



Sunshine Club

A Transgender Education & Support Organization of Western Massachusetts

The Sunshine Club was founded in 1992 as a social, support, and educational group for members of the transgendered community, significant others, and allies. According to The Sunshine Club's Statement of Purpose, a transgendered individual, "is male or female, who identifies himself/herself to some degree as a member of the opposite gender." The transgendered (TG) community is incredibly diverse. It includes those who crossdress occasionally in private, persons who go out dressed as the other gender in public, as well as transsexuals who live full time as a member of the other gender. While male to female transgendered people are most common within the community, female to male transgendereds make up a significant part of the TG population.

Whatever our differences, however, we have all felt shame and isolation as a result of our transgenderism. By meeting with others who have had similar feelings and

experiences we learn to focus on the many positive aspects of being a transgendered person, and learn to be comfortable in our own unique identities.

The Sunshine Club holds occasional social events, well as regular meetings on the fourth Saturday evening of every month. Meetings are at a secure and discreet location. Space is available in which to change clothes and apply makeup, etc. Before the main meeting at 8 p.m., the wives and significant others of transgendered individuals meet to discuss issues of concern to them. During the main meeting we discuss general club business, socialize, and have refreshments. Sometimes we have a guest speaker or other special presentation. For many members, the highlight of the monthly get-together is the 'Support Circle' held during the last hour. Each person present has the opportunity to speak for a time about their own accomplishments, challenges, or fears.

New members are always encouraged to join. Membership is open to adults only, without regard to sex or sexual orientation. All personal information is held in strictest confidence. Before attending his/her first meeting, a prospective member is asked to meet with a current member. We feel that this meeting is helpful to maintain the security of the group. Since we meet in a public, neutral place, prospective members

may feel more at ease meeting with a few people before attending a larger meeting for the first time.

The club also publishes a monthly newsletter, *Muliebrity*. Dues are \$25 a year, which includes a subscription to *Muliebrity*. Also of interest to prospective new members is our small, but growing, lending library to which members have access. The library has magazines, videos, other TG club newsletters as well as books.

As individuals, many members of the Sunshine Club have become active in other community organizations and activities. Since the club started, we have become more involved with the greater Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered (GLBT) community, as well as with the world as a whole. Some members are active with the University of Massachusetts' Stonewall Center's Speakers Bureau to educate others about the transgender phenomenon and issues. Several members have become involved with the PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbian and Gays) organization as transgender outreach network (TSON) coordinators and educators. One of our members recently founded 'It's Time Massachusetts', a political group advocating for equal rights for transgendered people. Others are becoming involved in political activities on the local, state and national levels.

For more information write:

The Sunshine Club
P.O. Box 564
Hadley, Ma. 01035-0564

You can also leave an E-mail message at
E-mail: ae907@yfn.ysu.edu
or leave a message on the club's
answering machine at
(413) 586-5004

The Sunshine Club also has a web page
located at: [http://www.umass.edu/
stonewall/sunshineclub.html](http://www.umass.edu/stonewall/sunshineclub.html)

For more information about
Transgenderism, including publications
and other transgender support groups,
contact the International Foundation for
Gender Education:

IFGE
P.O. Box 229
Waltham, MA 02254-0229

Voice: (617) 894-8340
or (617) 899-2212

Fax: (617) 899-5703

E-mail: ifge@world.std.com

[http://www.transgender.org/tg/ifge/
index.html](http://www.transgender.org/tg/ifge/index.html)

SHADES OF GREY

By: Diane Brown

[When we are young and think we know it all we go through life struggling to find out who we are in terms of masculinity and sexuality. We seek the acceptance of our peers in these areas. In order to be accepted we sometimes go along with the crowd and say things and/or do things that hurt others, even if it goes against our own beliefs. People who are different, Gays, Lesbians or even Transgendered were usually our targets. As we grow older, and hopefully wiser, we see the error of our ways. I was one such person and I would think that many in society, if not most, fit this category too. The following poem reflects my feelings...]



Shades of Grey

When I was young and always right,
I viewed all things as Black or White.
I didn't know, I am sad to say,
That life is lived in Shades of Grey.

I did the things that all boys do.
Girls wore pink, I wore blue.
I hadn't learned that soon someday,
I'd start to think in Shades of Grey.

I heard them say time and again
That girls were girls, and men were men.
I didn't dare come out and say,
I'm secretly wearing Shades of Grey.

I hid my feelings, so no one knew.
I laughed at their jokes; I told some too!
Now I regret to this very day,
making fun of those in Grey.

Now I try to do what's right.
I look beyond the Black and White.
I go out each and every day,
Showing off my Shades of Grey.

On those who just see Black or White,
I hope that I can shed some light.
And maybe then I'll hear them say,
That deep inside they like my Grey.

I'd like to honor us who fight,
For what is simply our Civil Right.
I think that maybe, one fine day,
I'll change my name to Diane Grey.