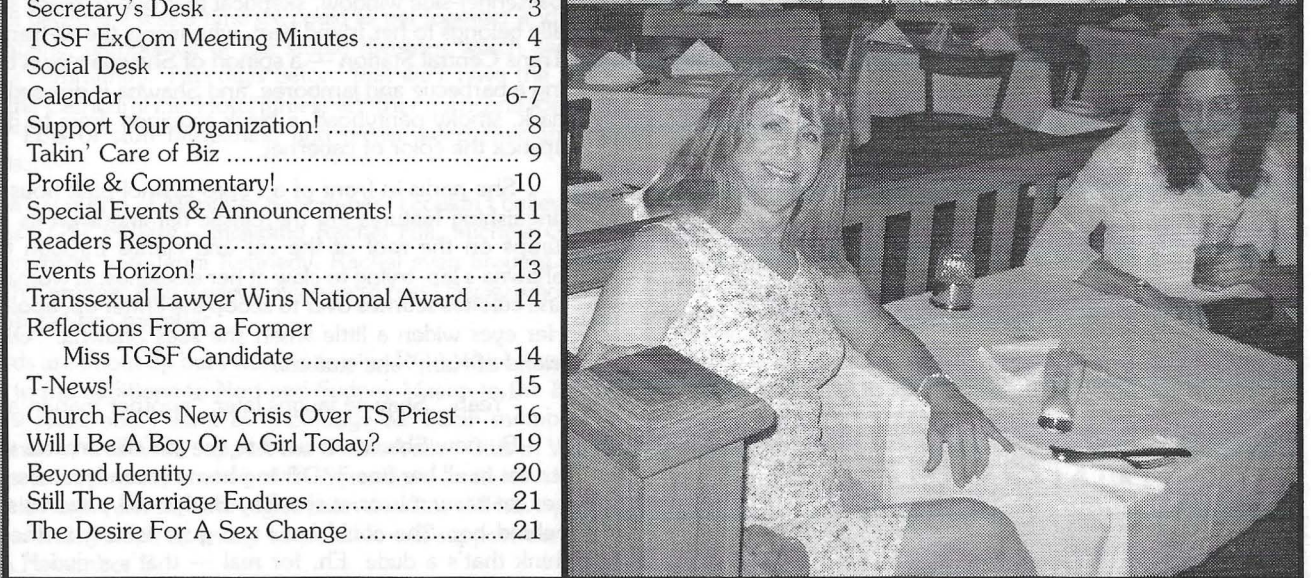


# TGSF Royalty At EOM!



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TGSF TransGender San Francisco is a group for all members of the Transgender Community. Transgender is used as an umbrella term that includes female and male cross dressers, transvestites, drag queens or kings, female or male impersonators, intersexed individuals, pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexuals, masculine females, feminine males, all persons whose perceived gender or anatomical sex may be incongruent with their gender expression, and all persons exhibiting gender characteristics and identities which are perceived to be androgynous.

The Channel



# The Channel

TGSF (TransGender San Francisco, a California non-profit corporation), is a non-sexual, membership based organization serving the educational, social, and recreational needs of gender-gifted people, their spouses, significant others, family members, friends, and professionals in the helping services. For details about TGSF programs, membership, article submission guidelines and classified ads, please write to TGSF Secretary, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486.

## ExCom 2005 - 2006 Officers

(Fiscal Year: May 1 - April 30)

President ..... Roxy Carmichael-Hart  
 Vice President ..... Laura Marlowe  
 Secretary ..... Lisa Rae Dummer  
 Treasurer ..... Pamela Gray  
 Education ..... Dawnne Woodie  
 ..... Jennifer Anderson  
 Outreach ..... Allison D. Laureano  
 ..... Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy  
 Social ..... Tommie Watson  
 ..... Katra Briel  
 Ms. TGSF 2005 ..... Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy

### Fine Print

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

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

### Newsletter Staff

Editor ..... Ayme Michelle Kantz  
 Advertising ..... Dawnne Woodie  
 Contributing Photographers, this Issue: ..... Roxy Carmichael Hart

### Ad Rates

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

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



## FABULOUS FIVE

**Lipstick Conspiracy aspires to rock stardom, but that's a tough sell when you can't even tell your co-workers you're a tranny.**

By Rachel Swan

Eastbayexpress.com / Photos by: Anthony Pidgeon

Shawna Love has an enviable talent for driving in stiletto heels. On a recent Saturday, she's driving through a quiet, suburban neighborhood in South Hayward that looks as if it burst out of a Sears, Roebuck catalogue and hasn't been touched in fifty years: All the houses are squat, ticky-tacky things with manicured lawns, window boxes, and identical American flags hanging in the windows. She squints out her passenger-side window, skeptical that one of these stucco boxes actually belongs to her friend Kari, who fronts the all-tranny-girl rock outfit Trans Central Station — a spinoff of Shawna's own band. Kari is hosting a barbecue and jamboree, and Shawna is dressed for the occasion: dark, smoky pantyhose, a black sequined dress to go with her heels, lipstick the color of cabernet.

She parks in front of a Pepto-Bismol-pink house whose only distinguishing features are the plastic flamingos on its front lawn. A cat jumps on the roof of the car and climbs through the window onto Shawna's lap, trying to claw at her stockings. A woman with poofy hair and culottes scurries over to scoop the critter up, apologizing profusely. Her eyes widen a little when she sees Shawna. "Oh, you must be a friend of Kari," she stutters.

"Yeah," Shawna laughs later, "another man in a fucking dress."

By now Shawna is used to the stir she creates when she hits the streets in all her finery. Driving home recently, she says, she peered in her rearview mirror at the Bay Bridge toll plaza to see a car slink up behind her. She could hear two guys talking in the backseat: "Yo, I think that's a dude. Eh, for real — that's a dude!" The driver rolled

Continued on Page 16

**WWW.TGSF.ORG**  
**UPGRADED SITE! GET ONLINE!**

**Hotline & Voice Mail**  
**415-564-3246**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Roxy  
Carmichael-Hart

### Remember to Give Thanks

We are full swing into the holiday season and that means lots of activities on the horizon.

But some are not having a happy holiday. We have seen the devastating hurricanes on the Gulf Coast, landslides and flooding in Guatemala and now, a horrific earthquake in Southern Asia. Many are suffering. Our own petty trials and tribulations don't seem important when you realize that thousands are wondering where their next meal is coming from, or wondering where they are going to live. Families are torn apart, homes destroyed, lives gone. I think we have it pretty good here. Maybe things aren't perfect or the way we like it. But all in all, most of us are in good shape. So please take time this season to help where you can. Pray, donate, volunteer, whatever is in your heart.

The Cotillion is less than 100 days away. Wow. It seems as if it was only yesterday when Jenni Kennedy captured that tiara. And now, we are looking for someone to succeed and follow in her large footsteps. The deadline for applying to be a candidate for Mr. or Ms. TGSF in Sunday November 6. We are having a contestant meeting on Sunday November 20 for all of the contestants at the MCC Church, 150 Eureka in San Francisco. Once again, the MCC Church has graciously donated rehearsal space for us and I want to thank Dawnne for arranging this. This Cotillion is going to be a fun time and I intend to make my last Cotillion something to remember. Tickets continue to be sold at Carla's, DVG, the LGBT Center Box Office through the Gay Men's Chorus (Dawnne arranged that too) and at the Fort Mason Center Box Office. Oh and if you see me at an event, I also have tickets for sale.

The TG Holiday Party will return for another year, I am happy to say. Thanks to the work of our own Jennifer Anderson and Nori, RGA Vice-President (and a potential Ms. TGSF contestant), we will return to the Tarragon on Saturday December 17. Look for details elsewhere but I have always enjoyed this event because it was a time we could all get together and enjoy each others company, without all of the stupid divisions which seem to perpetuate in this community. Two days before that we'll have the TGSF Holiday Party at the Cathedral Hill Hotel (unless another hurricane forces us to move again.). Lots of stuff happening and please keep checking our website for details.

Wasn't that a great End of Month in September? I couldn't believe that we had four Miss TGSF's there - including Rachel Hill, Michele Garcia, Anne Louise Mortenson and Jenni Kennedy. Rachel even brought a colleague from North Carolina. And it was a pleasure to meet Becky who looks like a future TGSF ExCom member.

My 500 words are about up but I wanted to plug RGA which has really taken off thanks to the additions to Nori and Sydney Mason to the Board. Both have lots of ideas and I want to encourage all TGSF members to support their events, as well as to support the Diablo Valley Girls in Walnut Creek. Both have been very supportive of TGSF and we need to continue this interaction. Although I am sure the registration deadline will have passed before you receive this, I hope as many as possible will support the DVG annual dinner on November 5.

Gotta rock, but remember the dead and give thanks for the living.

**Roxy**

## SECRETARY'S DESK

Lisa Rae Dummer

The Cotillion is only a couple of months away and it's time to start planning for a wonderful time. This year, it will be an entire weekend crammed full of things to do, old friends to greet and new ones to meet.

The weekend starts off Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, with a no host cocktail party from 7:00 to 10:00pm at the host hotel, the Holiday Inn Golden Gateway, where you will get a chance to meet the contestants for the titles of Mr. and Ms. TGSF - 2006. There will be plenty of time after the cocktail party to hit your favorite nightspot, whether it be Diva's, Martuni's, Marlana's or any of the other places in San Francisco that cater to the transgender community.

On Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, while the contestants and performers are busy rehearsing all day, there will be an Open Hospitality Suite from 10:00am to 4:00pm at the Golden Gateway where you can again sit and chat with friends, old and new alike. Of course, that evening is the Cotillion, which will be held at the Cowell Theater again this year, where we all don our fanciest outfits, looking to see and be seen. The doors open at 5:00, with the show starting at 7:00. Plan to arrive early for the best parking places.

For those of you who have never attended a Cotillion before, you have wonderful things in store for you. The Debutante Walk is especially memorable, where you will take your first walk across the stage, presenting yourself to your brothers and sisters in the audience. I really regret that I never got to take the Debutante Walk, as I was busy backstage changing costumes my first year. Maybe I'll get to do it some other time. If you are hesitant about making the walk, don't be. Talk to any of the older members of the community. I'm sure they all fondly remember their walk and wouldn't change it for the world. You, too, can experience that wonderful feeling of community and family when you cross the stage.

The theme for the Cotillion this year is Hooray for Hollywood and a fantastic show has been scripted and put together by Roxy Carmichael-Hart and the hard working production staff of Laura Marlowe, Alli Laureano and Dawnne Woodie. Without them, there wouldn't be a show.

The biggest part of the Cotillion, though, is the selection of the new Mr. and Ms. TGSF. There are a number of people who have expressed an interest in being a contestant this year, but there is always room for more. As a contestant last year, if you are thinking about entering, my advice to you is, to quote Nike, Just Do It. It's a lot of hard work in the rehearsals but the camaraderie and sense of sisterhood you build with the other contestants is worth any pain you go through to get there. I know that the relationship I built with Jenni Kennedy, Jennifer Anderson, Patricia Kevena Fili and Kara Flynn is a special relationship that I would not trade for the world.

Finally, the weekend will end with a brunch on Sunday, where the new Mr. and Ms. TGSF will be presented. The brunch is always a fun way to end the weekend and gives you one more chance to spend some time with your friends.

The time to get your tickets is now. There are plenty of good seats still available, but they will be going fast. If you haven't made your reservations for the Golden Gateway, which is located at 1500 Van Ness Avenue, you should get those in as soon as possible. There is a link directly from the TGSF website. Be sure you mention the Transgender San Francisco Cotillion when you make your reservation to take advantage of the special rates.



*Four Queens and a Goddess: Guitar Goddess Roxy is flanked by four beautiful Miss TGSFs: (l-r) Michele Garcia (2000), Jenni Kennedy (2005), Rachel Hill (2003), Anne Louise Mortenson (2004)*

October 2, 2005

## TGSF ExCom MEETING MINUTES

Attending - Roxy Carmichael-Hart, Dawnne Woodie, Pamela Gray, Laura Marlowe, Jennifer Anderson, Allison Laureano, Lisa Dummer, Katra Briel, Jennifer Kennedy, Absent -Tommi Watson

The Minutes of the August 28 2005 meeting were approved.

### President's Report - Roxy Carmichael-Hart

A number of high ticket items have been added to the silent auction for the cotillion, including a cruise. We need contestants for both Mr. and Ms. TGSF. Anyone interested in running should contact Roxy for the forms. The deadline for filing is November 6, 2005. We need to get advertisers for the program. Everyone should be working on that. Several positions are coming open on the ExCom in April. We need qualified candidates for these positions.

### Vice-President's Report - Laura Marlowe

We are still speaking with vendors regarding discounts for TGSF members. We are considering the idea of coupon books so the vendors are not taken advantage of. We need statements from the Social, Outreach and Education committees as to their duties, aims and goals to post on the website. Katra Dawnne and Alli will write them and give to Laura. The members of the ExCom need to activate their TGSF email addresses and these should be printed in the Channel when activated.

### Treasurer's Report - Pamela Gray

There is currently about \$4,600 in the bank. There are still payments to the Cowell Theater, catering and programs for the Cotillion to be made. We need to verify that all advertisers are receiving a copy of the Channel.

### Secretary's Report - Lisa Dummer

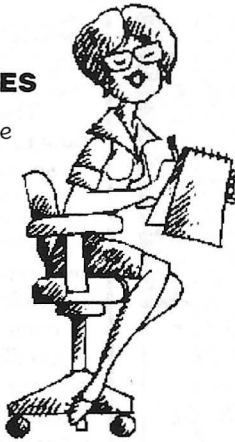
Since we missed her profile in the October issue, Allison Laureano will be the featured profile for November. Dawnne and Lisa will coordinate the pick up of the mail between them. We need more articles in the Channel that promote the Cotillion. Laura and Jenni were added to the Channel review group.

### Outreach - Allison Laureano and Jennifer Kennedy

The phone message on the hotline has been updated. It will be kept current monthly with a calendar of events. There has been no progress on the phone options. We will be participating in the Health Fair at the Academy of Art. We will also be speaking at several local colleges and need interested people for a Speaker's Bureau. We are looking into setting up several support groups including ones for Significant Others and younger transgender individuals. A transgender big sister/big brother mentoring program was discussed.

### Social - Katra

The barbeque went well, although attendance could have been better. We covered expenses and made a little profit, so it was worthwhile. There will be no mid-months in November, December and January due to



the Holidays and the Cotillion. The October End of Month will be October 27, 2005 and will be our annual Leather and Lace contest. Transgender Equality California will be speaking. The EOM for November will be November 17, 2005. The December EOM will be December 15, 2005. The annual Holiday Dinner at the Tarragon will be held on December 11, 2005. The Halloween Party is in great shape. We are still looking for a band. We are considering having a Wedding Party in February, which may include a bachelorette auction. Katra and Alli were appointed to investigate the possibility of holding a fundraiser before year end.

### Education - Dawnne Woodie and Jennifer Anderson

We have forwarded a letter regarding services to transgender youths to LYRIC since it is more in keeping with their group. It was decided that there will be no speakers with a personal political agenda. Alli will be doing a presentation at New College. There will be an Open House at the Santa Cruz diversity Center on October 9<sup>th</sup>. Improving attendance at the EOM was discussed and whether it would be better to have speakers or treat it as a purely social event. Alli noted that she had attended a DVG social and that this kind of format could work for a TGSF End of Month. It was felt that TGSF should be supporting our sister organizations such as DVG and RGA. Roxy noted that she attends RGA on a fairly regular basis.

### Old Business

We continue to review the potential duties for a PR/Communications Officer for the ExCom. This person will provide an official response on behalf of the ExCom as to various issues. There was discussion as to whether this should be the senior or junior Outreach Co-chair. It was suggested that this position be part of the duties of the junior Outreach Co-chair. A final determination is planned for the November ExCom.

### New Business

The Cotillion Card will be included in the Channel for November, December and January. The DVG Fall Dinner is November 5<sup>th</sup>. ExCom members were encouraged to attend and support DVG.

Next Meeting - It will be held on Sunday, November 6, 2005 at 1:00pm at the Cathedral Hill Hotel. All members are welcome to attend. Applications for Mr. and Ms. TGSF may be turned in at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

## GenderQueer, Trans, & Gender Questioning Youth Group

Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center  
[www.defrank.org](http://www.defrank.org)

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

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

## EAST BAY TRANSGENDER AA

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

# Social Desk

Hello, Katra here another message for you from your Social Committee! I must apologize for something that happened, or rather didn't happen in August.

We had scheduled a "Night at the Movies – With Bogie and Bacall." I was excited to do this and we did have some interest, but unfortunately, I had a very sudden and immediate family crisis. That occurred on the day of the event, and we canceled.

Some people did show up and the Bijou Hotel took great care of them. To those of you who showed up I am truly sorry for the failure on our part. Regardless of the situation, I should have made arrangements to cover the event in the event of any unforeseen circumstances. I will do everything in my power to make sure that as long as I am able, no events will be canceled on our part once the event is scheduled and announced in The Channel. We do not have the resources to react to last minute cancellations of events and be able to inform YOU, our members in a timely fashion so that you may make other plans on such short notice.

Additionally, I thank the staff at the Bijou Hotel for all their efforts and work, those members who assisted in preparations and those who were able to handle the cancellation notices to the Bijou Hotel and the other vendors involved.

## TGSF Help Wanted!

Hi! It's Katra! Your Social Co-Chair here again!

I'm looking for a few interested parties to help out with some upcoming events. Most notably will be volunteers for the "Bachelor and Bachelorette Auction" that will be held at the "Wedding Party" Event in February. We will be auctioning Bachelors and Bachelorettes in an effort to raise both funds TGSF and to help kick off Spring 2006 with some fresh ideas and events!

So first we will need some Volunteers who are willing to participate as Bachelors or Bachelorettes, and of course an Auctioneer! Please send a brief note to myself or Tommi Watson about why you, as a Bachelor or Bachelorette would want to be auctioned, and what your expectations would be. We still need to set some ground rules for those "FEW GOOD WOMEN...and MEN" who will be chosen to be auctioned off for a one time date! And of course, we need to have the rules for those who will bid on a Bachelor and Bachelorette!

We need YOU to help talk this up in our community to generate interest. Especially for Bidders! If you know anyone who would be interested in bidding for a Date with a Bachelor or Bachelorette, please contact either of our Social Co-Chairs. We definitely want to send them an invitation to the February Valentines Wedding Party!

## NEW BOOK FEATURES "TRANS" MAIN CHARACTERS

Are you ready for a science fiction novel featuring "Trans" characters . . . not as supporting but as primary characters??

"The Genite Chronicles – A Link To The Past" was written by TGSF members (formerly ExCom members)  
**Nicole and Debbie Cook.**

*A pro-Trans future awaits!!*

How to Purchase:  
**ISBN number: 142087294X**

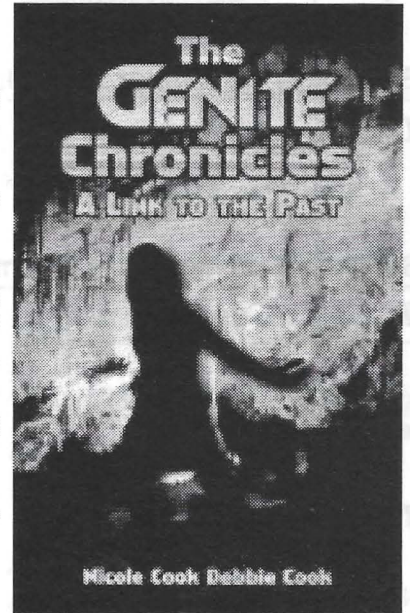
Available online or can be ordered through your local bookstore.

Nicole and Debbie will be available for a book signing at:

*A Different Light Books* on **November 17<sup>th</sup>** between 7pm and 8pm – Located at 489 Castro Street, San Francisco, CA 94114, 415-431-0891

Read more about our book here:

<http://www.nicoleanddebbie.com/where/guerneville/tgcbout.html>



## HEY!

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

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

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Inside Carla's  
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San Jose, CA 95126

tel: 831-262-0480  
marilyndahl  
@sbcglobal.net

*Happy Thanksgiving!*

## Wednesday, November 2 / Begins 7:30pm

### MID PENINSULA SUPPORT GROUP

Meets from 7:30 to 9:30 at the Full Circle Bookstore on the El Camino in Belmont. For information, contact Laura Patterson at [REDACTED]

## Saturday / November 5 / 6:30pm

### DVG FALL DINNER

See notice elsewhere in this issue!

## Sunday, November 6 / 1:00pm

### TGSF ExCOM MEETING

At the Cathedral Hill Hotel. All members are welcome to attend. Applications for Mr. and Ms. TGSF may be turned in at this meeting.

### TGSF MID MONTH

There will be no mid months during the months of November, December and January due to the number of holiday activities and the Cotillion in January. They will resume in February

## Thursday, November 17 / Begins 7:00pm

### TGSF END OF MONTH

The EOM will be held early this month due to the Thanksgiving Holiday. It will be held at the Cathedral Hill Hotel on 1101 Van Ness Avenue, at Geary, starting at 7:00pm.

## Saturday, November 19 / Noon to Midnight

### CARLA'S 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PARTY

For information, contact Carla at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

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San Francisco, CA 94102

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## November's Birthdays

1102	Merrisa Coleman
1104	Susan Ann Meckley
1106	Andrea Drane
1106	Valerie Valeska
1107	Nina Larouche
1111	Ann Grogan
1113	Debbie Cook
1113	Roxanne Taylor
1114	Melissa Robinson
1114	Madame Steele
1115	Kari Summers
1119	Leah Christina Segmen
1120	Lola Hurley
1120	Anna Heinkel
1122	Angela Marie Borges
1125	Mikayla Connell
1125	Glinda Corner
1125	Dale Carlson
1125	Sandy Campbell
1128	Randall Stone
1130	Carol Alexander

*Happy Birthday To All!*

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Nails Wigs Lingerie



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# Support Your Organization!

## TGSF Sustaining Memberships

### FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

#### Designated Sustaining Membership Giving Levels & Recognition

##### **GUARDIAN LEVEL: \$2500**

###### Recognition & Benefits:

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

##### **PATRON LEVEL: \$1000**

###### Recognition & Benefits:

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

##### **ANGEL LEVEL: \$500**

###### Recognition & Benefits:

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

##### **CENTURY LEVEL: \$250**


###### Recognition & Benefits:

Recognition in Cotillion Program  
Framed Recognition Certificate

##### **MERIT LEVEL: \$100**

###### Recognition & Benefits:

Recognition in Cotillion Program  
Recognition Certificate

 *Clip & Mail Today!*

### **Make your CONTRIBUTION to TGSF Today!**

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

Please indicate your level of giving:

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

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

**Thank you for your support of TGSF!**



# Takin' Care of Biz...

## TGSF FINANCIAL REPORT

As of October 15, 2005

### Assets

Cash .....	4212.59
Decorations .....	1000.00
Beverages .....	200.00
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>5412.59</b>

### Liabilities and Equity

<b>Total .....</b>	<b>0.00</b>
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## Statement of Income and Expenses

### Income

Memberships .....	200.00
Donations .....	177.00
Cotillion Tickets .....	110.00
Picnic .....	250.00
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>737.00</b>

### Expenses

Channel .....	333.80
Phone .....	49.71
Picnic .....	127.14
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>510.65</b>

**Net Income .....** **226.35**

## TGSF DONATIONS

Our Friends Who Give  
as of October 15, 2005

<b>Rachel Hill (United Way) .....</b>	<b>\$120.00</b>
<b>Karin Fresnel .....</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Ayme Kantz .....</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>

**Bless You and Thank You for Caring!**

## CONTACT TGSF!

### 2005-06 Executive Committee

#### President

Roxy Carmichael-Hart .... roxy.carmichaelhart@tgsf.org

#### Vice President

Laura Marlowe .....

#### Secretary

Lisa Rae Dummer .....

#### Treasurer

Pamela Gray .....

Or .....

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Dawnne Woodie .....

Jennifer Anderson ..... jennifer.anderson@tgsf.org

#### Outreach

Allison D Laureano .....

Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy ...

#### Social

Tommie Watson .....

Katra Briel ..... katra.briel@sbcglobal.net

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Ayme Kantz .....

#### Ms. TGSF 2005

Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy ...

#### TGSF.Org Webmistress

Laura Marlowe ..... webmistress@tgsf.org

**Calendar .....** **www.tgsf.org**

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

## PISSR

### People In Search of Safe Restrooms

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

## WAVE ELECTROLOGY

### Permanent Hair Removal



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# ExCom Profile & Commentary

## EXCOM PROFILE

Allison D.  
Laureano

### Outreach Co-chair

Well, I guess I'm no longer just that Filipina chick sitting in the corner of the Blue Muse during our monthly meetings eating ravioli by the light of my laptop. Yep, it's Alli again; one of your fabulous Outreach Co-chairs with another little insight into my world.

I don't know who came up with this idea of talking about ourselves. As many of you know, I concentrate more on talking about the work that needs to be done, rather than go on and on about that things that "I" do and who "I" am; but alas, the big brush of self-promotion has splashed all over me (thanks Lisa <wink>) and I must pontificate about me.

So should I be a Terrell Owens, or should I be Tom Brady? Yes, I'm a huge football fan, so I thought I'd go against type and use some sports metaphors in this soliloquy. If I were Terrell, I'd go on and on about how many contacts I've made or how many events I've done and begin name dropping of all the powerful and important people I have made contact with. But I find that all droll, especially since there is no way that I could be that fortunate without the hard work of my friends and colleagues, and those that have done the work before me (Thanks Kara Flynn, and Thanks Tiffany Woods). So maybe the "one team" approach of Tom Brady and the Patriots is more my style. I value so much the team of leaders you the membership have elected into office this year for TGSF. I am honored and pleased to serve with like minded individuals in fulfilling our goals of promoting a positive face for Transgender people and for building the bridges in the entire community, LGBT and beyond.

Each and everyday, we make plays. We grind it out on the ground, meeting with many different people, those that support us and those that don't through our outreach events at Pride and in schools. We may gain a little ground in getting people to think about Trans issues and concerns through lunches with local and state politicians and national organizations like GLAAD and HRC. We may break for a long one when we actually change peoples' hearts and minds and attitudes toward the acceptance of Trans people. Sometimes we may take a loss, when we see popular media demonize us, and sometimes we actually score the big TD when we pass important legislation such as the most recent HR2662 that cleared in the House a first ever Trans-inclusive federal Hate Crime bill, and when we convict vicious murderers in the case of two of the defendants in the Gwen Araujo trial. But it's through this hard work and perseverance of all our team members, you and me included that we may just yet pull a W for Transgender people.

Okay, okay, enough of the football metaphors. My point is, I do the work I do, because I believe in this community, I believe in this organization. I believe that we can pull together as a community to establish for ourselves our rights to live the life we want to, without prejudice and with genuine acceptance. I derive my energy from all of you, not because I seek the spotlight, but because, cliché as it sounds, it's the right thing to do.

I hope that I can encourage all of you to contribute to your community. I would love to see newer energy and more of it as we take TGSF into the future. We have unrealized dreams and directions that TGSF can take. There are tremendous opportunities for growth out there, and only through diligence can we grasp it. It is my fervent hope that we can leave this organization better than when we enter it, as should be anyone's goals when taking a responsible position. My outreach position may close at the end of this term (April 2006) but I hope to continue to work with you and for you, perhaps in other positions, in years to come.



## CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

By Roxy Carmichael-Hart

### Mission: Impossible? (without Mr. Katie Holmes)

Disclaimer: Although I will refer to my title and our ExCom in this article, please be aware that the opinions expressed in this article are mine alone and do not purport to represent the views or opinions of the ExCom, any TGSF member or TGSF in general.

We have been discussing at ExCom whether there is a need to redo our mission statement. I say no because our mission statement is already very clearly defined in our bylaws. TGSF was designed to provide educational, outreach, support and social services to transgendered individuals and their families and allies. Although I might have paraphrased it a bit, I think our mission is pretty clear.

When I first decided to walk into the light, I looked around for a place that would "help me to be a girl". I wanted to learn about clothes and makeup and hair and legal issues and whatnot. I wanted a place where I would be welcomed unconditionally, a place where I felt I belonged. I wanted to be able to meet others like me, to convince me that I was not mentally deranged and that it was ok to be transgendered. And I wanted a place where someone would answer my questions and yes, even provide a shoulder to cry on. And I found such a place with the help of Rachael Janelle. Rachael believed in me from the beginning and not only provided me with a place that I could get all of things that I sought, but provided me with the opportunity to serve others in the community - in others words, the "helpee" became the "helper".

Many of you who may be new to TGSF may not be aware that for a short stint, I served as Outreach Co-Chair and my responsibility was to return calls to the TGSF hotline. Most of it was routine stuff - people looking for information. But every now and then I would get a call that would tear my heart out. I have reported on several of these. But I got plenty of calls from girls at the end of their ropes, who would rather blow their brains out than live one more day in a body they hated. I got calls from sobbing sisters who were alone and afraid for fear that they would lose their jobs, their homes, their families, their children. And I got calls from people who just wanted to belong. As I did. As Rachael did. As many of you did.

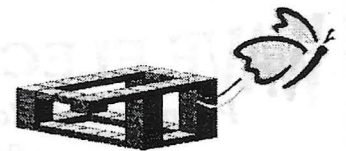
This is the purpose of TGSF. Helping people. Not who has the prettiest dress or best makeup or running off to Diva's or pumping up the ego of some blowhard politician or interest group who'll forget us ten minutes later. I think one reason why our membership is stagnant is that we haven't defined ourselves and if we have it is as a political action committee. Although I have no real documentation except our membership numbers, I would say that most of our members don't want to be bored month after month by some San Francisco politician looking for strokes. They want to hang out with their friends and visit. There are plenty of other opportunities for educational events but as yet we really haven't taken the initiative and pursued them. That's my fault as a leader. I needed to set the definition and I didn't or at least wasn't clear about it.

I think our members and leaders, including me, need a crash course on TGSF/ETVC 101. They need to learn about our roots. They need to learn why we were established and what our purpose was. They need to learn about Donna and Julie Freeman, Joan Sheldon, Ginny Knuth, Janis Ryan and Joanna Caron. They need to learn where our members are and the fact that the girls from the south bay have enthusiastically supported the Cotillion for years. The need to learn that Carla sells about a third to one half of the Cotillion tickets each year and she does not do that by going to San Francisco. There is a lot to learn but if we are to be a useful and purposeful organization it has to be learned. We have to have a mission and it doesn't have to be impossible. Wasn't transition supposed to be impossible once? But, as Professor Euclid Bullfinch once said "Nothing is impossible. Some things are just harder to believe than others."

## Significant Other Support East Bay

Questions or concerns about your partner's crossdressing? Please call Julie at [redacted] or e-mail [redacted] or write to: Julie Freeman, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885.

## legal questions about gender?



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# Special Events and Announcements!

**Saturday / November 5 / 6:30pm**

## DVG Fall Dinner

DVG will once again host our signature annual Fall Dinner at Blake's, Boundary Oak in Walnut Creek. This will be our eighth year! Festivities will begin with no-host cocktails at 6:30pm, followed by dinner at 7:30pm with entertainment following.

The entrees this year are Filet Mignon or Pan Seared Salmon at \$40/pp, or Baked Portobello Mushroom at \$35/pp. A Reservation is a MUST - first come, first served - we wouldn't want you to miss out on the fun!

For more information call the DVG Hotline at 925-937-8432 (M-Th 7-10pm) or write Donna at [dvg@transgender.org](mailto:dvg@transgender.org)

## UPCOMING RGA EVENTS

Hi all,

Just a few reminders. We're still taking recipes for the cookbook. A lot of you have promised me a submission, but to date you haven't come through. No worries though. I think we'll indefinitely postpone the deadline until we have enough to make a prototype. Still, don't delay too much. I know there are some great cooks out there!

**First Friday in November** RGA is hosting a White Elephant sale. Please consider bringing an item to donate, and bring some money! Christmas is on the way. There will be plush animals, jewelry, and other household items. Bring a treasure to donate, and walk away with a new one! Doors open at 8, refreshments provided. All proceeds to benefit RGA.

**First Friday in December**, RGA is hosting it's first annual No Rules Chile Cookoff! Fire up your crockpots, or bring your appetite and be a judge! .50/taster bowl, or \$1.00 for a regular bowl. There will be trophies and bragging rights for the top three chili cooks. Who's going against me? I make a great chili! See you there at 8pm!

At RGA's annual Christmas pot luck, there will be some fantastic raffle prizes. If you're a BBQ or meat lover there will be a basket with gourmet selections from around the world up for raffle! Details coming soon!

Blessings folks, hope to see you soon at RGA.

**Sydney**

[ftmsrul@hotmail.com](mailto:ftmsrul@hotmail.com)

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## Mid-Peninsula Support Group

**WEDNESDAY, November 2, 2005**

**Full Circle Books**

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

**7:30 - 9:30 P.M.**

All welcome regardless of race, age, gender, gender identification  
\$1 donation will be requested but no one will be turned away.

For more details please contact Laura Patterson at

[Laura@laurasoft.com](mailto:Laura@laurasoft.com)

*Please note: This is a support group. The views expressed in this group are reflective of the attendees and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ExCom and members of TGsf.*

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

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Contact the Editor at: [MissAyme@aol.com](mailto:MissAyme@aol.com)

*New weekly FTM social group will  
replace the "Transitioned Men's" group*

## **FTM GET-TOGETHER AND SUNDAY BRUNCH**

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

# Readers Respond

## MARLA AND JUDY GO TO DETROIT...

### *Have Breakfast At White Castle And Look For What's Happening In GLBT Detroit*

We start looking for things to do after recuperating from the 2,400 mile drive with two caged cats in a 1979 Chevrolet Monte Carlo, somewhat revitalized by breakfast at White Castle. We found it in *Between the Lines*, the weekly LGBT Detroit area newspaper ([www.pridesource.com](http://www.pridesource.com)).

Hallelujah, such an event. Walking distance from our new home, at the 1st Unitarian Universalist Church on Cass, there it was THE THIRD ANNUAL GOSPEL AND SOUL CELEBRATION, hosted by the African American Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community and the Human Rights Campaign ([www.HRC.org](http://www.HRC.org)). Event Co-Chair Michelle Brown, also Co-Chair at HRC's national diversity committee, proudly announced that some while gospel singers would be included this year for diversity's sake, and even a choir from a straight church, maybe - and that the performance would be followed by a sampling of soul food favorites. Who could resist this! So we went.

To start at the end, the sampling of the food of the African Diaspora was more than fine—we were disappointed to discover that Ruby's Kitchens only cater and have no brick and mortar restaurant.

The finale of the musical performance was Ortheia Barnes — “everyone in Detroit knows Ortheia Barnes”, as well as folks outside the city who know Gospel, we were assured, and there would be a reason for that. She is very, really very, good at gospel, singing and speaking. The Full Truth Praise Team, a group of apparently mostly Lesbians who'll have you on your feet clapping your hands and praising the Lord, are also world class Gospel.

The One Voice Choir, Metropolitan Detroit's LGBT chorus, handed out Singers Wanted flyers, to meet at the Affirmations LGBT Center in Ferndale. They were good, except there really weren't enough of them.

The speakers — besides Michelle Brown and Curtis Lipscomb as MC's — were Mrs. Brenda Warren, with her story of her faith supporting her when her gay son was beaten to death and deposited on the side of the road near her at home. She praised HRC, saying that without them she would never have known what had actually happened to her son, as the truth would not have been pursued.

Donna Payne, HRC Diversity Organizer, spoke about the “Claim Your Truth” campaign for LGBT students at black colleges (t-shirts, etc., were available). She urged speaking your truth, too—she said the world needs to know there are black GLBT's, and even religious GLBT's, such as her black religious Lesbian self, just as your family needs to know, so the world and our families need us to stand up and speak the truth. She pointed out that people have trouble understanding why “you people” need marriage rights, or at least domestic partner rights, as they still don't realize that these rights mean taking care of the ordinary bureaucratic business of life with hospitals and insurance companies and banks and schools, etc.

The table Marla and Judy sat at to enthusiastically sample the soul food included a wedding party who had made this event one of their day's celebrations of their wedding (a relative was a singer). The wedding, in Michigan, wasn't exactly legal, the sister of the bride explained, but it was a real wedding anyway. And it involves the welfare of four children.

In spite of having our attention riveted by the food, we did a little local political research in chatting with folks, and got an = sticker, too. There is definitely more to Detroit cuisine than White Castle—and there are some lively politics around here, too.

Marla and Judy's Detroit adventure will continue...

## NOTES FROM A LARGE ISLAND

Well, it's been 8 months since I've been back in Australia and it is proving interesting, as in “May you live in interesting times”. What follows, if you are interested, are my ramblings about being T in Australia. These are my thoughts and views and are not, necessarily, endorsed by TGSF.

Australia is a very liberal country, and very accepting. However, in the years I have been away it has managed to put into its constitution that marriage is between a man and a woman. However, like the US, you can change your gender depending on your state, or territory (Territories are not quite states, sort of like DC - you know, 4 legs good, 2 legs better!). So, excellent, you can change your gender and get married! However, this isn't as simple as it looks (never is, is it?).

Birth certificates are owned by states. Marriage certificates are owned by THE State, as in the commonwealth (otherwise knows as a country in this case). So, If I change my Gender I have to get divorced (unlike in the USA or, it seems, in California) because I'm married to a woman and same sex marriages are against federal law (Oh, yes, we are a commonwealth, federation, and a country! - and an island/continent!). So, I choose to not change my gender, just my name. Simple, right? No! Australia has this thing about using titles, so any letters I get sent to me are addressed to Mr. Siobhan Ellis!

As Marriage is owned by the state, Australia tried to prevent a F2M transsexual from getting married to a woman. They argued that he was a she, even though his birth certificate said that he was a he and he was legally a he. That one they lost! Seems that the government wants it all ways. What was interesting was that part of their defense was that the government had already provided them infertility treatment based on the fact that he was an infertile male!

Anyway, back to my dubious legal position. My birth certificate is actually held in the UK. In Australia you have to have SRS to change your gender. In the UK you do not have to change your gender. I could, if I wanted, have my legal status in Australia changed based on my UK passport - would still have to get divorced though :-)

New Zealand is looking good. They have legalised marriage for same sex couples - an interesting step, as New Zealand and Australia recognise each others marriages (did you know New Zealand can become a state within Australia?), and there are now a healthy number of openly gay and trans MP's (Members of Parliament). Talking of which, we have an openly lesbian MP in NSW (New South Wales, a state of which the capital is Sydney. Sydney is NOT the capital of Australia, that is Canberra). She also has two children and is in a steady relationship. We also have a right wing, queer hating MP called the Reverend Niles (Why is it that the Christian faith that is supposed to be about forgiveness, etc produces some of the worst bigots?). He insists that she has to give details about her private life, she insists that if she was straight it would not be an issue, and so therefore does not. So far, the speaker is siding with her. We'll see who wins out.

That's all for now. Until next time

**Siobhán**  
**siobhanellis@hotmail.com**

# Events Horizon!

## 18TH ANNUAL CREATING CHANGE CONFERENCE

November 9-13, 2005

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

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

While we know that building an anti-racist movement will take much time and many resources, we believe that we can take important steps towards the more immediate fulfillment of that commitment.

#### **Creating Change Priorities:**

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

The conference hotel, the Oakland Marriott City Center, located in downtown Oakland, offers a conference rate of \$119.00/night. Please be sure to mention the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Creating Change Conference when making reservations. Reservations must be made by **October 7, 2005** to receive the guaranteed conference rate. You may reserve a room by calling 800/991-7249.

The 2005 Host Committee will organize a community housing program to provide a limited number of no-cost housing options for conference presenters and attendees. In order to participate, submit a completed housing request to the local Host Committee, available on our web site [www.creatingchange.org](http://www.creatingchange.org).

## TRANSVISION SOCIAL — HAYWARD

TransVision Social Transgender Women will meet at **7:00pm on the fourth Friday of every month** to celebrate our survival. Come and share your journey of daily living and participate in the affirmation of our lives. For each of our journeys and our vision, let us validate, support and affirm each other and celebrate our success.

There will be light refreshments and a wonderful atmosphere. Come for that good feeling. For more information, contact Tiffany at (510) 713-6690, ext. 9. Don't miss this!

TRANSGENDER SAN FRANCISCO PRESENTS

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Gift certificates courtesy of Carla's and Dahl Faces

Reservations Required

Please contact Nori at [redacted] or Jennifer at [jennifer.anderson@tgsf.org](mailto:jennifer.anderson@tgsf.org) at least two weeks prior.

Please indicate how many guests will be attending, and their dinner choices. Pre-payment preferred, but cash or check payment accepted at the dinner. Cancellations accepted up to December 5. Full payment requested thereafter

## TRANSSEXUAL LAWYER WINS NATIONAL AWARD

by 365Gay.com  
Newscenter Staff

(San Francisco, California)  
**Shannon Minter**, the legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights has been named one of the winners of the Leadership for a Changing World awards.



He is one of 17 people - and the only one from the LGBT community - chosen from nearly 1,000 nominations for the prestigious Ford Foundation award that carries a \$100,000 prize.

The Center has been at the forefront of legal battles to secure marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples. Minter also has been instrumental in a number of cases involving the rights of transgender women and men.

Minter has been an adviser, mentor, and lawyer to transgender people across the country. He has represented dozens of transgender clients in cutting edge civil rights cases, as well as provided assistance to other attorneys who represent transgender people.

In 2003, Minter represented transgender father Michael Kantaras in a highly publicized custody case that was televised on Court TV and that exposed millions of viewers, many for the first time, to accurate information about transgender people and the process of sex-reassignment. (story)

Minter has helped to draft and lobby for innovative new federal, state and local laws prohibiting discrimination against transgender people. In Portland, Oregon, he helped local activists develop a non-discrimination policy protecting transgender inmates in the county jail. In San Francisco, he and other community members succeeded in a campaign that led to the city and county being the first government employer in the country to provide equal health-care benefits for transgender employees.

In 1993, Minter founded NCLR's Youth Project, the first national legal-advocacy group to address the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth. Over a decade later, he is now supervising the Safe Homes Project at NCLR, which helps LGBT youth who face discrimination and problems in foster care, group homes, or the juvenile-justice system. Currently, Minter is collaborating with Legal Services for Children to author a best practices guide for professionals who deal with LGBT youth in state care, which will be published by the Child Welfare League of America in 2006.

Minter, who was born biologically female was raised in East Texas. In high school, Minter said, he "had some vague idea" that he was born to the wrong gender. In 1992, his last year of law school, Minter began to actively confront transsexuality and in 1996 began transitioning.

Four years later the sex reassignment surgery was completed and a year later he married.

As one of the nation's few recognized experts on transgender legal issues, Minter has written extensively on transgender issues. In 1999, Minter collaborated with Professor Paisley Currah and the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force to author Transgender Equality: A Handbook for Activists and Policymakers, which has been used by activists around the country. Minter speaks at forums, hearings, and gatherings around the country.

In 2004, Minter received an honorary degree from the New York City University School of Law for his advocacy on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

## REFLECTIONS FROM A FORMER Miss TGSF CANDIDATE

By Jennifer Anderson

Cotillion 2006 is just around the corner. I want to encourage as many of you as possible to run. I ran last year and I'm planning on trying again.

Running for Miss TGSF has been one of the most rewarding growth experiences I've had in my lifetime. I really got to see so many community folks at their best and meet many new people. I also had the opportunity to bring several friends from other areas of my life who had never been to a TG event. They all had a blast and I've been hooked on outreach ever since!

I still can't believe that you folks empowered me to sing solo in front of 200+ people. What an incredible growth spurt for me! What most of you didn't know is that it was the first time in my life where I had ever performed publicly. I could feel your love and support and I honestly never felt afraid. The reward of that moment is the main reason I now serve on your board. It is my way of giving back to you what you so freely gave to me.

Sure, I was disappointed when I didn't win, and in retrospect, I think I placed far too much emphasis on winning and missed a lot of the experience in the process. I surely won't make that mistake again. And, I have a beautiful Miss Congeniality award that I display proudly in my living room. I smile every time I notice it.


You owe it to yourselves to have this kind of experience in your lives. If not now, when? I guarantee there will be over 200 of your brothers and sisters out there and they will all be supporting you and loving you through it. You cannot fail and you will savor the memory for the rest of your life. Please don't miss out! Run!

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## TRANSSEXUAL BEATEN FOR REFUSING SEX WITH COP

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Katmandu) A transgendered woman says she was beaten by police in Katmandu the capital of Nepal and held in a cell for 24 hours because she refused to have sex with an officer. Nepal's LGBT rights group Blue Diamond Society said in a statement Tuesday that the woman and a group of gay men were harassed by a police officer in Katmandu's tourist area. Gays and the transgendered have no civil rights in Nepal and are frequently arrested.

The woman's ordeal began when the policeman began groping the 21-year-old woman. When she refused his demand for sex in return for not being arrested she refused. Blue Diamond said that the officer then slapped her and pulled her hair. When her gay friends retaliated the officer went for reinforcements. A fight broke out and one officer was hit on the head with a stone by one of the gay men

The group was taken to a police station. The gays were questioned, their names and addresses recorded and then were released, with the exception of the man who struck the officer. Both the woman and gay man, both of whom are HIV-positive were left in a cell and denied their medication. "The cops were on the lookout to get money and free sex," charged Blue Diamond founder Sunil Pant.

International human rights groups have long criticized Nepal for its treatment of sexual minorities.

In 2004 police in Kathmandu rushed a peaceful demonstration of gays seeking equal rights beating the protestors and dispersing the crowd. The demonstration, in front of the Himalayan nation's Parliament, the Singha Durbar, had been organized by the Blue Diamond Society. The protestors had gathered to submit a petition to the Prime Minister calling for an end to laws against gay sex and for civil rights.

## NEW SANTA CRUZ TG SUPPORT GROUP

Thinking about transitioning? Don't know where to start? In transition and need some support? Made the journey already and would like to share your experiences or just meet new people?

Announcing a brand new support and social group at the UC Santa Cruz campus for transsexual, transgendered, questioning folks and their allies. The group is geared towards those making, thinking about making, or who have made the physical and/or social transition from female to male (FTM) or male to female (MTF).

Students, staff, and faculty are all welcome.

The first meeting will be at the Lionel Cantu GLBTI Center on the UCSC campus, Tues. Oct. 11th @ 7:30pm. The group will be deciding on a name for the group so please bring your ideas! Regular meetings will be meeting on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month.

Questions?

Email **Nic Winter** [winter@chemistry.ucsc.edu](mailto:winter@chemistry.ucsc.edu)

## NEW TRANS ADVISORY HOTLINE OF AMERICA

**1-877-427-3230**

This will supply anyone in the U.S. with sources of:

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- Gender Therapists
- Transgender groups and organizations
- Peer support

Hopefully, at a future date; we will have forwarding capabilities to someone in the state you reside in; answers to questions to veterans issues, problems; and avenues to help in times of natural disasters on a transgender level.

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## ANGLICAN CHURCH FACES NEW CRISIS OVER TRANSSEXUAL PRIEST

by Peter Moore 365Gay.com, London Bureau

(London ) Conservatives in the worldwide Anglican faith already threatening a schism over the election of an openly gay bishop in the United States are incensed over the announcement that a transsexual woman will be ordained into the priesthood in England. Sarah Jones, 44, will be ordained by the Bishop of Hereford.

The Evangelical Alliance - the organization of conservatives in the Church of England - called it "blasphemy".

"[The Bible is] absolutely clear that God created human beings as male and female," said Don Horrocks, a spokesperson for the group.

"Therefore there is absolutely no Christian acknowledgement of the 21st Century human idea that it's possible somehow for a person to take charge of their own destiny and to decide what their own sexuality is. Someone who does that... is therefore actually perpetuating an illusion or masquerading and any Christian is clearly not going to be supportive of someone who purports to be what they're not," Horrocks told the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Bishop Anthony Priddis called the alliance's attack on Jones unwarranted and unchristian. "What's important is that she's a person made by God, loved by God and given gifts by God who feels that she's called to be a priest and that's a call that's been checked out by the church rigorously," Priddis said.

Earlier this month the leader of the worldwide conservative element in the church severed ties with the Church of England.

Nigeria's Archbishop Peter Akinola said that the Nigerian Anglican Church would delete all reference to Canterbury, the "mother" church of the Anglican Communion, from its constitution.

Communion with Canterbury is regarded as one of the defining characteristics of Anglicanism. The Nigerian Church has the second largest number of Anglicans in the world outside of the UK.

The conservative faction formed after the election of Gene Robinson to be bishop of New Hampshire. Robinson is the first openly gay man to be made a bishop in the Anglican faith.

Last week, Robinson said he expected that conservatives would eventually break away from the Anglican Communion. (story) But he said that the underlying issue was not just sexuality. "This is at least as much about power and control as it is about theology and Scripture," he said.

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## Lipstick Conspiracy...

Continued from Page 2

down his window and hissed at her: "Eh, eh yo, dude!" When she turned to look at him, he added, "Yo, where'd you get your weave at?"

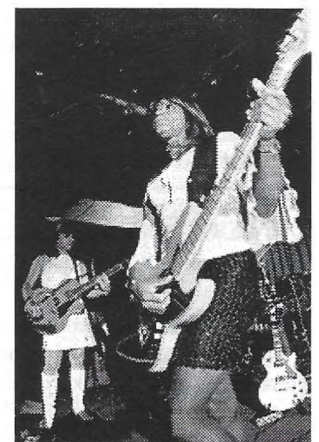
Shawna works as a maintenance man by day — she is reluctant even to whisper her employer's name. She likes her job; the work is fun and fulfilling, and she gets benefits. The catch is that she has to work with a bunch of homophobes. And she can't be Shawna; she has to dress and act like one of the guys. She predicts that if she came out as a tranny at work her co-workers would ostracize her and make the job a living hell. "They'd probably go to my boss and say, 'I'm not working with him or it, or whoever the fuck he thinks he is; I'm not working with a fucking faggot,'" she says. Shawna recalls the time someone at her job started gossiping about another co-worker, saying that the co-worker went to parties "where there's all these punks and motherfuckers wearing wigs and shit." Then the guy telling the story "made the symbol of having a gun in his hand and shooting people."

In her private life Shawna plays guitar and bass for Lipstick Conspiracy, a rock band that features frontwoman and guitarist Sarafina Maraschino, with Marilyn Mitchell holding down guitar and bass duties, Tori Tait on keyboards, and Emme Yarwood on drums. Since its genesis in a San Francisco Victorian in 2003, the five-tranny band has played some 55 gigs — including two San Francisco Gay Pride festivals — toured the West Coast, self-released a five-song EP, garnered a Bay Guardian write-up as "Best Girl Band," and built up a cult of adoration in the trans and SOMA boho communities. After the Lipsticks adopted Martuni's Piano Bar and Cocktail Lounge as their unofficial headquarters, on the far fringes of the city's Castro district, Sarafina says the Zagat Survey published a blurb describing it as a place where you can catch the occasional tranny. One of the joint's bartenders says he's naming a drink after the band. Sarafina says there's even a major label "sniffing around."

But that's all talk. The Lipstick Conspiracy revels in hype — and in being that rare transgendered band that, unlike most identity-affirming queer bands, is actually pretty decent. Its audience to date is largely limited to the clannish LGBT and Michelle Tea communities, but the Lipsticks are relatively easy for the straight crowd to swallow because they don't whack you over the head with militant tranny anthems or sing the blues about electrolysis and fake tits. Plus, its members are endearingly kitschy. The band name was meant to embody a shtick that combines '60s mod style, Nancy Drew, J. Edgar Hoover, or "James Bond in a skirt," says Sarafina, who notes that "conspiracy" evokes images of cat burglars, jewel thieves, spies, and the like, while "lipstick" softens them.

But there's a more personal dimension to the theme: Three of the band members are undercover agents. By day, they appear as men. By night, women. It's a secret they've managed to keep for years.

Plenty of successful musicians conceal their personal lives (and their sexualities) to safeguard a carefully groomed public image. But Lipstick Conspiracy's problem is the opposite: The band members are trying to develop a public image while hiding it from people they interact with on a day-to-day basis. Like most struggling artists, they fanta-



Sarafina (left) and Shawna soundcheck at the Edinburgh Castle.

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## Lipstick Conspiracy...

Continued from Page 16

size regularly and effusively about hitting the big time, but for them commercial success would mean more than penthouse parties and funding their makeup and martini habits. In their worldview, it would allow them to ditch their straight careers and fearlessly step from behind the curtain to live publicly as the people they are in private.

Granted, it's hard to be a tranny girl in the cruel straight world. Tori, a West London-raised computer software engineer, dubs herself a "128-er," because she spends 128 hours per week dressed as a woman and looks like a guy only at her nine-to-five. The keyboardist has no intention of coming out at work; she isn't so committed to gender transition that she'd risk "going from being a valued professional to being 'that TG person' and then having to start an educational campaign." Besides, she adds, "If you want to be out in the world it's easier if you're on one end of the spectrum or the other" — you either totally look like a guy or you totally look like a woman. Tori is pretty androgynous, and there's a part of her that enjoys being a geeky software dude. The average Joe, she says, probably gets his ideas about transgendered identity from Jerry Springer testimonials, which have a common plotline: You discover you're a woman trapped in a man's body and come out, then go through this series of operations until you look like the woman you've always conceived yourself to be, marry a nice man, move to a house in the suburbs, and voilà, your suffering is over. "People are comfortable with that," she says. "You still belong to a specific gender — you were just assigned the wrong one."

The reality is more nuanced, of course. Lipstick Conspiracy's 38-year-old frontwoman Sarafina Maraschino — one of the quintet's two full-time trannies — is the one who is most habituated to her female identity and who is most attached to the time-worn fantasy of suddenly being discovered and propelled to fame and fortune. She also is the band's alpha diva, resembling a stern, bitter-chick version of Disney's Snow White: slinky and raven-haired, prone to wearing ruffly red tops and shiny knee-high combat-ready boots. On a recent weeknight she is decompressing after a show at the Center for Sex and Culture at SF's 11th and Harrison streets, sipping her signature Bombay Sapphire martinis and smoking slender Marlboro Ultra Lights outside Martuni's Piano Bar — the popular tranny-rock chick quips that she and bandmate Marilyn Mitchell sometimes receive mail there. Sarafina readily admits she wasn't always this fabulous: In past lives she has been a Stockton-raised farmboy, an Air Force sergeant, and well-heeled dot-commer among other things. In her current incarnation the singer knows she's a hot ticket, especially in the rarefied world of transgendered divas. And she'll be the first to tell you so.

Born Scott, Sarafina chose her new first name because it sounded gothic. Besides, it matched the "S" engraved on a compact mirror one of her ex-girlfriends had given her. As for her last name, she had a moment of clarity while standing next to a bar tray laden "with all those olives and maraschino cherries and shit." When she takes the stage she often looks as if she's dressed for a futuristic space battle: knee-high rubbery white vinyl boots (she says she owns nine pairs in different colors), white headband, white leather skirt of the Barbarella strain. She wishes her jokes were accompanied by a laugh track.

All these flourishes may explain why Sarafina is so particular about the company she keeps. Even when she put up a profile on the online tranny network URNotAlone.com in early 2003 — supposedly with the intention of making friends — she made sure she looked fierce enough to scare off most people. According to bandmate Tori Tait, Sarafina's profile said something to the tune

of: "I'm stylish, I'm intelligent, and I'm already in a relationship — don't e-mail me unless you're smart."

When Tori first found Sarafina's online profile, she figured she'd "have to write something witty" to get this gal's attention, so she shot off an appropriately sassy e-mail that said: "I'm putting together a band of t-girl adventuresses. Do you want to come play?" Tori had meant this figuratively, but Sarafina took it literally. "I got really excited and replied with my whole CV," she recalls, "plus a list of all the bands I'd been in."

As luck would have it, Tori had been playing keyboards her whole life. They recruited the tranny scenesters Marilyn Mitchell and Shawna Love to switch off on guitar and bass, and, a few months later, brought in drummer Emme to replace Oswald and Monica, two drum machines they'd given appropriately conspiratorial names. Initially the band was just a great excuse to meet up for drinks and talk, but before long the girls were rehearsing in Sarafina's San Francisco apartment.

From then on, it was straight to business. Being in Lipstick Conspiracy, in fact, is a bit like being in the Girl Scouts, even the military. Sergeant Sarafina brags that she fronts the only rock band in the world — the only one she can think of, at least — that is on time for everything, including soundchecks. On the day of a show, she calls everyone and tells them what to wear. "It's like, 'Okay, we're all wearing black,' or 'We're all wearing chartreuse' — something like that," Shawna says. If a member doesn't have anything in that color, Sarafina pulls something from her girlfriend's closet. "A band is a military operation," Sarafina says. "I know how to manage those bitches."

Her past life, after all, has required her to commandeer far more than five trannies. In the Gulf War, she headed a six-person maintenance crew. Six years later, as a product manager at Military.com, she ran an office of up to ten people. "I didn't have any problems firing anyone," she says.

Despite the band's seemingly high aspirations, the Lipsticks appear willing to play alongside any transgendered, guitar-strumming Ponderosa Pine who wants to perform on the same stage, which means they're typically the stand-out act at their shows. They have landed on bills with the best- and worst-dressed of transgendered performers: the capable, if Guidoish, flamenco-folk guitarist Storm Flores (né Stormaldo); the pouty-faced chanteuse Shawna Virago; and, best of all, the honky-tonk drag husband-and-wife duo Buck Shot and Bebe Gunn, who play most of their songs in only one chord and deal with one theme exclusively — they even cover Patsy Cline's "Stand By Your Man," changing the hook to "Stand by your trans/Give him all the T [testosterone] you can." While singing the line, Bebe mimes poking a needle into Buck's ass.

What makes the tranny-rock genre particularly painful is a fondness for spouting the scene jargon, which only makes the typical lyrics less accessible to outsiders: There's FTM (female to male), GG (genetic girl), TG (trans girl), "pre-op" and "post-op" — and the list goes on. As you'd expect, this makes for brazenly schlocky music — such as when Buck Shot and Bebe Gunn regale their audience with a cover of Johnny Riv-



Singer Sarafina and keyboardist Tori tickle the ivories

Continued on Page 18

ers' "Secret Agent Man," but change the chorus to "Secret FTM." In the midst of Stormaldo Flores' set during a recent "Rock Out Without Your Cock Out" all-tranny show at Edinburgh Castle, one of the few genetic boys in the audience elbows his date and audibly whispers, "I think I'm here to reify gender."

After such openers, the crowd often heaves a collective sigh of relief when Lipstick Conspiracy takes the stage with the wallop of a regular '80s-style chick-rock band. (One fan captured it perfectly: Josie and the Pussycats, all grown up. Except in this case, they'd all be squabbling about who gets to be Josie.) It's comforting to finally hear conventional songs about falling in love and being jilted in which the music is more ... well, musical than the average tranny-camp, and the lyrics, thankfully, are devoid of clinical LGBT patois. The set's highlights are Shawna Love's melodic, soft-rock tune, "Kelly's Song," which is based on a poem about feeling left out, and Marilyn's "Just a Girl," a straight-ahead rock song with electric organ glissandos — the group's only obvious tranny anthem. In it, the girls sing cheekily about all the ways in which they're like any other sweet gaggle of decadent chicks: Like my martinis dry, cosmos I won't deny/Smoke those long cigarettes/Thank God I'm not dead yet/Done all those crazy things, short of a wedding ring.

But long cigarettes and martinis are just small scraps of the glamorous life. Lipstick Conspiracy now thinks it's ready to make it big.

Many a fledgling musician grapples with lust for success — that's an all-too-familiar story for any poor music critic who has to listen to every unsigned emcee's projection of how many Beamers and Rolaxes he'll own ... five years from now. Lipstick Conspiracy is no exception. The girls bill themselves as "the next Beatles" — really; they even designed their CD sleeve as a play on Abbey Road, with the San Francisco skyline as a backdrop. Stardom, they believe, will let them be who they really are. Sarafina figures that once the band leaps into the stratosphere, its members will just quit their jobs and be girls full-time.

There's a big problem with this dream, though. You can't throw a tennis ball in the Bay Area without hitting a musician who thinks he's on the verge of getting signed, nor move two inches without bumping into some starry-eyed indie rocker with fantasies of being the next big thing. To actually get a major label interested nowadays, you typically need a few indie-label releases, plenty of college radio interest, and a strong following, which means you have to be out in the public eye, touring and self-promoting. It also pays to be young, and this is not a young band. The upshot is that Lipstick Conspiracy's closeted members would almost certainly be outed long before they could afford to live off their music. And that's where things get even more problematic.

Take Marilyn, a tenured science professor at a Bay Area university who, according to Sarafina, is well known in her field. Marilyn pussyfoots around the idea of coming out at work. It's not totally out of the question, she says, but it does have ramifications in the straight academic science community, and would cause the guitarist plenty of problems. "Coming out would be a huge story, because it's just a novelty," she says. "I would alienate some people and gain a lot more friends. I just have to decide, at some point, when it would be the right thing to do." In fact, the band has even performed at her campus, and Marilyn, hidden beneath a platinum Dolly Parton wig and stage makeup, has spotted some of her own students in the crowds at Lipstick Conspiracy shows — none have recognized her, she thinks. "Right now, not being out at work is not that big of a deal," science girl says sheepishly.

Well, actually, it is a big deal when half of your life revolves around an alter ego you've developed and inhabited. Marilyn, like Sarafina, has Hollywood dreams for Lipstick Conspiracy; she says the short-term goals are to get signed to an indie and to increase the band's visibility. "I would like our music to outlive us," she says. "How we do that, I don't know — the standard way of doing that, of course, is to get a recording contract and all that, but there's a lot of strings tied to getting a recording contract."

A few extra strings in this case. For starters, how can the band hope to appeal to a mainstream audience when half its members are afraid to come out at work? Marilyn says they've "done a few things," such as adding a couple not-ostensibly-gay clubs to their Pacific Northwest tour, and performing at large mixed events like Oakland's Art & Soul Festival — even if the band was relegated to the new LGBT stage. Asked whether she'd be willing to abandon her academic career to go tour with a mid-level band, Marilyn concedes that giving up her post would be "kind of foolish." On the other hand, she muses coyly, professors are allowed to go on sabbatical.

In fact, Marilyn dreams of living daily life in girl mode even if the rock star fantasy never pans out. Hanging out by the bar at SF's Edinburgh Castle before a show, the guitarist gushes about a prospective teaching position in a master's program in Walnut Creek, where she thinks she might try teaching "as a girl." The only way to really pull it off, she figures, is move someplace where nobody knows about her past.

As for the Leading Lipstick, the singer claims her parents should have predicted that little Scotty would grow up to be stylish Sarafina — growing up on a farm in Stockton, he was the only boy who hated getting grease under his fingernails — but it took years of cross-dressing and flirting with the lifestyle before he actually committed to the things you have to do to change your gender. Stationed in Germany in 1988, Scott met and married his now ex-wife. At the time the young soldier was what you might call a Christmas-and-Easter tranny who would "spread her wings" at occasions like Carnival, when everybody dressed in drag. After returning to the States with an honorable discharge in 1993, he studied world history at UC Berkeley and began singing — still as a man — for Vacaville indie band the Occasional Orange.

Scott's transition to full-time trannydom was episodic as he started going to fetish events and dressing as a girl more often. "My wife knew," Sarafina says, "but I didn't wear it on my sleeve." They divorced in 1998, the same year Scott embarked on his five-year dot-com stint — the wife ran off with his old band's drummer, Sarafina explains, adding that she is still friendly with her ex. Scott then moved to San Francisco, where he fantasized about singing Cole Porter in drag: "I figured every bar would have a tranny torch singer," Sarafina says.

But in 2002, before that dream was realized, Scott got laid off from his lucrative Internet job. "I decided everything in my life was wrong, from who I was to how I was trying to sustain myself," Sarafina recalls of the aftermath. "I had all this money laying around. Some of my old business partners and I were scrambling to put together business plans for another company, but we couldn't agree on anything, and I loaned out a bunch of money to help my friends pay rent or buy groceries. The only thing that gave my life meaning was getting dolled up and going out." Following a period of navel-gazing, Scott emphatically concluded that "she" was living in the wrong body. So she decided to fix it.

As Sarafina describes the transformation, it's pretty onerous. There are the expensive electrolysis treatments, the hormone regimen, the wardrobe makeover — plus you've got to grow your hair out, change your name, and, toughest of all, explain to family, friends, acquaintances, and co-workers that you're a girl now. And this is without surgery — which most people can't afford, by the way. "Transition is incredibly difficult; you basically go into what we used to call 'the gender hideout,'" Sarafina says.

Continued from Page 18

When you come out of that hideout, everyone still looks at you sideways. Sarafina says, even in the seen-it-all Bay Area. "We're always going to have biology working against us," she notes. "We're all tall; some of us wear wigs. As long as we're a band and people get it, and they realize that when we perform we're not a train wreck, and we're not a bunch of drag queens. The only things we want to be respected for are being musicians, and being girls."

That's harder than you might think. It's not just a matter of shaking off those well-meaning but clueless indie-rock kids who run up to the band after a show exclaiming "I love you guys! I fuckin' love drag queens!" It's a matter of always being compelled, tediously, to convince people that yes, you walked into the right bathroom or that yes, they should make that check out to Sarafina Maraschino because Sarafina Maraschino is real, and that, no, you're not another fuckin' drag queen running around with your B-52 bouffant and your platform heels and your Priscilla, Queen of the Desert accent. "I never want to throw my drink in somebody's face or yell," Sarafina says. "I have the casual, just, 'Look, sweetie, I'm not a drag queen.'"

Now they just have to convince a whole nation of that.

Shawna Love, 42, always felt like the token something-or-other. Born in East Oakland in the early '60s, she spent half her childhood living in a Hayward neighborhood not unlike Kari's suburban habitat, except a little swankier, she says. When she was eleven, her mom bought her a cheesy electric guitar, which she learned to play by ear, copying licks from her favorite songs by Kiss and later Prince and AC/DC.

As a teen, Shawna became the one black stoner dude who hung out with the white boys at Hayward High because "they had kickass weed, they introduced me to rock 'n' roll, and they didn't judge me," she recalls. "They didn't have any trannies back then, so I was wearing my mother's underwear, but not dressing." After getting her GED in the early 1980s, Shawna moved back to Oakland, bought a blue Fender Stratocaster from a crackhead, and started jamming with her friend Jerry.

Shawna was still living as a man in 1993, when her girlfriend put her in a suede skirt as a joke. "I noticed that I liked it, and I looked good," she recalls. The couple got married two years later. "Then one day I got this wild hair up my ass to put on some of her lingerie, and I did, and that was it," she says. "Something just came over me; it was powerful. I didn't want her shit — I wanted my own shit. She had experience in beauty school, so she taught me how to put on makeup, how to walk in heels, and how to not walk like a dude."

Shawna began dressing as a woman as much as possible. When Jerry caught wind of it, he decided they could no longer be friends. Despite his wife's initial support, their relationship went on the skids because Shawna had a drinking problem, she says, and the cross-dressing didn't help. The couple got divorced in 2000. Their two children — ages seven and eleven — have seen pictures of "Shawna" but have never met her in person, so to speak. Shawna says she isn't trying to shelter them, but sees no need to flaunt it, either.

Being a part-time tranny is actually quite an ordeal. You have to stay aware of what you're wearing at all times, and whether you took off all your makeup. Shawna is so accustomed to her wig that she sometimes catches herself trying to brush hair off her shoulders at work, and then realizes she has none. Co-workers sometimes tease her about the way she talks, she says. When she gets calls on her cell phone from work, she'll modify her voice from

femme and fey to more gruff and percussive. It's a hassle, Shawna says: "Why I gotta do all this shit to be the Shawna that everybody else sees as Shawna?"

But for her and other members of Lipstick Conspiracy, the alternative is worse. Like anyone, Shawna needs money, a stable home, and health insurance. Ultimately, she says, "I just want to pay my rent off this shit; to sustain myself from music. To be able to get up in the morning and do my thing." She's not really sure what steps the band has taken to get a record deal, but Shawna says she's started taking measures into her own hands. Her new gambit: "Wear less clothes on stage, and play my guitar louder."

The girls may be far from landing a contract, but one thing they don't lack is bravado. Gathering at Marilyn's condo in South San Francisco on a recent Sunday night, the bandmates discussed their future over oily falafel sandwiches and red wine. Marilyn had Coldplay on the stereo. "This is currently the number one band in the world," she said.

She followed it with a track from the Houston-based tranny rock band and Lipstick Conspiracy imitator Gurlfriendz. Predictably, they sucked: The song sounded like it was recorded on a cheap-ass four-track; the rhythm section was weak; and it had no solid groove. Then she played the beginning of Lipstick Conspiracy's EP, *Don't Tell a Soul*, which kicks off with "Just a Girl." Sarafina and Andrea sat on the couch grinning smugly, with a look that could be translated: "Our tranny band just kicked that other tranny band's ass."

## WILL I BE A BOY OR A GIRL TODAY?

**Gender-bending teenager switches back and forth**  
Associated Press / [www.edmontonsun.com](http://www.edmontonsun.com)

CHICAGO — When it comes to gender, Alex Polanco is not easily pegged. Some days, he wakes up in the morning and feels male, pulling on jeans and a T-shirt and leaving it at that. Other times, he wears makeup and one of the wigs he keeps in tidily packed boxes in his bedroom closet.

"I don't want to call it a split personality - but sometimes, I feel like a girl. So I put on the costume, what feels comfortable," says the 18-year-old Chicagoan, who refers to himself as "tranny boy." He often switches back and forth around friends he trusts or in urban neighbourhoods where he feels free to express himself.

Gender-bending is, of course, not a new phenomenon. Nineteenth century author George Sand was famous for her cigar-smoking and pants-wearing. More recently, against a backdrop of increasing equality in the workplace, youth and pop icons have been slowly pushing the limits on gender roles - from long-haired rock bands to David Bowie's androgynous look and Madonna's celebration of drag in the 1980s and '90s.

Now, macho men get makeovers on mainstream TV and a popular TV talk show host is a lesbian comic who feels most comfortable in slacks and sneakers. Academics who specialize in gender and pop culture say today's youth are continuing to test the boundaries of gender - and challenging societal standards in the process.

"I think the fluidity of gender is the next big wave in terms of adolescent development," says Caitlin Ryan, a clinical social worker at San Francisco State University who's conducting a long-term sexual orientation and gender survey of youth and their families. "Gender has become part of the defining way that youth organize themselves and rebel against adults."

While researchers have yet to quantify the trend, Ryan says that, in the last five years, she's seen more young people coming out as transsexual - those who believe they are one gender trapped in the body of the other. She and others in her field also are seeing a noticeable number of young people who are taking it further by purposely evading gender definition.

They are "gender fluid," expressing androgyny with wardrobe, hairstyle or makeup - sometimes going as far as calling themselves a "boi" or a "grrl." To some youth, playing with gender identity and roles is as much about fun and self-expression as anything. "There's a kind of tongue-in-cheek aspect to it," Ryan says, "as well as a celebration of oneself."

Elayne Rapping, a professor of American studies at the University of Buffalo, is among those who've seen more students playing with gender roles - something she says her own peers in the '60s and '70s did with sexual orientation.

"A lot of people went back to straight lives. But that doesn't mean that it didn't open doors for a lot of people to come out and stay out," says Rapping, author of *Mediation: Forays into the Culture and Gender Wars*.

# BEYOND IDENTITY: A NONESSENTIALISTIC THEORY OF TRANSEXUALISM

Ariadne Pythia

[Note: while this article is not directly concerned with transgender rights, it presents a non-medicalized view of transsexualism which has implications for rights activists — specifically, if gender identity is not different from other types of social identity, it arguably falls into the category of politically protected “speech” or “expression.”]

Current mainstream sexology maintains that transsexualism occurs because of a cross-gendered “Gender Identity.” Because it is presumed that “Gender Identity” is binary and is “normally” aligned with other (purportedly binary) factors of sex such as genitalia and sex karyotype [sic], cross-gendered Gender Identity is conventionally held to be a “disorder.” Hence transsexualism is a “Gender Identity Disorder” in DSM-IV. It is further argued that the Gender Identity is innate and possibly connected to specific sexually dimorphic brain structures.

More sophisticated biological concepts (cf. Roughgarden, *Evolution's Rainbow*) naturalize sexual and gender diversity as a common form of biological diversity, and raise doubts about the possibility that such diversity can be genetic pathologies, which must be deleterious under all environmental conditions. This is a strict and rigorous criterion, implying that true genetic pathologies can exist only at a very low mutation-selection equilibrium incidence, around 1 case per million live births or less.

The mainstream theory has never clearly explained what “gender identity” is. Many people, primarily of the female sex, claim that they have no gender identity at all, but simply think of themselves as people. Sex reductionists such as Blanchard, Bailey and Lawrence intimate that “gender identity” is a meaningless concept, and that either homosexual or fetishistic sexual motives impel transsexuals to transition. This is inconsistent with the experience of most post-operative transsexuals, who almost always state that they feel more comfortable socially in their gender of identification. If the motives were only sexual, there should be no connection to social assimilation that involve gender roles and gendered behaviors unrelated to sexual activities.

Let me adduce an example from my own experience. I became homeless two years to the day after my SRS. I quickly found myself in a women's homeless shelter. Despite the trauma of homelessness, I was “delighted” by the fact that I was accepted as any other woman by all the women in the shelter, both staff and other homeless women. I passed. I belonged. It was March, and it was raining. I sat in the converted warehouse, looking at the bright murals women had painted on the wall of the children's play area, feeling the space, feeling the sense that I was where I *belonged*. This was much stronger than my fear of homelessness itself. I felt “safe” there for the first time in my life.

What does this feeling of “safety” have to do with sex? To claim this is reducible to fetishism or homosexuality is at least as implausible as the concept of an innate gender identity predisposing certain people to a love of ironing clothes and others to a profound need to memorize sports statistics.

Hence the need for a new theory. And here it is:

MTF transsexualism is simply a complete rejection of masculation. “Masculation” is the system of social rewards and punishments used make people conform to the socially constructed “ideal” of male behavior.

FTM transsexualism is simply a complete rejection of femination. “Femination” is the system of social rewards and pun-

ishments used make people conform to the socially constructed “ideal” female behavior.

I have personal experience of the MTF rejection of masculation. I am guessing that FTM is the mirror image of my experience.

A few comments:

1) It does not matter “why” masculation or femination are rejected, only that they “are” rejected. Hence this theory does not exclude the possibility that some biological variations may increase the likelihood of rejection. However, this theory does not “reduce” transsexualism to biology.

2) Cross gender identity arises in the same way as any other type of social identity. It is not a special, innate brain structure. It is a cognitive-affective structure fleshed out (or not) by ideation.

Those women who report no particular sense of gender identity may well be reporting the truth, just as may a feminist woman or a lesbian who has a highly developed gender identity bolstered by years of experience, reading, discussion and thought. A transsexual has likewise developed a cross-gender identity based on observation, cultural myth, reading, thought and experience. Since however there is no “culture” of transsexuals (with the possible exception of the infamous iatrogenic “transition script”), there is no reason why their “gender identities” should be closely similar to each other — less reason in cross-gender identification than in same-gender identification.

So a fairly well-worked out cross-“gender identity” is an expected consequence of the rejection of masculation or femination. But it is not the essence of transsexualism. Transsexualism has no essence; it is the rejection of an essentialistic paradigm of forcing socially-constructed gendered behavior.

Apparently, rejection of masculation comes in degrees from fully conscious rejection at a very early age, all the way to people who only feel a vague sense of wrongness but try to conform both cognitively and emotionally. The latter sort of people are cognitively masculated, and often do not seem much like women to others if they do transition. They may also be extremely homophobic, which inhibits them from transitioning voice and mannerisms.

Where does sex come in? Anywhere. Nowhere. Sex is an obstacle, and the more completely masculation is rejected, the more of an obstacle it is likely to be. If cross-gender-identification is total, an MTF transsexual will want a vagina simply because women have a vagina. She will also want a uterus and ovaries, but that is not possible today.

If masculation were to end, would MTF transsexualism be eliminated?

The rejection of masculation would end, since there would be no masculation to reject. There would still be males who would choose nurturing, intuitive forms of work and self-expression that our society now genders as “female.” But there would be no punishments for doing so. Would any of these people transition? I think that the answer would be yes, if transition eventually enables them to be mothers and that seems to them the best expression of their feelings.

But such people would not be seen as “transsexuals.” They would be seen as people who would prefer to be women, but did not have the luck to be born as the gender they would prefer to be. This would not be a “disorder”, but it is a disadvantage, because e.g. they cannot be mothers, and would like to be. So, if the technological means of transition exist, they may use them.

## Transcending Transgender

Sponsored by  
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A support group facilitated by Janetta Johnson and Portia Denard;  
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## HE BECOMES A SHE, AND STILL THE MARRIAGE ENDURES

Jeff Wright  
The Oregon Register-Guard

Russell and Marsha Taylor met at a party, fell in love, got married, had two children, grew a business and bought a big white house on a hill. But then a funny thing happened on the way to living happily ever after: Russell became Rebecca.

Diagnosed with gender identity disorder, Rebecca Taylor last year flew to Thailand to see a doctor she regards as the best in the world for sexual reassignment surgeries. Taylor describes the day of the surgery, Feb. 12, 2004, as "my second birthday."

The difference between who she is now and who she was then, she says, "is the difference between being real and playing a role." In her view, gender identity disorder is no different than, say, having a cleft palate: "It's a medical condition that needs to be fixed." The surgery culminated a two-year process in which Taylor presented herself in public as a woman, started therapist-approved hormone therapy and took the necessary steps to acquire a new driver's license identifying her as legally female.

In her former life, Taylor was an Oakridge kid who played clarinet in the school band and guard on the school football team. A self-described computer nerd, Taylor joined the family's successful electronics business and served a stint on the Oakridge City Council.

Today, Taylor lives and works in Eugene, where her business, Diamond Edge Technology, provides a six-figure income for her and her family. She also finds herself at political odds with other transgendered residents in town because, as a woman, she says she opposes allowing people who are not legally defined as female from entering women's public showers and locker rooms.

But mostly, Taylor, 38, defines herself as a homebody who dotes on her partner and children - and acts surprised when others are surprised that her marriage and family are intact. "We are a great couple - far better now than when I was pretending to be who I was not," she says of her spousal relationship. "We are soulmates. The idea of us not being together is ludicrous."

She and the former Marsha Jones met at a party in Oakridge, where both grew up, and married in 1992. Daughter Megan, whose facial features resemble Rebecca's, arrived in 1997, and 5-year-old Ryan was born the same year the family moved to Eugene.

Marsha Taylor, 34, does some accounting work for Rebecca's business but is mostly a stay-at-home mom. Marsha sees little mystery in how she managed to modify yet maintain their relationship. "I love her," says Marsha, who is bisexual. "It doesn't matter to me what genitalia she has. It's her soul, her spirit, her kindness. Overriding all that is our relationship and her parenting skills."

Rebecca says she knew by age 5 or 6 that she didn't feel right in a boy's body. "I would go to school and do boy things and I knew I was pretending," she says. "It was exactly like acting in a play. As I got older, it was harder to do."

After high school graduation, Taylor attended Oregon State University - and learned about gender identity disorder in a freshman psychology class. The realization that the diagnosis might apply to him - that he really was a girl trapped in a boy's body - was too scary to accept. "Within six months, I married a woman because I was so terrified," Taylor says. The marriage ended in divorce two months later.

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## THE DESIRE FOR A SEX CHANGE

*Psychiatrist says sex-change surgery is a collaboration with a mental disorder, not a treatment.*

By Richard P. Fitzgibbons, M.D.  
NARTH: [www.narth.com/docs/desiresch.html](http://www.narth.com/docs/desiresch.html)

How should the Catholic community respond to men and women who think that a person's sex change operation would solve their problem? Catholic teaching in this area is clear. It is impossible to "change" a person's sex. Hormone treatments, cosmetic surgery and surgery to mutilate the sex organs do not change a person's sex.

Confusion in this area has come about because people tend to defer to scientists, particularly in areas where their personal experience is limited. Therefore, when doctors, including those from the prestigious Johns Hopkins, have promoted "sex change" operations for physically normal men who believed they were really women trapped in men's bodies or women who believed they were men trapped in women's bodies, many have accepted the idea that it was indeed possible to change a person's sex.

In an article in First Things titled "Surgical Sex," Dr. Paul McHugh, of Johns Hopkins, laid out some of the history of the "sex change" phenomenon. From the beginning, McHugh had doubts. He interviewed the men for whom the surgeons had created bodies that appeared female, and found the claim that they were now women unconvincing. He states:

None of these encounters were persuasive... The post-surgical subjects struck me as caricatures of women. They wore high heels, copious makeup, and flamboyant clothing; they spoke about how they found themselves able to give vent to their natural inclinations for peace, domesticity, and gentleness—but their large hands, prominent Adam's apples, and thick facial features were incongruous (and would become more so as they aged). Women psychiatrists whom I sent to talk with them would intuitively see through the disguise and the exaggerated postures. "Gals know gals," one said to me, "and that's a guy."

When he became psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins, McHugh decided to challenge what he considered to be a misdirection of psychiatry. He encouraged a study already begun on the outcomes of such surgeries. The study found that while most of the clients said they were happy with the outcome, the various psychological problems, which accompanied their feeling they were the other sex, remained unchanged. They still had the same difficulties with relationships, work and emotions.

McHugh concluded that "to provide a surgical alteration to the body of these unfortunate people was to collaborate with a mental disorder rather than to treat it." He ordered the practice halted at Johns Hopkins and tried to convince others that such interventions were a misuse of psychiatry and surgery. However, in spite of the evidence, the support for the idea of "sex change" operations has continued to grow. In fact, there have been several articles discussing whether it is advisable to begin the "sex change" process in adolescence or even before.

McHugh was frustrated to find that those promoting the practice were not persuaded by empirical evidence: One might expect that those who claim that sexual identity has no biological or physical basis would bring forth more evidence to persuade others. But as I've learned, there is a deep prejudice in favor of the idea that nature is totally malleable.

Without any fixed position on what is given in human nature, any manipulation of it can be defended as legitimate. A practice that appears to give people what they want—and what some of them are prepared to clamor for—turns out to be difficult to combat with ordinary professional experience and wisdom. Even controlled trials or careful follow-up studies to ensure that the practice itself is not damaging are often resisted and the results rejected.

Each cell of a person's body contains chromosomes which identify that individual as either male or female. It is not simply a question of different genitals. Before birth prenatal hormones shape the brains of boys to be different than those of girls.

Mutilating surgery and hormone treatments can create the appearance of a male or female body, but it cannot change the underlying reality. It is not possible to change a person's sex.

In promoting the truth about the human person, the Church is on the side of science when it proclaims that it is not possible to change a person's sex. Therefore, persons who claim to have had their sex changed may not marry or be ordained. A man who is surgically altered to resemble a woman may not marry a man and a woman with a male appearance may not be ordained a priest.

Unfortunately, the promotion of "sex change" operations has decreased investigation into prevention and therapy for those suffering from gender dysphoria. However, a number of mental health professionals work with and do help such individuals.

For example, in one case a Catholic, married man who had several children wanted to become female. He had completed electrolysis to remove facial hair and was on hormone treatment. As child he had been unable to model after his angry

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## Desire for Sex Change...

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father, aggressive older brothers, or hostile boys in the neighborhood. He viewed men as angry, violent, dark people with whom he could not identify. Instead, he had escaped from what he perceived as the unsafe world of men, into a fantasy female world where he felt safe. As he matured, these fantasies diminished and he married and had children. However, at a certain point in his career he found himself in an extremely stressful situation both at work and at home, and his original fantasy about being more safe as a female reemerged.

In his therapeutic treatment, he came to understand the origins of his inability identify with his masculinity. Then he worked on forgiving the men and boys who had hurt him in his childhood and in his adolescence, especially his father and his brothers. In working with a spiritual director, he slowly came to experience God as loving father who could protect him, and to develop a relationship with St. Joseph as a role model of male love. A major goal of treatment was to help him see his own masculinity as a positive gift from God.

In another case, a thirty-year-old man with excellent athletic abilities was seeking "sex change" surgery. The therapist he consulted was able to help him uncover serious emotional conflicts with his mother. She was a self-centered person and a substance abuser who had essentially abandoned him as a child. Unconsciously, he thought that if he were a woman, he finally might receive his mother's love and acceptance. Because he had not experienced a comforting, loving mother/son relationship, his ability to trust and feel safe in the world was badly damaged. He thought that if he were a female he might feel protected in the world. As a result of his regular participation in a "transgender support group" (which was biased toward encouraging "sex change" procedures), he came to believe that there was a biological basis for his belief that he was female. It was extremely difficult for the young man to admit his problems with his mother, or to acknowledge his feelings of disappointment, sadness, and resentment. Eventually, through therapy, he was able to recognize the effects of his mother's dysfunction on his self-image.

Dealing with clients who have a desire to become the other sex, it is important not to take the desire at face value, but to uncover the emotional conflicts which has led them to think they would be happier, safer and more confident as the other sex. The recognition of emotional pain with peers or with a parent leads to the awareness of significant anger which can be resolved through a process of forgiveness. At the same time it is necessary to treat low self-esteem, poor body image, sadness and fears.

Many of those who seek surgical "sex change" suffered from untreated and undiagnosed gender identity disorder (GID) as children. For example, a therapist was consulted by a member of the family of a young woman who had told her parents that she wanted "sex change" surgery after graduating from college. Since childhood, the young woman had shown all the classic symptoms of GID. She had never had female friends, never wore a dress, never used make up, never wore jewelry or dated a boy. She also insisted that her Catholic parents address with a boy's name which they agreed to do.

GID in children is a treatable condition; however, according to Zucker and Bradley, who are experts in the treatment of this disorder in children, parental ambivalence is, in most cases part of the problem with parents ignoring or excusing obvious problems. Zucker and Bradley encourage early intervention, not simply to avoid a later desire for a "sex change" but to prevent the suffering, unhappiness, and isolation that children with GID experience. In the case of this young woman, the therapist recommended treatment of GID to the family member who asked for consultation, but this recommendation was never communicated to the parents. The young woman recently had her breasts removed.

The other conflicts in those who seek "sex change" surgery experience are a failure to embrace the goodness and beauty of their masculinity or femininity, hatred of their bodies, deep resentment with a parent or peer, childhood loneliness and sadness, rejection by peers of the same gender, intense fears of being betrayed and hurt, and a deep desire to be protected in the world. A less common conflict is seen in some boys and men who have powerful artistic and creative gifts, which lead them to experience a strong attraction to the beauty in the female world and to an identification with femininity. This artistic response can begin early in childhood and can lead to a desire to be female. In rare cases, a parent wants a child to be of the opposite sex, dresses and treats the child as being of the opposite sex and may even take the child to a "transgender support group."

Self-knowledge, forgiveness, skilled psychotherapy and good spiritual direction can all play a part in the healing process. Much more work needs to be done in this field. Parents, pediatricians and educators need to be able to recognize GID in children. Mental health professionals and priests should understand the origins of the condition, and know that successful treatment can occur in persons who come to them with the desire for a "sex change." Finally, professionals with positive experience in treating this problem need to share their expertise with others.

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## When He Becomes A She...

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Taylor returned to Oakridge, met and married Marsha, and took over Diamond Traffic Products, a family business that makes traffic counters and other data collection devices. The company, now run by Taylor's twin sister, Andrea Taylor-Miner, employs 24 people. Taylor in 1999 divided the company and moved the R&D branch to Eugene. But for all the business success, Taylor's interior life was a shambles. "I spent seven years in therapy trying to make myself be male," she says.

Finally, in 2003, Taylor could pretend no longer, and sat down for a hard talk with Marsha: "I need to stop fighting this if I'm going to truly be happy in this life." Marsha, not entirely surprised, worried for her partner, her children, herself. "I made two promises," she says. "I said I'll be as supportive as I can be, and I'll never keep our kids away from you."

The two had to figure out if they could make their own relationship work. Intuitively, Marsha says she knew they were making the right decision to go forward with the psychological assessments, hormone regimen and surgery that are part of the transition process. "But there was also this niggling fear of the unknown," she says. "I can remember being scared: 'What if Rebecca is no longer attracted to me?'"

Marsha says she fell in love with Russell Taylor "because he was the first guy who listened and valued what I was saying. He was caring, and really cute." She sometimes misses some of Russell's qualities, thinking back to when he would roughhouse with the kids, or how she liked having a man next to her when they were walking somewhere late at night. "But Russell is still Rebecca," she says. "We just put in a patio, and she put in the fence."

She chuckles when asked how things have changed for the better since her partner became a woman. "Well, she likes to go shopping now," she says. "And we get to wear each other's clothes."

It's hardly been easy, however. Marsha tears up as she recounts some of the schoolhouse teasing she says their daughter has endured. And, with the exception of Rebecca's sister and Marsha's niece, they are estranged from most everyone in their respective families.

Within the family they've created, they insist theirs is a normal world full of love and laughter. The biggest difference, they say, is that the kids now refer to Rebecca as "Dama" instead of "Dad."

"Our kids know they have two parents who love them and are invested in their well-being and their happiness," Marsha says. "So in the end, I think they're going to be OK."

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