mean that I plan to campaign – or to encourage anyone else to campaign for that matter – for all GLBT organizations to rearrange such letters to put transgendered people first. Doing so would be as patently stupid as Griffin whining because a group decided to do such an innovative arrangement of letters. The bottom line: letters happen. Griffin complaining about the placement of 'G' constitutes a form of gay male elitism heretofore unseen by these transgendered eyes. even among the ravings of the Texas Log Cabin Republicans.

I personally don't care where transgendered people are 'located' in a name. 'GLBT' is cool and so is 'TBLG' (star or no star.) My fave, though, is 'Les-BIGaTr' – which is closer to actually being a word than the alphabet soup that many transphobes claim are reason enough to exclude transgendered people from the quest for basic civil rights.

What is important is that *all* sexual and gender minorities that are hated, despised, loathed and tar-

geted for legalized oppression by religious theocrats are represented in what the organization *actually does*. The 'T' in NGLTF doesn't stand for 'transgendered' but the organization does stand up for transgender dignity and equality (unlike HRC) along with gay & lesbian equality. *That* is what matters.

Griffin, on the other hand, simply states his disdain for the letter arrangement and then immediately proceeds to dismiss inclusivity as "foolishness"

No – "foolishness" is demanding a quota, which is what he is demanding with his complaint about the GLBT Centre at Carleton University, which, according to him, "recently broke with tradition and appointed two women as co-ordinators, instead of the customary one man-one woman team." Face it, if lesbians, bisexuals or transsexuals were on the giving end of such a demand to retain what they think is a "customary" seat at the table of authority, gay males of Griffin's ilk would decry them as quota queens.

In his eyes though, two women who are quoted as saying "I don't gender identify" and "I find it interesting that people look at us and see females -- two women -- as opposed to thinking that maybe one of us is transgendered" are automatically suspect when it comes to dealing with gay men.

"However fantastic these two women/transgendered/non-gendered individuals may be at their jobs, their answers erase same-sex politics from the centre's agenda and promote a politic that makes it possible for the GLBT Centre to be run by people with no same-sex experience whatever."

Forget merit, eh? Just look at 'dem labels.

Despite professing not to be claiming "that issues of gender are not important," he obviously does not care that the continual barrage of bigotry that is constantly aimed at those whose existence is disapproved of by radical theocrats does not contain a safe harbor loophole for any "heterosexual man who likes to wear dresses" or "bisexual woman who only dates men."

At its core, Griffin's complaint is the same as that made by Jim Gilbert in Boston's *Bay Windows* earlier this year. Of gay males he mused, "It used to be we were the cool ones."

The quest for equality is not about the elitist snobbery of declaring who is "cool" and who is not. It is about the extermination of legalized bigotry.

Griffin ended his tirade with the immature wheeze of "Perhaps the TBLG* and GLBTC groups can reach into their alphabet soups and learn how to spell F-A-G-G-O-T and D-Y-K-E." My return admonition is for Griffin to learn to spell the words E-L-I-T-I-S-T and T-R-A-N-S-P-H-O-B-I-C.

After learning to spell them, he should look them up in a dictionary. He will probably find his picture next to both words.



EXIT STAGE EXODUS

(Continued from Page 6)

Why does this photo upset me?

The caption's short tale of Jody: "Shortly after this, he returned to Birmingham where he was shot to death in a parking lot." Yes – 130+ pages of denial, self-loathing and rote drivel, but one sentence devoted to a painful reality – the violent death of a woman who was probably in the situation that got her killed solely because she was legally excludable from the work force (yes, I'm making assumptions – I don't know if she was a prostitute or, assuming that, that she was killed while prostituting, but considering the inordinate number of transgendered people who are forced into the sex industry I feel that it is a good – albeit sad – assumption.)

I want to see the story of Jody's life, of the despair that she assuredly faced, of the opportunities that she was undoubtedly denied due solely to being transgendered. I want to see the story of how she died – and whether anyone was ever punished for the crime.

I wonder if Pat Boone cares about her life and death.

Oh – and speaking of death. No, you're not going to see Perry Desmond the next time that legitimate news outlets decide that they have to (want to?) give exposure to the fraud and hate espoused by groups like Exodus. At the time the book was published, Perry was alive and denying. However, according to the piece that was sent to Gwen Smith, Perry died on June 26, 1984 of a stroke (it also lauded him for being an "early pioneer in the EXODUS movement.")

I could be cruel and openly ponder what he had to stroke – but I won't. I feel almost as sad for Perry as I do for Jody and all other transgendered people who, if not bashed into oblivion are relentlessly hounded by religious zealots until they give in.

Of course, Perry was only 47 when he died. Had he lived, he may well have come to his senses, abandoned the denial and gone back to the life as a female that he had worked so hard to achieve.

Dear John. John 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.

You can change your behavior – hating homosexuals and transsexuals – if you want to.

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TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- From TGain's Sarah DePalma...Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby (LGRL) has currently drafted an upcoming version of ENDA for the state of Texas. LGRL executive director, Dianne Hardy-Garcia, has committed to adding TG-inclusive language to the bill; which will ensure our support for its push for passage. This will be a monumental occasion in our statewide community, and deserves the strongest support we can show for this process. Please Email Dianne at LGRLTexas@aol.com and express your support for their consideration.
- The location and date for the 1999 IFGE Convention has been announced: March 18-21 in Louisville, Kentucky! The sponsoring group will be my pals, the Bluegrass Belles. Dawn Wilson, Anne Casebeer, Marjorie DeMaille and the girls have done an awesome job over the years, and truly deserve the spotlight. I received a press release, however it wasn't in a readable format. But I did make out that they are planning to add a TG wellness seminar, and other programs in an effort to reinvent the wheel, so to speak. More details later....
- Congratulations to Melinda Whiteway, the first ever transgendered attorney to be named co-chair of National Gay and Lesbian Law Association's Lavender Law Conference. Our own Phyllis Frye was also named to the board. Kudos to both ladies on the appointment!
- Fighting against hate crime on the border.... Laredo's queer community held their first-ever hearing before a closed-door session with city fathers on October 10. They met at the Anti-Queer Hate Crimes Hearing to express their concerns, and discuss the possibility of enacting an anti-hate crime measure in the border city. Local activist Jaime López expressed surprise when the city agreed to meet with them; and per initial reports, the group was well received!
- Did anyone see the shuttle launch a week ago? Sen. Glenn became the first septuagenarian in space. There were also sidebars about the first Spaniard, and the first Japanese in space, as well as a story of how women were unfairly excluded from the earliest beginnings of the space program...at least until Sally Ride rode her first flight.
One wonders when NASA will consider transgenders in space? Members of our own group have worked at NASA, why not a TS in space? It wasn't long ago that I printed a blurb about NASA wanting to study estrogen effects in women and men. Makes you wonder if they're thinking the same thing....
- Enlightened attitudes from the Great White North.... The Canadian military has approved a soldier's request to become a woman, and ordered the armed forces to pay for the sex change operation. Over the past six years, the Ontario government has funded 46 SRS procedures, totaling approximately \$700,000. The head of the committee recommending surgery, Col. Scott Cameron, said that "Clearly, this is not elective," and doesn't expect inundations of similar requests. He continued, saying that "[t]here is a lot of misconception on the public's part. They think this is some kind of perversion. In fact, it's a very well-defined medical disorder."
- Losing virginity on the net, heart transplants on the net...now sex reassignment surgery on the net! "This is not a hoax," Jonathan Ogden, chief technology officer of privately-held Calypso Productions International, Inc. told Reuters in an interview. Calypso's Health division plans to broadcast live over the Internet a six-hour surgical procedure in which a Florida resident would be transformed from a man into a woman. The operation will take place in London, England, and supposedly will occur sometime this month - pay-per-view, of course....
- Do you shave your legs? Deborah Bell (from NOW) sent me a blurb about a new shaver designed to cut shaving time in half. According to Deb, the "funny looking" razor has "two shaving heads" and easily fits all Trac II type blades. The razor 'Quick Shave,' will be available in stores soon, but you can get them now for only \$12.95 (plus tax).from the NOW, and a portion of the profits go to NOW. Call 281-856-1803 or 888-75-SHAVE; Email HoustonNOW@yahoo.com; or write to Houston Area NOW, P O Box 540204, Houston TX 77254. And get them stubbly legs away from me!!!

(Continued on Page 13)

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Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

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TATS Talbits
(Continued from Page 12)

• Intersex Support Group International (ISGI) announced a new ministry based on the True Love of Jesus Christ for intersexuals. ISGI has been established from the recognition within mainstream Evangelical Christian churches of birth anomalies labeled "Intersex" or "Hermaphrodite".

Based in Portland, OR, ISGI grew out of the response of one conservative Baptist Church as they studied and responded with compassion to an adult intersexual within their congregation. Acknowledged in scriptures, both old and new testaments, persons born with ambiguous or non-existent genitalia have been promised special blessing, (Isaiah 56:3-5), as well as understanding of their peculiar relationship in a two-gendered society, (Matthew 19:11-12). "Being born a hermaphrodite is not a sin."

• Speaking of intersexuals...American Boyz has elected its first ever intersex liaison: Raven Kaldera. Kaldera, an author and intersexed activist, was announced as the newest member of American Boyz Board of Directors on their Sept. 10 press release.

• RuPaul, the drag diva of late night talk TV, will soon celebrate the 100th episode of The RuPaul Show on cable's VH1. As yet, VH1 has not committed to renewing the show for another year. However, by continuing to produce and air The RuPaul Show since its inception in Oct. 1996, VH1 has shown a commitment beyond mere rhetoric to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Please tell VH1 how much you value their

approach to programming equality, and (if you like Ms. Ru's show) encourage the network to renew The RuPaul Show. Contact: John Sykes, President, VH1, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, fax: 212-258-7955, or Email: mailto:shows@vh1.com (write "RuPaul Show" in the subject line.)

• The State of Alaska is about to fight over Ballot Measure 2 which reads: "No provision of this constitution may be interpreted to require the State to recognize or permit marriage between individuals of the same sex." Does that mean that they can't permit already legal and probably long-term TG marriages, often with children, solely because one marriage partner corrects her or his sex with the support and acceptance of the other? Or will the State of Alaska then be able to force a divorce? Well, isn't that real family values...?!?

• Real life Tootsie? That's what the newspapers advertised it in an Oct. 25 story. It seems a girl by the name of Kimberlee Kramer (aka: Riley Weston) landed bit parts and later a TV (no pun) writer's position for the show 'Felicity' on the WB network.

Kramer / Weston never indicated that she was TG, attributing the persona to desire for the writing job. However, Ms. Kramer's words, "In my desperation to find work as an actress..." kinda leads one to believe she is one of us. Non-TGs are usually not 'desperate' to be 'actresses.' The controversy arose more out of her lying about her age and her identity, than the transgendered implications. Apparently she'd shaved a number of years off of her age when she first applied for parts.

Judging from her picture, she could pull it off: She's quite a looker. Touchstone TV (producer of the show) has yet to make a decision on whether to fire her. They may want to keep her- it looks like a

sequel to Tootsie just dropped right into their lap!

• TOKYO, Japan — Doctors at Saitama Medical have conducted the first-ever sexual reassignment surgery in Japan. The surgery was a success, and the patient — an FTM identified only as K. Nakahara — was reported as doing well.

• BRAZIL.... Four military policemen in the city of Salvador (Bahia, Brazil), after humiliating and torturing two transvestite sex workers, forced them to undress and throw themselves into the sea, on the night of August 4th. One of them, "Luana" (Junior da Silva Lago) drowned and the body was found three days later in an advanced state of decomposition. The witness to the crime, a transvestite named Joyce, is being protected by human rights organizations as her life is at risk.

The Grupo Gay da Bahia and the Salvador Transvestites Association held demonstrations in front of the Military Police barracks, resulting in the arrest and discharge of the four military assassins who are currently in prison awaiting trial. The lieutenant in charge of the patrol remains at large.

• BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — All in Latin America isn't bad news, though. In 1996 a Convention met and formed the city's Constitution. Among them, Article 11: protecting the "right to be different" and prohibiting discrimination on several grounds, including sexual orientation. However, "wearing opposite sex clothes" was still illegal and many TG's were legally harassed and brutalized by the authorities. Apparently no right to be too different.

In March, though, that changed with the passage of Law 10 — a progressive law which forbids the legal harassment or arrest of transgenders there. Fortunately, that's a rare occurrence in Latin America.

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HOW MANY DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHTBULB? DEPENDS ON YOUR SIGN....

Submitted by Lauren Robison

How many members of your sign does it take to change a light bulb?

Aries: Just one. You want to make something of it?

Taurus: One... but try to convince them that the burned-out bulb is useless and should be thrown away.

Gemini: Two, but the job never gets done – they just keep arguing about who is supposed to do it and how it's supposed to be done!

Cancer: Just one. But it takes a therapist three years to help them through the grief process.

Leo: Leos don't change light bulbs, although sometimes their agent will get a Virgo to do the job for them while they're out.

Virgo: Approximately 1.0000000 with an error of +/- 1millionth.

Libra: Er, two. Or maybe one. No – on second thought, make that two. Is that okay with you?

Scorpio: That information is strictly secret and shared only with the Enlightened Ones in the Star Chamber of the Ancient Hierarchical Order.

Sagittarius: The sun is shining, the day is young and we've got our whole lives ahead of us, and you're inside worrying about a stupid light bulb?

Capricorn: I don't waste my time with these childish jokes.

Aquarius: Well, you have to remember that everything is energy, so....

Pisces: Lightbulb? What lightbulb?

Christian Right Say "No" to King James Bible

Submitted by Lauren Robison

WASHINGTON D.C. (AP) — In a somewhat surprising announcement three right wing Christian groups – the Family Research Council, the Christian Coalition and Americans For Truth About Homosexuality – have announced that they were urging their members to cease using the King James Version of the Bible, known as the KJV.


The King James Version was commissioned by King James I of England and produced in 1611. Scholars are now fairly certain that James was a homosexual. Biographer David Harris Willson who authored "King James VI and I" is in no doubt. "Oh, yes. James had a number of 'favorites' such as the Earl of Somerset, and the Duke of Buckingham with whom he undoubtedly had sexual relationships."

Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council, who only days ago announced he was considering a run for the Republican nomination in 2000, has said that Christians should cease using the translation and use instead a more recent version of the Bible such as "The Good News Bible" or the Revised Standard Version. Speaking at a press conference Gary Bauer said, "I feel uncomfortable that good Christians all over America, and indeed the world, are using a document commissioned by a homosexual. Anything that has been commissioned by a homosexual has obviously been tainted in some way".

Standing alongside Bauer, Peter LaBarbera of the Washington D.C.-based Americans For Truth About Homosexuality agreed. "The Homosexual has from the earliest times sought to subvert Christianity in many subtle ways – some so subtle that we scarcely notice. I would ask Christians to check who is responsible for both the translation as well as the editing of their Bibles. We all need to be vigilant."

In a phone conversation, Pat Robertson of the Christian Coalition said, "It is very important that we stand up to the homosexual wherever and whenever he appears."

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TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 6, Issue 12

Houston, Texas

December, 1998

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 INVADES UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

In two separate incidents, TATS members spoke before various groups at University of Houston, both at the main campus and downtown. Early in the month, Michelle Myers participated in a discussion on hate crimes at the main campus.

Then on November 17, it was the ever-present panel discussion making the rounds at University of Houston's Downtown Campus. It was a selection of the usual cast of characters: myself, Daniell McCleney and Jennifer Lytwyn. We TATSies addressed yet another class on Human Sexuality hosted by Dr. Bob Glazier. This time our focus was primarily on the Q & A format - question and answer.

Dr. Glazier engaged us in the first round of questioning, in an almost Donahue-esque style. Though it seemed his questions were rather impromptu instead of having a planned direction, they were all sensitive and very relevant. The initial questioning format by the instructor seemed to work extremely well. His



TATS panel at UH: (L-R) Jennifer Lytwyn, Vanessa Edwards Foster & Daniell McCleney field a question.

questions left a lot of food for thought, and were an excellent precursor to the students' question portion of the discussion. Though we've had numerous panel discussions previously, it's a continuously evolving format. This particular format seemed to work the best.

The students picked up where Dr. Glazier left off, asking numerous questions about a variety of subjects. While there were a few students who didn't show much interest in the subject, the vast majority of the class were quite interested and very active. Most of the student inquiries concerned our personal lives and feelings; however, a number dealt with issues such as how accepted we were in gay society as opposed to straight society and our views on religion. Testimony to what a successful panel should reflect, on the latter questions, all three of our answers varied from negative to positive to middle-of-the-road. The class got first-hand knowledge that we weren't monolithic in thought, and that we're certainly not easily pegged into the same slot. We were indeed not following stereotype dictates.

Bursting stereotypes is, in essence, what we set out to accomplish by panel discussion education. It was obvious from

the class response that there were a number of stereotypes dispelled that evening. Without exception, the class - and even the instructor - were all unfailingly polite, interested, and eager to learn about us. I must thank Dr. Bob Glazier for having us, and for helping us stumble upon a very successful format for future panels. And a very special thanks to one of his students, Tomas Turrubiates, who took the initiative to look us up and facilitate setting up the discussion. Thank you

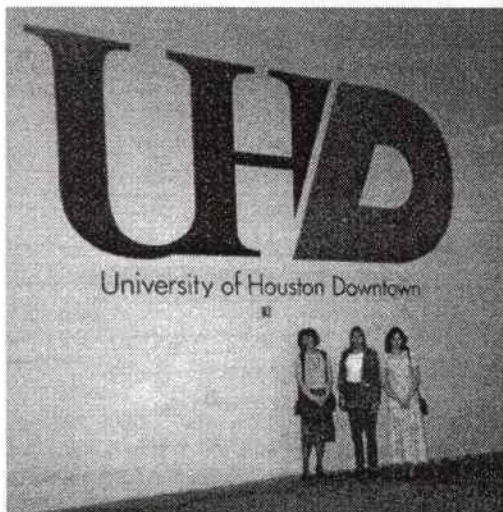
Tomas!

There were a number of things that contributed to making this a winning discussion. The panel was large enough to accompany a variety of viewpoints, but small enough to allow all panelists ample time for questions. It was more crisp and concise than previous outings, allowing for more questions to be fielded. I feel this was our most successful panel yet.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

December 12	Social Meeting at: Desirée Walton's @ 3:00 PM
December 26	Meeting Cancelled: Enjoy the Christmas Holidays!
January 9	Social Meeting at: Desirée Walton's @ 3:00 PM
January 23	Meeting at: Vanessa Edwards Foster's @ 7:00 PM

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The TATS panelists stand in front of the logo of the panel's latest educational conquest.

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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) 827-5913 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

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:
http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/

EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Too much to do, too little time to do it...story of my life these days! November started off sorta slow, heated up in a big fat hurry. The October TATSletter bled over well into first week of the month – also mailing GCTC newsletters, election ballots. Then, last minute preparations for their meeting, elections, meeting venue and speaker. Nov. 14's meeting went off without a hitch.

Next came preparations for the panel discussion at UH Downtown. Thrown together at the last minute, but we fielded an adequate panel, most successful!

End of that week: coordinating plans to spend a weekend with my friends, LIB members Mina Garcia and VP Jackie Doval, in San Antonio. Jackie had her first body-building competition since beginning retraining on November 21, which also coincided with her birthday! Friday night I spent at Mina's, so we could wake early (3:30 AM!) and leave for Alamo City. It was a blast! Met lots of new friends, and ate of course. Jackie didn't place, but one of Johnny West's Houston Gym girls won in heavyweight division...weighing only 126 lbs!!! After the meet, headed downtown (the long way!) Ate at Mi Tierra in El Mercado. Left after 2:30 AM! Sunday it was up bright and early again: a post competition barbecue at Mike Luchar's mom and sister's house out in the Hill Country. Great company, fantastic food! One problem: not much sleep.

Back home – cleaned house like a tomado. My friend Sarah from Ohio flew in Monday for Thanksgiving week. Impromptu dish for T-Day lunch at work (moved up the date, I didn't know til last minute!) Bust hump at work so I can get off early on Wednesday. We leave mid afternoon to Austin to spend time with Sally Anne Ofer.



Thanksgiving at Salvation Army: Me (L) and Sarah Fox, just after the feast.

Had a good visit with Sally Anne and friends. Stayed up til 3 AM.

Thanksgiving day, up at 7 AM. Ate a good breakfast & headed back to Houston. Drove straight to Salvation Army and we began serving. Stayed til it closed, helped clean up, then ate what was leftover.

Left there, went straight to Desirée's for her Turkey Day get-together. Ate another good meal and visited. Went to Sarah DePalma's, everyone else already gone.

Stayed and visited (can't eat, guts bursting!) Go to Sarah's cousin's and visit til after midnight. Wake up and start cleaning, TATS post Turkey Day Feast at my place. Too much food, too little sleep...and the cycle begins, again.

Note to self: Hire a Stand-In! Whew!



Jackie's birthday celebration in San Antonio at Mi Tierra: (L-R) Jackie Doval, Mina Garcia & Vanessa Edwards Foster enjoy the food and party.



Thanksgiving Day at Desirée's. From L-R, Back row: Lisa Haywood, Jenifer Crawford, Stephanie Stout, Alison Kubota. Middle: Sarah Fox, Karen, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Daniell McCleney, Chrissy Fusco (arms around Daniell). In front: Tiffni Trenton and the hostess, Desirée Walton.

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- Dianne Boucher**

Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV

for submitting photos, scanning & miscellany

- Sarah Fox, Columbus OH**
- Katrina C. Rose**

POST-MATTHEW SHEPARD TG-ORIENTED HATE CRIMES TG SHOT IN ANTI-GAY HATE CRIME

By Natalie Davis, *Baltimore City Paper*

BALTIMORE, MD – Less than a month after gay college student Matthew Shepard was viciously murdered in Laramie, Wyoming, a gay drag queen living in Baltimore, Maryland was shot six times – nearly to death – by youths saying that they would “not allow drag queen faggots” into their neighborhood.

The shooting on Wednesday, October 28 at approximately 9 p.m., 31-year-old Leonard “Lynn” Vines, a lifetime resident of Baltimore, walked onto the 200-block of Maderia Street (in eastern Baltimore). He was going to pick up a key from his cousin’s house. A large group of young men and women, were hanging out on the street. Leonard heard one of them say “Hey y’all, there’s a drag queen faggot!” One of the youths told Leonard that they “didn’t allow no drag queen faggot bitches” to come through the street.

Leonard said that he didn’t want any trouble. While he was explaining that he was there to pick up from his cousin a key to an apartment he was thinking of renting in the neighborhood, one of the youths struck him in the face.

When Leonard repeated that he didn’t want any trouble, another of the youths pulled out a gun and shot him six times – twice in the arm, twice in the chest, once in the back, and once in the shoulder. Then all of the youths sauntered off leaving a seriously wounded and bleeding Leonard behind on his cousin’s front stoop.

Quick action by firefighter saved Leonard’s life. A man working at the fire station around the corner heard the shots and brought the ambulance immediately, meeting Leonard’s cousin who frantically flagged him down in the alley. Leonard was taken to Johns Hopkins University Hospital, where doctor’s expressed dismay at the violent attack and surprise that Leonard did not die en route to the hospital.

Leonard spent a week in the hospital before being released. The Baltimore Sun reported that a suspect, Paul Bishop, 20, was charged in a warrant with attempted first-degree murder. Police Detective Jerry Weaver said the suspected motive was the victim’s lifestyle.

“We are outraged at the level of hate and violence targeted at gay people and people who do not conform to our society’s rigid gender norms,” said Nancy Meyer, Board Co-Chair of the Free State Justice Campaign (a Maryland political organization working for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights).

Added Liz Seaton, FSJC Executive Director, “What happened in Wyoming is happening everywhere and it is happening here. It is time for people to wake up, to recognize that bias does lead to violence, and to take action. Fair-minded citizens must take a stand....”

WISCONSIN CD ATTACKED “NOT HATE CRIME” POLICE RULE

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

MADISON, WI — An 18-year-old crossdresser was attacked by a man wielding a broken beer bottle Tuesday evening, just minutes after a vigil for Matthew Shepard ended at the University of Wisconsin. Originally, Madison police had tentatively labeled the attack a hate crime because the victim was described as a man dressed in women’s clothing.

Later police decided it was not a hate crime because there was insufficient proof the attacker chose the victim because of his sexual preference. “Wisconsin’s hate crime law does not include crossdressers, so the extra penalties that a hate crime charge brings do not apply” said police spokesman Dave Gouran.

The victim was hit on the back of the head with a full 40-ounce bottle of beer and then stabbed in the abdomen with the broken glass bottle. After being treated at a local hospital and giving police a fake name, the victim later fled.

Wearing women’s clothing, including a padded bra, the victim was attacked as [s]he walked with two friends. They apparently crossed paths with the suspect while walking across a convenience store parking lot; and the suspect followed, taunting the victim, yelling obscenities and calling the victim a “he-she.”

Police were called to St. Mary’s Hospital about 9:45 p.m. with a report of a female patient who had been stabbed. Hospital officials later discovered the victim was a man. Between 50 and 60 stitches were required to close the wounds, officials said.

A suspect in the attack was later arrested and charged with aggravated battery while armed. He also was charged with bail jumping in connection with a pending domestic abuse case. However, since the comments from the suspect “didn’t address his sexual orientation or the perceived sexual orientation” Gouran said the decision was made not to pursue hate crime charges.

DeEtte Tomlinson, executive director of OutReach, a Madison gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender center, said crimes against gays are increasing. “It is very distressing to see it happen in Madison,” Tomlinson said. “Unfortunately, this year an atmosphere has been created where this is happening more often, not only in Madison but across the country.”



TRANSSEXUAL MURDERED IN CALIFORNIA

By Kimi Yoshino – *The Fresno Bee*

CLOVIS, CA – Chanel Chandler slipped into a black minidress with silver and gold stripes. The 22-year-old set out for a night of dancing, partying at a Fresno club until 2 a.m. It was a typical night out for a single woman, Clovis police said.

Five hours later, Chandler was dead. Her body was found inside a burning Clovis apartment she shared with another woman. Police believe the blaze was set to make her murder look like another type of crime. It was nearly a

week before police revealed her name and the case’s biggest twist: Chanel Chandler was a transsexual.

Whether that led to her death is a mystery, police said. “In a situation like this, that’s the first motive you jump on, obviously, but you don’t want to let that keep you from exploring other options, too,” Clovis Police Department spokeswoman Micheline Golden said. More than one month after Chandler’s death Sept. 20 and after interviewing numerous people, police know more about Chandler’s life but

have yet to make an arrest.

“The impression we have is that she pretty much lived the life of a normal, single 22-year-old woman,” Golden said. “This is someone who led a very quiet lifestyle.”

Chandler was born Charles William Roe into a conservative Montana family. “It was a fairly nice childhood,” said his aunt, Carla Coronado. “He was just a normal kid.”

By the time he hit his teens, however, it grew more and more apparent that Roe

(Continued on Page 5)



DOJ TO PURSUE GENDER BIAS LAWS AGAINST GAYS, TG'S

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

(with information supplied by Andrea Bennett)

The U.S. Justice Department (DOJ) announced last week that it will use existing federal civil rights laws to take action against businesses and government entities that engage in employment discrimination against transgenders, gays and lesbians.

Aaron Schuham with the Department of Justice said the DOJ believes that existing U.S. civil rights statutes that explicitly ban discrimination based on sex can be applied to cases of anti-Gay and anti-transgender discrimination. Schuham, an attorney with DOJ's civil rights division, said high-level DOJ officials, including Attorney General Janet Reno and Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Bill Lann Lee, approved the DOJ "initiative" to take on such cases, even though no federal civil rights law specifically bans discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Schuham announced the new DOJ policy on Nov. 14, while speaking on a panel at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change Conference in Pittsburgh. Schuham said Lee put the policy into place "several months ago," although neither Lee nor the DOJ formally announced the change. "It's a very serious

commitment that has been directed by everyone from Janet Reno all the way down," Schuham said. "We can really bring our resources to bear on this."

"We intend to work on cases [where] an employer fails to hire you, promote you, or fires you or retaliates against you because you don't live up to the employer's expectation of what a male (or female) employee should act like, or how he should hold himself out," Schuham said.

Additionally, the DOJ will pursue cases of harassment of students in public schools and anti-Gay discrimination or harassment in prisons. Schuham added that local police departments that fail to provide adequate protection for Gay and transgendered people may also come under the same scrutiny and have action taken against them as well. Anyone with information about possible gay or transgender-related discrimination at the workplace can reach Aaron Schuham at (202) 514-3878.

The DOJ is expected to use the 1989 Supreme Court ruling of Hopkins v. Price Waterhouse, which established that gender role discrimination and gender stereotyping is covered under Title VII as a form of sex discrimination. Title IX, which bans sexual harassment in the workplace, is another weapon in the arsenal that may be used by the DOJ in such cases.

In the Hopkins case, a woman was denied a partnership in the Price Waterhouse accounting firm because her superiors believed she dressed and acted in a way that was inappropriate for a woman. The woman's sexual orientation was not identified in the case and did not become an overt issue.

"This reflects a significant response on the part of the Justice Department generally to seriously apply existing laws in ways that can remedy current injustices against Gay people and gender-non-conforming people," said Lesbian-activist attorney Chai Feldblum, who heads a legislative clinic at Georgetown University Law School. Feldblum said the Justice Department's response was prompted by recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, such as one in a case involving same-sex sexual harassment, and that "the actual impact of this change will depend on the results we get in court."

Dana Priesing, an official with the TG lobby group GenderPAC, called the Justice Department action a "very important" development that could provide job protection for transgendered persons. "We believe this is well grounded in case law," Priesing said. "We believe they clearly have the authority to do this."

2nd TG Teacher Comes Out In MN

By Rosalind Bentley, Minneapolis Star Tribune
BLAINE, MN - For the second time in the last six months, a middle school teacher has come out as transgendered in Minnesota. Alyssa Williams, a male-to-female transsexual, is a music at Roosevelt Middle School in Blaine, MN.

Her introduction was well-planned. Williams - flanked by district officials and Roosevelt administrators - went before 120 teachers, staff members and a handful of parents to tell her story and be presented to the school. The district had sent a letter to parents the day before.

"I was very nervous this morning, but I got up there and told my story and I think some of them got it," Williams, 35, said Friday. "My morale has been lifted because of this meeting. I mean, last night I was worried, 'Am I going to crumble?' But now I feel like we're a team and I think this is going to work."

Her declaration comes six months to the day after Debra Davis, a media-center director at Southwest High School in Minneapolis, became the first secondary-school educator in the state to come out at work as transgender.

In August, Williams interviewed as a woman for a job as music instructor at Roosevelt Middle School. According to state law, she did not have to reveal her gender status. She also had taught in public schools in South Da-

kota and Minnesota for seven years, but as a man. "I was successful as Alyssa," she said. "I was meeting new teachers and staff. Things were rolling along really nicely."

But after an open house for parents, one parent called the principal, asking whether Williams was a woman. The principal then approached Williams, who admitted she is transgender. Williams agreed to go on paid administrative leave until the district could put together a plan to introduce her to students and parents.

"We have had to learn a lot about transgenderism ourselves," said Mary Olson, spokesperson for the Anoka-Hennepin School District. "There's a lot we didn't know. So we've been planning very hard."

Joe Spartz of Ham Lake, MN has two children who attend Roosevelt and says he has no problem with Williams being in the classroom. He is on the school's parental advisory board and heard Williams' Friday presentation. The mood among the handful of parents there was "Geez, what's the big hubbub about? Should we be this concerned about it?" he said.

Later, Spartz spoke with his 11-year-old son. "He asked me what transgender was and when I finished, he said 'Oh, OK,' and kept on doing what he was doing," Spartz said.

(Continued on Page 9)

Transsexual Loses Court Appeal

By Laurie Asseo

WASHINGTON (AP) - A transsexual who says a Pennsylvania judge banished him from his hometown for life after he tested positive for the AIDS virus lost a Supreme Court appeal today.

The justices, without comment, turned down Raul Valentin's argument that he should be allowed to pursue a federal civil rights lawsuit against the judge. Lower courts said the judge enjoys total legal immunity.

Valentin was arrested in Lebanon, PA, in 1987 after an altercation at a local swimming pool. A transsexual who had been taking injections to enhance his breast size, Valentin was wearing a bikini at the time. A local magistrate sentenced him to 30 days in jail for disorderly conduct. While in jail, he was tested and found to have the human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS.

Valentin said he then was taken before Court of Common Pleas Judge G. Thomas Gates, who ordered him to leave town and never come back. According to Valentin, the judge said that if he ever returned, Gates would find other charges to bring against him and would see that he was sent to state prison.

(Continued on Page 6)

TG LOBBY DAY SCHEDULED JANUARY 27

Transgender rights activists from virtually every major city in the state of Texas will be attending the first "Transgender Lobby Day" sponsored by the Texas Gender Advocacy and Information Network (TGAIN). This event is scheduled to take place on January 27, 1999 in conjunction with two bills which could have great impact on transgenders across the state. "We have a huge stake in the Texas version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act," said Sarah DePalma, Executive Director of TGAIN. The Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby (LGRL) of Texas already had the language for this bill and

volunteered to include transgenders. Our goal is let legislators see us as we really are and get this bill passed. "

The second piece of legislation would also impact on the employability of transgenders because it would streamline the way transgendered people change their names and gender marker on their drivers license. "The current procedure is often subject to the whim of judges," said Ms. DePalma.

We have seen some truly terrible rulings inflicted on transgenders which were made on the basis of ignorance and prejudice. We must get

this name/gender marker process accomplished in a more acceptable manner."

The Texas Gender Advocacy Network was originally started in 1985 as It's Time, Texas! and operated as the Texas Chapter of It's Time, America! the national transgender rights organization. Although planning to remain affiliated with the national group, the name was changed to TGAIN in 1998 to makes its mission more clearly understood.

For further information about the state Transgender Lobby Day or TGAIN, please contact rhost@flash.net or call 713-778-1416.

TS MURDER IN CALIFORNIA

(Continued from Page 3)

wanted to be a woman. He dropped out of high school and moved from Montana. He headed to San Francisco - and a new life. Though he stayed in contact with family, not everyone approved of his decision. His father, Clyde Roe, said: "I haven't talked to Charles in years. I didn't approve of his lifestyle."

Said Coronado: "In his mind, she was a female. There was no two ways about it. C always wanted to be a female and always felt that he had been cheated, that it was a mistake."

Friends and relatives say Chandler even married a man in Sacramento, although officials found no record of a marriage. That man, whom Chandler lived with in Citrus Heights, declined to be interviewed.

During the years Chandler lived in California, she closely guarded her 'secret.' "Not telling people, that was important," Coronado said. "Even people that were very close to her, I don't think they had any idea."

One friend, Charlie Gilbert, who considered himself a friend, brother and father figure to her, said he was stunned after Chandler's death to learn that she was a man. "I'm surprised as hell," Gilbert said. "It's almost like you're putting me on." Even Chandler's roommate, a woman with whom she worked, was unaware of her gender, police said.

It always seemed that Chandler was in search of a better life, Gilbert said. But while she tried to improve herself personally and professionally, she moved from one stormy relationship to another, he said. "It seemed like she attracted abuse."

When cryptography is outlawed,
bail bhgynjfvjv univ cevinpl.

Lazlo's Chinese Relativity Axiom: No matter how great your triumphs or how tragic your defeats, approximately one billion Chinese couldn't care less.

Madness takes its toll. Please have exact change.

Husband & Wife Now Wife & Wife After SRS

Submitted by Angela Brightfeather

The man Debbie Nelson married 17 years ago is a onetime Stillwater High School basketball MVP who stands 6-foot-4, wears blond hair that cascades below the shoulders, pastel dresses, red nails and heels. The former Bernard Nelson, a state worker and father of five, has just completed the five-year process of becoming a woman.

She now goes by the name of Bridget. "The biggest thing is," she said, "we love each other. She loves me for who I am, not my sex."

"I love her regardless of the package on the outside," echoed Debbie Nelson, 39, who insists her unconventional marriage is an affirmation of the oldest notions on love and matrimony.

Although same-sex marriage is prohibited in all 50 states, Debbie and Bridget Nelson expect to become a legally married lesbian couple, a husband and wife turned wife and wife. The parents of three sons, they will remain in their mobile home set behind the cornfields that define their Saratoga County town of 7,000.

Many people in their situation have done so quietly. But the Nelsons are speaking up for the rights of same-sex partners. "We got married in a church, a Methodist Church in Texas, and no law says you can no longer be married," said Bridget, 45, a towering figure seated in a living room dotted with family portraits reflecting only her current identity.

Lawyers who specialize in gender issues concur there is no precedent suggesting marriage can be undone by anyone other than the partners themselves - a matter of consequence given the access spouses have to Social Security, pension, death benefits, insurance and custody. But the volume on such discussions is being turned up as gays and lesbians in all 50 states press to legalize their vows, churches stake positions and cities extend domestic partner benefits. And as battle lines are drawn, some activists see "transitioned" spouses like the Nelsons building a precedent. Others fear the cou-

ple is only inviting the courts to consider retroactive annulments, or worse.

"When people say, 'Are you a gay couple?' I say no, but that would be the way the world perceives us to be," said Debbie, a manager at an Albany, NY restaurant.

"Why are they telling you about this? You don't have many taxpayers who go to the IRS and say 'Audit me,'" Evan Wolfson, director for the Marriage Project at LAMBDA Legal Defense said on hearing of the upstate couple. "The government has not yet swooped in but that doesn't mean some bureaucrat won't."

Stepping into the spotlight to establish standards are Bridget and Debbie Nelson, who never set out to make an example of their case, but have learned to do so as they saw other transgendered individuals, and their children, struggle. They are now involved in the Gay and Lesbian Community Center, giving speeches and interviews and even establishing their own Web site devoted to gender dysphoria.

The Nelsons say they are fully aware of other's disapproval, and, particularly, the cost of the ordeal on their sons - 12-year old twins and a 14-year old. They wish the boys had not had to endure their father's transformation, but neither do they feel exactly guilty. The alternatives - living with an incessantly unhappy father or living without him - were untenable. Living true to themselves, they say, was the only true option.

"I had three choices: stay how I am and be miserable and make everyone else miserable. Leave Debbie and our kids, or stay here and be who I am," she said, repeating what she told their children the November night she decided to become Bridget for good.



THE MAKING OF A MOTION PICTURE

By Anna Marie Rosenberg

Well, where to begin.... With the help of a few of our TATS members, we were able to begin pre-production of the motion picture "Everything But The Laughter." My sincere thanks to those who were able to help in launching the making of this motion picture. You are my shareholders and I will not let you down.

Time will not allow me to explain in detail the complexities of making a motion picture, let alone being a transsexual woman in charge of such a large and controversial undertaking, but we have determined to make this motion picture and are pressing onward.

Pre-production consists of plotting the entire course of the making of a motion picture on paper. During pre-production the budget is broken down and put together, the script is again reviewed and usually revised, prop lists are put together, script scenes are broken down to a day-to-day shooting schedule. Shooting site locations are selected and documented. You see everything must be pre-thought out and documented on the pre-production paperwork before any shooting actually begins. Therefore, get right in pre-production and the shooting of the motion picture will go a lot smoother. Because of you our shareholders, we have been allowed to finish the majority of pre-production.

We now are in the process of securing a substantial investor(s) who will bring us to the broker who will package this motion picture along with a few other motion pictures and then list them on the stock market for the 'big guns' (big money) to invest. We already have a distribution contract on the motion picture.

I apologize for not being in attendance at our local support meetings. I have been so busy of late, but will make a concerted effort to attend more frequently.

I have heard rumors floating around that I am scamming the community. This hurt me very deeply as you can probably imagine, but I have put these rumors in their proper perspective and have put them behind me in order to press on towards the objective at hand which is of course to shoot a motion picture.

Once we reach the shooting phase of the project, many of you will be given the opportunity to be extras in the motion picture. We will feed you and pay you for your efforts.

The current budget for this motion picture is 3 million dollars. 1.2 million for prints and advertising and 1.8 million to actually shoot the project.

Final thoughts: Dare to dream, "the impossible dream." Envision yourself doing it and then do whatever it takes to achieve "the impossible dream." Because you see, dreams really can come true.

"THE WAR STORIES": #1 The White Christmas

By Phyllis Randolph Frye

December of 1977 was a bleak month for my spouse and me. I had been unemployed for nineteen months since I was last fired for being "a dress wearing freak." Her job wasn't generating what we needed because during the time that we were both employed, we had accumulated much debt. (Several years later, her profession enjoyed a substantial pay raise, but that was later.) We had used all of the savings while trying to learn how to downgrade our standard of living.

To make it worse, I had been unable to get unemployment compensation. My last employer did not fight it, but I had a homophobic Texas Employment Commission referee who chose to write up my interview in such a way that I was blocked from benefits. (We eventually won and got the benefits, but that was later.)

We felt very alone because neither of our families would have anything to do with us. (Her mom eventually came around and became a great ally, but that was later.)

The fight to change the ordinance was not making much headway. At the time Houston had a crossdressing ordinance. I'd already been lobbying against it for about a year. Every day, I never knew if I'd be arrested. Every day, my spouse never knew when she left for work if I'd make it home from job hunting, lobbying and such. (The ordinance was overturned in 1980, but that was later.)

Christmas was going to be meager. We had shoes, but they were not winter shoes. We had some warm clothes, but they were a bit tattered. It was depressing as hell. Actually, it was all around shitty.

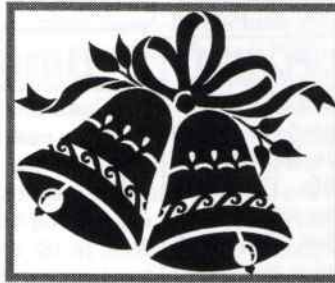
About the only things we did have were each other, our faith in God and our church family. Even though she and I loved each other (and still do) and were best friends (and still are) those years of hardship bonded us together. We felt that our faith was being tested, much as in the story of Job, but no matter how bad it got we always tithed (and still do) 10% of our gross. Our church family helped to keep the loneliness and the isolation at bay. We were with the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection and we sang in the choir. (Today when I sing the Hallelujah Chorus, I get it all mixed up. In junior high, I memorized it as a tenor and in college I learned the bass line. There at MCCR I sang soprano and in later years I did the alto line. Now when I hear it I just kind of sing it

all.) Each year at MCCR, as in most other churches, they have a White Christmas offering where people bring canned and non-perishable goods each Sunday in December, wrapped in white paper, and place them at the altar. The poor families are given this the day before Christmas.

As I sit here keypunching this out, I am starting to cry again, because they brought the food to us. We were the White Christmas family that year. It was really quite wonderful. We separated the eight boxes of food into category and took out ten percent. We then went to another transgendered person who had been living on the street because she'd also lost her job and gave it to her. We three cried a lot. With the money we saved from not having to buy food for several weeks, we bought some warm shoes and each a warmer coat.

As you all know, my spouse and I did survive and now are prosperous. The other transgendered person I referred to was an engineering graphics designer. She got a job several months later washing cars. Eventually, she made it back and got rehired in her previous profession.

I shall never forget.



TS LOSES COURT APPEAL

(Continued from Page 4)

Valentin said police took him to the bus station and gave him a one-way ticket to New York City. He remained there and now lives in a hospice on Staten Island.

Valentin filed a civil rights lawsuit against Gates in 1997, but a federal judge in Pennsylvania threw it out. Judges have absolute immunity from being sued over judicial acts they take in matters over which they have jurisdiction, the judge ruled. The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld that ruling.

In the appeal acted on today, Valentin's lawyer said Gates lacked the authority to act because he was not presiding over any case involving Valentin. The 3rd Circuit court "has set a new standard for judicial immunity," his lawyer argued.

"Why is it that when we talk to God we're said to be praying, but when God talks to us we're schizophrenic?"

Lily Tomlin

How? If you love peace and quiet.

Feminine Boy Kicked Out of School

By Dan Sewell

CARROLLTON, GA (AP) – Patrick Nelson had heard there was a cross-dressing boy enrolled at his high school. But darned if he could figure out just who it was. “I looked for him the first couple weeks. The honest truth-I didn’t even know,” Patrick said.

One day, he was talking about the mystery to a friend, who smiled and pointed to the pretty blonde at the desk next to his. “I said, ‘No way, that’s too weird!’” Patrick recalled. “Then I thought about it, and I said, ‘So what’s so weird about that?’”

But while Patrick and his friends were willing to accept Matthew “Alex” McLendon’s feminine appearance and mannerisms, others in this rural, conservative western Georgia community of about 20,000 weren’t.

And so 15-year-old Alex withdrew from school under pressure, leaving supporters of the popular, easygoing student wondering what threat they had supposedly been protected from.

“Alex wasn’t causing any problems. She got along well with everybody,” said classmate and friend Meayghan Denkers. “She wasn’t trying to change anybody to be like her or anything.”

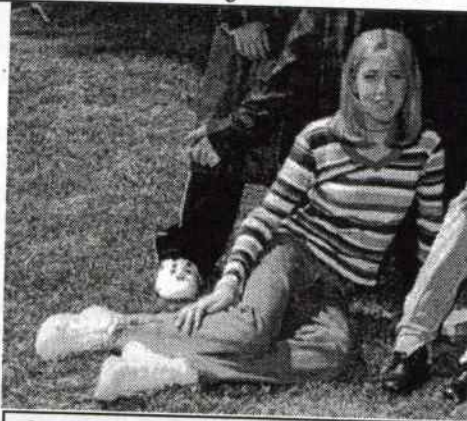
After a heated meeting of the board of the small, private Georgian Country Day School on Oct. 6, Alex was “invited to withdraw” or face expulsion. Alex, who had enrolled in September after attending public school, was cited for wearing a tongue ring, but had been called before school authorities earlier about his female dress, makeup and hairstyle.

Most of Alex’s classmates—including some of the boys-wore bows in their hair in protest until ordered to remove them by the principal. Some indignantly quoted their school handbook, which urges acceptance of “diversity in opinion, culture, ideas, behavioral characteristics, attributes or challenges.”

“Alex represents something that’s way beyond the experience and the comfort zone of the very conservative people we live with,” said Lori Lipoma, Meayghan’s mother and a drama teacher at the school. “I really think we all lost something very precious that night.”

School officials would not discuss the case. “We make no comments on students,” said Rex Camp, chairman of the board of the school, where tuition is more than \$5,000 a year for the 50 or so high school students. Kindergarten and elementary students are in a separate building, but one parent of a 6-year-old expressed concern at the board meeting about Alex’s effect on younger children. “I believe in sexual standards in society, and I want my child in a school that holds the same sexual ethics that I do,” said Craig Neal.

Alex, who speaks in a soft, feminine voice,



Georgia teen, Alex (fka: Matthew) McLendon.

began cross-dressing two years ago and considers himself “95 percent girl.” Larry Harmon, a Dade County, Fla., psychologist who counsels patients on sexual identity, said such feelings appear to fit a rare condition called gender-identity disorder. He said it doesn’t necessarily imply homosexuality, and it’s difficult to know how many youngsters have it and why.

“I’m not homosexual,” Alex said. “I just look like a girl and I dress like a girl. It wasn’t anything flamboyant, not sequins or anything. But because I’m a guy.” He has since enrolled in night school and hopes to pursue a career in fashion merchandising and modeling.

At the Georgian Country Day School—where Alex said he enrolled to get a better education—he struck up a friendship with Meayghan and was soon invited to spend nights over at her house. The first couple of times, Meayghan’s mother popped in on them unannounced just in case. “They’d be sitting there doing hair, or painting nails, and I said to myself, ‘This is a girl,’” Ms. Lipoma said.

A few weeks into the school year, he and his father were summoned to a meeting with school officials. They said that parents had complained, and that he had to dress like a boy, Alex recalled. He refused and was sent home. A special board meeting followed. Under the law, a public school would have had to show that Alex was disrupting education or undermining safety. A private school has more leeway.

Alex’s mother died when he was young. He said that his cross-dressing initially caused a rift with his father, but that the older man stood with him in the dispute with the board. Mack McLendon declined an interview.

“School is supposed to be preparing you for life,” Alex said. “Parents are trying to protect their kids by covering their eyes. It’s going to be a real shock for some of these parents when their kids get out into the real world.”

A Change Will Do You Good”

By Jessica Ann Redman

As I have journeyed in my transition from being a man to becoming a woman I have always worked hard at improving my outward appearance. I dieted, I colored my hair, I conditioned my hair I had my teeth whitened, I bought hair extensions, I plucked my eyebrows, I had...hormone therapy, facial electrolysis, facials, laser hair removal, make up lessons, body massage, loofa, manicures, pedicures, body sculpting, color charting, wardrobe planning, accessorising and so on and so on and so on.

Along the journey I developed a friendship with a genetic woman who asked me a question one day. She asked, “With everything you are doing on the outside to become a woman what have you done to change your inside?” I being poisoned with testosterone at the time asked what did she mean? “I was born a woman inside a man’s body, I didn’t have to do anything to change my inside. I just had to redesign the exterior.”

She then said, “Well have you ever really tried to look at life like a woman?” I said, “Of course I had, I was a woman, it was instinctive.” She looked at me sadly and shaking her head, walked away.

Now over a year later, a year of living full time and back, I have begun to understand what she meant. We all want to be women sooo badly, we go through everything possible to change our outside appearance but do we really try to change what is between our ears? Do we ever work on our very essence, our soul, to help it adjust to the wonder of truly being what we are, women?

It is all about attitude, your personal spirit that makes you the woman you are. Each of us is different, with a self contained being of beauty deep inside who is made to live life to the fullest. Have you gotten in touch with her lately?

Take a moment and think about the last time you just sat. That is it, really just sat still with out TV, or the radio, or music playing, just sit in total quiet. Plan some time to meditate tonight. Take five minutes, turn off the lights, the TV, all outside music or sound. Light a candle and stare at the flame. Sit for a moment and listen. What do you hear? What do you feel?

Over the next issues we will offer each of you ways to get in touch with your own feminine spirit, Think about allowing the woman within you to grow and flourish. Only by each of us becoming a complete and balanced woman can we join our souls together to make our sisterhood reach it’s true potential. See you next issue!



TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

- Wanna be a TG politician or campaign manager? Seriously. Well, Dave Fleischer is organizing a local training seminar for openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people who wish to run for office, manage campaigns, or be part of the leadership team on projects and campaigns to increase GLBT community effectiveness in the electoral arena. The classes will be taking place Jan. 21-24 at the home of Grant Martin (Annise's campaign manager, for you Parker volunteers.) For more details contact DaveFlei@aol.com, or call 718-230-9865. Capitol idea!
- From a press release by Gary Bowen of American Boyz...The True Spirit Conference 1999 – America's premier conference for transmen – will be held on February 26-28, at the Best Western Hotel, Laurel, MD (same site as previous years). Email: Amboyz@netgsi.com for details
- Butcher Brown goes to trial.... In an article from *American Medical News*, the infamous John Brown has been ordered to stand trial for the death of a patient whose leg he amputated. 80-year old Philip Bondy had sought out Brown, who was practicing in Tijuana, to amputate his leg. Apparently Bondy suffered from a condition where a person feels a sexual desire to have a limb removed. Bondy was later found dead from gangrene in a motel room in San Ysidro, CA – across the border from Tijuana. Brown was practicing across the border illegally.

Brown earned the nickname 'Butcher' after his medical license was revoked when three patients nearly died after sexual reassignment surgery. After losing his license, he continued practicing clandestinely, performing operations in hotel rooms

and at least on one occasion in a garage. Brown has already served on stint in prison after being convicted in the death of a botched scalp reduction on an M2F preparing for surgery. Apparently his low prices for surgery had attracted a number of patients over the years. So much for the 'cheap route.' As always, caveat emptor...you get what you pay for.

- Trouble in God's Country? After "downsizing" its national staff last year, Promise Keepers is again laying off workers. As of October 31, the group reduced its work force at its Colorado headquarters from 250 to 180. Sources claim that the change reflects a drop in revenues....
- BALTIMORE, MD – A 15-year-old Jamie Schoonover was briefly suspended from school for allegedly casting a spell on a fellow student. So what's the catch? The news reports seemed to obsess on the fact that her mother, Colleen Harper, was not only a wiccan, but also at one time was Jamie's father. Male to female, just like magic....
- LUSAKA, Zambia (AP) -- An activist group has threatened to name government officials with links to gays if they try to arrest homosexuals in this southern African nation. "We don't want to disclose names but if pushed too far, we'll do so," said Alfred Zulu, head of the Zambia Independent Monitoring Team. Earlier this month, the government said it would arrest gays and their supporters. He said his group would register the 100-member Lesbians, Gays and Transgender Persons Association as an affiliate body next week.
- SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — Recent murders against transvestites, homosexuals and women have been carried out with impunity by as yet unknown individuals. Many of those targeted have been sex workers. Entre Amigos reports that since the month of February there have been 9 killings of transvestites and women, and 5 transvestites have

been seriously injured in San Salvador and Sonsonate counties. There have also been 6 attacks on various gay gathering places. Activists believe that these actions clearly demonstrate a disturbing level of homophobic violence and discrimination against gays and lesbians and more specifically against transvestites, which many in the larger society reject.

- SHANGHAI, CHINA — Police detained two male singers for performing in women's clothes and shut down a nightclub on its opening night. The two performers "swayed on stage, stroked their hair coquettishly and batted their eyelids at the audience before breaking into song," the Xinmin Evening News said. "Unexpectedly, as soon as they opened their red lips, the rough male sound came through the microphone," it said.

The dance hall immediately plunged into chaos and some patrons rushed out to call police, who dragged the two singers off stage during their performance. The club stated it wanted to offer an exciting act for its grand opening....

- Jolly good! A transsexual journalist has been chosen to replace a veteran U.K. Labour councillor who was dropped by the party. Ken Howard, 72, failed to impress the selection panel of Sedgefield District's Labour Party as they chose candidates for the local elections next year, despite 20 years of experience. His place on the West Cornforth Borough Council has been taken by Christine Warbis.

Ms Warbis – known as Christopher when she first moved to the former mining community 12 years ago – has been a parish councillor for a number of years. "I was as surprised as anyone" she replied when Howard wasn't chosen "He has been extremely gracious and I am very sorry and saddened Ken wasn't chosen," said Ms Warbis.

(Continued on Page 9)

PHYLLIS RANDOLPH FRYE

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B.S. Civil Engineering, Texas A & M University 1970
M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Texas A & M University 1971
Licensed Professional Engineer (Texas) 1975
Master Business Administration, University of Houston 1981
Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Houston 1981
Licensed Attorney (Texas) 1981

Areas of Legal Practice:

- Criminal Defense ---
 - Transgender Issues and Documents ---
 - Divorce and Family Issues ---
 - Wills, Power of Atty, "Living" Wills ---
- Although licensed since 1981, I have not taken additional testing, therefore the State Bar requires that I state that I am "Not Certified by the Board of Legal Specialization"

Areas of Engineering Practice:

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TATS Tidbits
(Continued from Page 8)

- Muslim and TG? Maybe it's not so improbable any more. A recent press release trumpeted the First International Retreat for GLBT Muslims held Oct. 9-12 in Boston, MA. The conference was held to address concerns by GLBT Muslims worldwide who are stigmatized because of their sexual or gender identity and face internalized guilt, ostracization, even physical violence. Sounds familiar.... One thing's for sure, in the traditional female Arab garb, it wouldn't matter what you looked like - even the homeliest among us would pass! As for a fashion statement, well....
- TransViews will begin publication soon, covering the TS, TG and intersexed community. The new magazine is an independent venture and is intended for a more mainstream reader. It's promoted as a "full color high gloss and very dignified" quarterly magazine, published by Kelley Wise (a regular columnist from Transformations magazine.)
- TransViews will be "a vehicle for positive images of the TS and TG and intersexed community." To submit articles, advertise, or for more information, write to Kelley Wise at P.O. Box 18749, Anaheim, CA, 92817-8749
- The Tyra Hunter trial continues in Washington DC. Both sides have scored on major points, but it's still too early yet to see a winner. Even if Hunter's side wins, it's still a sad victory. Watch for details next month.
- And last, but not least, Dr. Collier Cole will hold his get-together for the TG/TS community Dec. 5. at Rosenberg Clinic in Galveston.

Santa's Really Bitter

Submitted by Brandi Welch

'Twas the night before Christmas -
Old Santa was pissed,
He cussed out the elves and threw down
his list.
"Miserable little brats, ungrateful
little jerks!
I have good mind to scrap the whole
works!
....
"I've busted my ass for damn near a
year.
Instead of 'Thanks Santa' - what do I
hear?
The old lady bitches cause I work late
at night,
The elves want more money - The
reindeer all fight!
"Rudolph got drunk and goosed all the
maids,
Donner is pregnant and Vixen has
AIDS!
And just when I thought that things
would get better,
Those assholes from IRS sent me a
letter
....
"They say I owe taxes - if that ain't
damn funny,
Who the hell ever sent Santa Claus
any money?
And the kids these days - they all are
the pits.
They want the impossible... Those mean
little shits!
....
"I spent a whole year making wagons

and sleds,
Assembling dolls... Their arms, legs
and heads.
I've made tons of yo yo's - No request
for them;
They want computers and robots... they
think I'm IBM!
"If you think that's bad, just picture
this:
Try holding those brats with their
pants full of piss!
They pull on my nose - they grab at
my beard,
And if I don't smile the parents think
I'm weird!
....
"Flying through the air...dodging the
trees...
Falling down chimneys and skinning
my knees...
I'm quitting this job - there's just no
enjoyment.
I'll sit on my fat ass and draw
unemployment!
There's no Christmas this year - now
you know the reason:
I found me a blonde. I'm going
SOUTH for the season!!

2nd TG TEACHER OUT IN MN

(Continued from Page 4)

Transgender people, as well as gays, lesbians and bisexuals, are protected against discrimination under the state's 1993 Human Rights Act. Minnesota is the only state that affords protection by law to those who identify as transgender.

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Because A Man Couldn't Meet The Demands Of The Job...

Submitted by Dianne Boucher

I think Santa Claus is a woman....

I hate to be the one to defy sacred myth, but I believe he's a she. Think about it. Christmas is a big, organized, warm, fuzzy, nurturing social deal, and I have a tough time believing a guy could possibly pull it all off!

For starters, the vast majority of men don't even think about selecting gifts until Christmas Eve. It's as if they are all frozen in some kind of Ebenezerian Time Warp until 3 p.m. on Dec. 24th, when they - with amazing calm - call other errant men and plan for a last-minute shopping spree. Once at the mall, they always seem surprised to find only Ronco products, socket wrench sets, and mood rings left on the shelves. (You might think this would send them into a fit of panic and guilt, but most men say it's an enormous relief because it lessens the 11th hour decision-making burden.) On this count alone, I'm convinced Santa is a woman. Surely, if he were a man, everyone in the universe would wake up Christmas morning to find a rotating musical Chia Pet under the tree, still in the bag.

Another problem for a he-Santa would be getting there. First of all, there would be no reindeer because they would all be dead, gutted and strapped on to the rear bumper of the sleigh amid wide-eyed, desperate claims that buck season had been extended. Blitzen's rack would already be on the way to the taxidermist.

Even if the male Santa DID have reindeer, he'd still have transportation problems because he would inevitably get lost up there in the snow and clouds and then refuse to stop and ask for directions. Add to this the fact that there would be unavoidable delays in the chimney, where the Bob Vila-like Santa would stop to inspect and repoint bricks in the flue. He

would also need to check for carbon monoxide fumes in every gas fireplace, and get under every Christmas tree that is crooked to straighten it to a perfectly upright 90-degree angle.

Other reasons why Santa can't possibly be a man:

- Men can't pack a bag.
- Men would rather be dead than caught wearing red velvet.
- Men would feel their masculinity is threatened...having to be seen with all those elves.
- Men don't answer their mail.
- Men would refuse to allow their physique to be described even in jest as anything remotely resembling a "bowlful of jelly."
- Men aren't interested in stockings unless somebody's wearing them.
- Having to do the Ho Ho Ho thing would seriously inhibit their ability to pick up women.
- Finally, being responsible for Christmas would require a commitment.

I can buy the fact that other mythical holiday characters are men. Father Time shows up once a year unshaven and looking ominous. Definite guy. Cupid flies around carrying weapons. Uncle Sam is a politician who likes to point fingers. Any one of these individuals could pass the testosterone screening test.

But not St. Nick. Not a chance. As long as we have each other, good will, peace on earth, faith and Nat King Cole's version of "The Christmas Song," it probably makes little difference what gender Santa is. I just wish she'd quit dressing like a guy!!!

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