January 2004 — Dedicated to the Memory of Gwen Araujo — Volume 23, Issue 1

The Channel

TGSF Celebrates the Holidays!

TGSF TransGender San Francisco is a group for all members of the Transgendered 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

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 2003 - 2004 Officers

(Fiscal Year: May 1 - April 30)

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Contributing Photographers, this Issue: ..... Holiday Pictures taken on Roxy's camera by Jim Weston (President, DeFrank Center), and Yvette.

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FROM THE EDITOR...

I was at the Dickens Christmas Fair last month, patronizing one of the pubs set up in the streets of London Towne, the merits of alcohol consumption having recently been sung enthusiastically by a troupe of traveling players, its merry tune ringing happily in my ears. Needing little encouragement, but feeling a mite parched all the same, perused the innkeeper's wares and liking the look of the available consumables, ordered myself a Boddington's. Good stuff that. And I'm standing there, dressed nicely in a soft feminine sweater and long ruffled skirt - in keeping with the spirit of the thing you know - and the barkeep hands me my change and says "thank you Sir" as slick as you please, and I am left speechless, staring into the creamy foam frothing in my very non-Edwardian disposable cup thinking "Jesus Freakin' H. Christ, what is it gonna take to get a little respect?!"

I must be absolutely stark raving bonkers to think I can get away with this. Whatever was I thinking that, with my deep voice and 6-1 frame, I could possibly convince anyone that I was a woman? I have got to be kidding myself. I mean, who in their right mind would want to change their gender mid-stream? Oh the selfish ingratitude of it all, thinking that God had bungled big time and gave me the wrong body, as if I - a puny human - should know better than He. And what audacity to act upon it when no ecclesiastical intervention was forthcoming! Who cares if people are going to make fun of you for the rest of your life, damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!

It's amazing how quickly the Pit of Despair will open up and swallow you whole, without regard to time, place or circumstance. The depths to which you find yourself falling is enough to give you vertigo - and judging by the amount of corsetry at the Fair it's a wonder we don't have more maidens swooning from the vapors as it is. Yet my friends, it is equally astounding that you can pop right out of the rabbit hole, as if you had springs on the soles of your feet. 'Tis true! For no sooner than I had my ale in hand, a few steps into the streaming crowd led to a near-collision with a very dapper young man in waistcoat and top hat, followed by a doff of monsieur's chapeau and a very polite "excuse me miss." And there! All better now. Just like that.

So a sip of the 'ol nectar and a deep cleansing breath sets things to rights, and I set one foot in front of the other, finding that I'm back on my road again, one step at a time. By no stretch of the imagination, an easy road to follow. Many have gone before me, and many shall come after me. And I realize that there are all sorts of arguments, logic and reasons for not undertaking a journey such as ours. It's not, however, a matter of simply traversing from point A to point B and once there think it's all over and done with, pass me another Boddington's please. Being transitional in nature, and knowing that physical changes are pretty much permanent, it's enough to scare the bejesus out of anyone. And I'm willing to go there? Talk about a leap of faith!

And ya know something? That's exactly what it is. A leap of faith. God (whatever or whoever - the Master Cylinder for all I know) may have added a pinch too much of something extra while stirring my genetic soup. All I know is while I was born with this male body, there has always been this female inside me that is very, very powerful. And not letting her out was making me physically and mentally ill. Now I've read dozens of stories from transsexuals about how changing genders literally saved their lives. And to tell you the truth, I don't know where I would've ended up had I not done the same. I can hazard some frightening guesses, none of them pretty, but having made the decision to change the direction my life was taking, there was little point in doing it if I wasn't going to give it my best shot. I mean, if you want something done right, ya gotta do it yourself!

In reflecting on what's happened to me since, I am so happy I did. It's made such a huge difference in the quality of my life, and for those around me. In all seriousness though, it's not a road to travel alone if you can possibly help it, and it does take no small measure of personal effort. With the modern miracles of computers and the Internet, help, information and connection are just a mouse click away. Ponderous (though certainly not pretentious) tomes such as this one do much to gather us together, a lifeline if you will, for our community.

Yet even with supportive parents and family, the pressures from peers or society can crush a spirit, driving so many of our young ones to ease the pain of existence with devastating finality (I refer you to the story of Tesia Samara, beginning on page 22). Those fortunate to survive their first year of transition have a better chance of making their way through the maze. But now there's so much pressure to find a label to wear, a box to pigeonhole ourselves in, following unrealistic expectations and wading through gobs of bad information.

So it's especially important, even vital, that those of us who've been at it for a while (say 10 years or longer), make ourselves available to those just starting out. It's not enough any more to expect our parents and family to be there for us - some are, some aren't. We instead, have to be there for each other. We connect by doing. We grow by giving of ourselves. We find validation in sharing experiences. We understand the truth of our lives, and express our lives by living the truth. And this New Year that lays before us is fresh and clean, and wrought with ripe potential, in that yes we can - oh we most certainly can! - turn our dreams into reality.

President's Report

By Roxy Carmichael-Hart

The Roxy Horror Picture Show

Let's do the time warp again….

It's the day after Thanksgiving but I am writing my report that you won't see 'til next year. If that isn't a time warp I have no idea what is.

I had a glorious Thanksgiving with my big sis and her family. (I hope you did as well). And just to show you that my job as your President is 24/7, Rachael Janelle and I mailed your December Channels on Thanksgiving Day. The night before, Tommi, Ari and Theresa helped me stuff envelopes so that you could get your Channels before the first of the month. My thanks to all of you ladies for your thoughtfulness and help.

Some of you may remember that at the November End of Month, one of our sisters made a very touching announcement. I want to thank Siobhan for consoling me and reminding me that I did not lose a friend – she is still there and the qualities that I admired in her won't go away. You're a doll, Siobhan.

Some people have called me a doll (and some a lot worse). But, believe it or not there is now a Roxie Hart doll (from "Chicago"). I saw her at the doll show on November 22 that I attended with Rachael and our friends Tommie and Michelle. So now you can dress her, play with her or whatever. I have no doubt that there are some who would like to stick pins in her but…I didn't get her since a little birdie told me that she is my Christmas present.

Today (November 29) I got the mail and was pleased to see so many memberships and donations. I also want to thank our sisters in Vancouver BC for publishing our Cotillion flier, and a couple of the other groups who published some other Cotillion information. It is nice to have national coverage. I hope that our friends from around the country are able to join us. (I took BART also and this was my first BART trip as a girl other than for Pride or the Folsom Street Fair.)

Since I am in a January mindset, you know what that means. Less than one month until Cotillion 2004: Come Together. I hope by now you have your tickets because the early bird price is gone. Tickets are now $60 and you can get them from Carla, Jo-An, Donna, or me and several ExCom members and still on-line through PAYPAL at www.tgsf.org. Better hurry because I won't guarantee that we'll have any at the door. Please see the enclosed postcard for all of the information about tickets and hotels.

In a little over a week I will know how many contestants we will have so I will stop now and will pick this up again on December 7. In the meantime, don't get crushed at the mall.

Well, we've got six lovely ladies who have stepped forward. I am very pleased that this group includes three of my ExCom. Our contestants are (envelope please): Anne Louise Mortensen, TGSF Secretary (and designer of the Cotillion postcard you received in your *Channel;* TGSF Education Co-Chair Kara Flynn, who handles our hotline; TGSF Outreach Co-Chair Marla Selby who has entertained at past Cotillions; Siobhan Ellis, who arranges our fantastic MAC events; Silia Hurst, who has been very active in the central Valley; and Chrysanthemum Hyphus, who announced as a contestant the day after the last Cotillion. I am proud of all of you ladies for a making the commitment and any one would make a fine Miss TGSF. They have already received an idea of the hard and rigorous task in store for them by virtue of their 2-hour training session with Denae Doyle. She can cram so much information into two hours that it's a wonder your brain doesn't fry. Incidentally, I must thank Denae for so graciously donating her time to our contestants and for providing some of her new videos for us to auction off at the Cotillion. Thank you Denae, you are beautiful in so many ways.

Monday December 8. I visited Dr. Brink. I guess I am giving birth to twins on March 9.

The TG Holiday Party at the Tarragon is coming up in a few days as I write this. So again I will stop and report on that and our after party on Monday. Stay dry. Tonight it's raining but I'm only happy when it rains. Who'll stop the rain?

"Tonight, it's about family". So said my beautiful big sister Jackie at the TG Holiday Dinner on December 14. I couldn't have said it better myself. It was about being together and enjoying each other's company – regardless of where we are in the gender spectrum or which group we belong to. It doesn't matter. What matters is family. And this is the sprit of Cotillion 2004. I was pleased to be able to present some gifts of recognition to our reigning (at least for a while longer) Mr. and Miss TGSF, Tyler Fong and Rachel Hill. I was also happy to be able to recognize several individuals who have always stepped forward when asked or needed. In addition to Jackie, gifts were presented to Becky and Loyola from RGA (with Jackie's help), Donna and Julie Freeman, co-founders of DVG, Laura Marlowe and Pam Gray, Tommi and Michelle (who got me something doll-related for Christmas – they are just so sweet), Susan Laird, Kara Flynn, Anne Louise Mortenson, Gelsey Wong, and Denae Doyle. And of course, as always to Rachael Janelle whose love and support has enabled me to have a life to begin with. And I deeply appreciated all of her kind words. I was so pleased to see such a wonderful turnout at the after party where we enjoyed cookies, spirits, coffee and of course the infamous burnt almond cake. Again we recognized Siobhan (thanks to her and Akiko for the lovely card), Madame Steele and Judy from Stanford for their support for our community. I would like to thank Jim Weston, President of the Board of Directors for the Billy DeFrank Center, for acting as my "official photographer" and hopefully you'll see some of his pictures in this *Channel.* Although Rachael designated me as "co-hostess", it goes without saying that most of it was her doing. I've never known any time when she has not given something to all of us and on that day, it was the love of thinking enough of us to invite us to her home.

I was very honored to have TGSF as a co-sponsor of the TG Holiday Party because this event epitomizes what is right and good and beautiful about our community. It signifies the fact that we are all part of a bigger community and that we all need to work together and help one another. Whether you've been part of us for one day or for ten years, there will always be challenges. It is heartening to know that your family is there for you to help you. Last year at this time, I wrote my first column for the *Channel*, noting how on Thanksgiving Day at Rachael Janelle's, I felt like part of a family. And this year, her mother welcomed me to her home as part of her family. TGSF is always going to be a place where your family is there for you, as long as I have something to say about it.

Tonight is the DVG holiday gift exchange and our own holiday party on Thursday. But although I took the morning off to recover from last night (I got to bed at 1:15 AM), as my boss would tell me, "it's time to get back to work."

It is going to be a long week. Not much sleep. No sleep 'til Brooklyn.

What a wonderful Holiday party we had! We met the new "wannabe" Miss TGSFs, recognized some people who are an integral part of our community and were led in some holiday carols by the beautiful Miss Ayme with the even more beautiful voice and heart to match. I recognized her as well with the gift from "Roxy's snap cup" and I am very grateful to her for this *Channel*.

I wrote this column over three weeks. So much has happened just in that time. So much is yet to come.

It has been a good year. A rewarding one, a challenging one, a difficult one. A new year is upon us. We face more challenges and some hard decisions. Our ExCom, our organization, our sisters need your support. Let's meet these challenges together.

Happy New Year and see you at the Cotillion!

Love,

Roxy

Significant Other Support - East Bay

Questions or concerns about your partner's crossdressing? Please call Julie at **(925)** [redacted] e-mail [redacted]**@attbi.com** or write to: Julie Freeman, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885.

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December 7, 2003

TGSF ExCom Meeting Minutes

Present: President Roxy Carmichael-Hart, Vice President Susan Laird, Secretary Anne Louise Mortenson, Treasurer Brooke Jansen, Education Co-Chair Kara Flynn, Education Co-Chair Kelly Anne Marsh, Outreach Co-Chair Marla Selby. Guest: Laura Marlowe. Absent: Social Co-Chair Tommi Watson, Outreach Co-Chair Kalani, Social Co-Chair Aiyanna Eveningstar. At Susan's home on December 7, 2003. Minutes were approved.

President's Report

Status of our debts. Roxy's recommendation is that we do not accept the donation of the coat donated by Rachael Janelle for payment of debt. We will continue to let Rachel Hill use the fox coat until the end of her reign and then we will return the coat to Rachael Janelle. All were in favor.

The crux of the issue is to get out of debt. We still have about $3500 worth of debt. We have to do more to get money into the organization. The more we carry the debt the less we can do for our community. We need to have more money-making events with the key being low overhead. Roxy gave everyone a list of possibilities. We discussed the upcoming Valentine Party. Anne Louise ran down the costs. The greatest cost for the Halloween Party was the food but that was because Carla knew we were going to have a big crowd. We could not have such an ambitious buffet this time and still have a good party. We do have some supplies from last time that includes some wine. We need to make sure we have enough money to buy some alcohol. We do want Carla to pay for the room this time and have some money for decorations. Also we want to make sure we have enough water and soda. We decided on a budget of $450.

We're planning another event at Carla's for June. It would be nice to have another event between that and the Valentine Party. April 22nd is the date for Cal Dreaming. We would like to get an event in May. We need to have people working on these ideas. Kelly may be able to help out with planning these events. Kelly has been talking to her friends and there is not going to be an open date before the Cotillion. Kelly said that the hardest part is not finding people who are willing to help but to finding dates when we can put the events on. If we had a good solid calendar that we could go to and say ok, this week is taken and this one is open.

Roxy said that it is important to get the events planned at least by the time our terms end. We want to get as much of a burden off the shoulders of the future Ex-com as possible. She also included in our packets, events that we had planned early last year but had not followed through on. She noted that we can no longer give lip service to these events and must get them going.

Roxy also wanted the Ex-Com to consider what may happen if the Cotillion this year doesn't make money. We still have low pre-sale. We will have a lot of tickets sold as we near the Cotillion but we could still be a thousand ahead or a thousand behind. She passed out a revised budget showing lower projected revenues than previously distributed. If we have a low attendance that will mean the bar may not make its limit which will add more expense. If we lose money, we need to consider not having the Cotillion or not a Cotillion in the style we're used to. We can't buy a Hummer when we can only afford a Volkswagen. The Cotillion is about coming out, it's not about the money. If we're $3500 in debt, why are we spending $14,000 on a Cotillion? What is our purpose? Our purpose is outreach and education. Being a place where people can come and be accepted. The Cotillion should enhance our community, not drain it. Roxy noted that perhaps there was no longer a need for the Cotillion because there are many other events that people can go to.

Anne Louise suggested a silent auction and dinner as an important part of our social calendar. A non-profit she knows runs all year long on the profit they make from their event. The dinner is put on by all volunteers, but it's a fancy dinner and we have low cost. We could work really hard on this for 6 months and have it in the fall in September. Susan Laird wonders where we're going to get all the things for the silent auction. Kara noted that all the fundraisers are in our own communities. Everything is coming from us. It's difficult to get money from outside the community.

Roxy has been canvassing the outer community and been writing letters. But for twelve letters she wrote letters last September, she got not responses. We need to do more work on grant writing and finding people who know how to approach the outside community.

Roxy also likes the idea of a having a more organized social calendar. Susan Laird thinks the Transgender Picnic may offer us an excellent opportunity to bring people together. It could offer possibilities for a silent auction, entertainment and could be an excellent fundraiser. The attendance for the event has been running lower and lower every year. The organizers may welcome TGSF in to organize it as a fundraising event for TGSF.

Vice President's Report

Cotillion -Susan reported that we had a very successful planning meeting and many positive things were said and done. We are making progress in selling tickets. We did have activity with the PayPal feature on the website.

We have a total of six contestants for Miss TGSF. Roxy noted that Denae Doyle was pleased with the quality of our contestants.

For Pride 2005 someone needs to take the lead and look at options and focus on low budget and monitor website for registration, outreach booth and beer booth forms. Roxy says after the first of the year they put the forms on line: sfpride.org. We would really like do a booth this year because it is a potential money-maker. The problem with the beer booth is the competition. Kara will watch sfpride.org

Treasurer's Report

Brooke prepared statements of Income, Assets, Liabilities, and Equity and Accounts Payable as of December. The bottom line is that we have certain fixed expenses. What happens every month is that we fall behind about $350. This is a recurring situation. We need a way to make up for that $4200 over the year.

Something to add to the expenses. We paid the Marriott $500 and we need to pay them another $500. We may have been paid off already, we need someone to check. We have a quote for insurance: $1228.12. We need to put $665.60 down and then pay the rest off in installments. Brooke will take care of it. Deadline is the 12th.

Secretary's Report

Mail: Tommi said she was going to pick up the mail but she's not here. Roxy picked up the mail the day after Thanksgiving. Brooke brought up the fact that the late fees for bills keep on adding up because we don't have a plan to pick up the mail on a regular basis. We had two months worth of phone bills in the mail. Kara volunteered to pick up the mail. Roxy requested that all of the mail be set aside for her review and that she be apprised of any donations that come in.

Next Ex-Com profile, Roxy. We also should have something for Miss and Mr. TGSF.

Education

We had the Dr. Ousterhout education Seminar and we had a turnout of about seven. Two out of towners. Kara talked to an esthetician but December is too packed so we are looking at February or March. Roxy suggested that Kara contact Wendy Schultz who has a column in the Channel. Kara got an e-mail from Advanced Laser Clinic in San Jose. We might get Kelly to check into that. TG straight committee has picked December 18th to have a tea party. It's at a different time then our Holiday Party. Their party is 6 to 9. Roxy noted the lack of coordination in the TG Community hampers the ability to put on events.

Outreach

Kara's been keeping up on the hotline. Someone called who said they were psychologically abused at UCSF. UCSF said they were going to do more outreach education. They wondered if we would participate in that as well. We had a call from Patricia Williams about a hate crime against her niece who is a FTM.

Marla is going to be in charge of soliciting memberships at our events and at other events. She'll be greeting prospective members and giving them Channels and membership forms.

Social

Next Events: Red and White Ball. We discussed the budget; $450. We discussed having it on a different date then the 14th of February. The 7th is too close to the Cotillion, so we will hold it on February 21st. Susan is going to be helping with the sound. We are going to charge $15 and still have food and a drink.

Next Sunday, December 14th, is the TG Holiday Party at the Tarragon. Roxy is going to give out awards. TGSF is a co-sponsor of this event.

New Business

We are changing the Feb. 1st meeting to Feb. 8th .

Next meeting - January 4, 2004 at Susan's 4 PM (or following Contestant meeting at 11 and the Cotillion Planning Meeting at 2:30)

The Menu For Her Future:

Dallas Restaurateur Monica Greene Considers A Run For Office

By Ernesto Londoño, Dallas Morning News

The restaurant opens in 15 minutes, and Monica Greene is overseeing a scene of controlled chaos. She meticulously arranges the sauces and spices prepared for the night's specials on a rectangular counter. In the background, a musician picks at the strings of his untuned guitar. On a stove in the rear of the kitchen, a cow's tongue wobbles in boiling water.

Ms. Greene, 48, picked it out herself. She hits the stores nearly every morning to stock her three restaurants – Pegaso, her current project, as well as upscale Ciudad and the popular Monica's Aca y Alla.

"I like to be able to pick the best tongue, the best liver," she says in a distinctive voice that manages to be hoarse and silky in the same breath. "When I was a child, in Mexico, I used to go to the market with my nanny. Refrigerators were very small, so you would have to go every day. Everything was fresh, you know, raw. The pigs seemed to be staring at you, the fish still moving."

It's that attention to detail that helped Ms. Greene rise from busing tables to being a successful restaurateur. And her willingness to challenge the status quo – whether in business or in her own identity – may lead her into an entirely new arena.

She opened Pegaso in June in the heart of downtown Dallas, ignoring those who said it would be virtually impossible to make a culinary splash in a part of town that turns largely inert after sunset.

"I wish people could close their eyes and visualize what this could become in five years," she says, standing on the sidewalk, eyes fixed on the crisscrossed light bulbs rigged along a portion of Main Street.

Of course, she's been through this before, in 1993, when she became hell-bent on jump-starting the gentrification of Deep Ellum by opening Eduardo's Aca y Alla. The successful restaurant was rechristened Monica's Aca y Alla the following year when she began living as a woman, shortly before undergoing male-to-female sexual reassignment surgery.

At Pegaso, she greets patrons as they come in. She is dressed in jeans and a nondescript, long-sleeved brown blouse. "Welcome, thank you for coming," she says. Many are friends. The restaurant, which morphs from counter-service taquería during the day to a full-service restaurant at night, has fared well with critics and diners. She designed the menu, inspired by a somber epoch of Mexican history.

Cocina económica – inexpensive cuisine – came about during the 1960s, when the Mexican economy took a nose-dive, and many middle-class Mexicans sold homemade food to neighbors to make ends meet.

But Ms. Greene is gearing up for a new endeavor that could keep her out of the kitchen. "I want to run for City Council," she says. She thinks she "could bring a tremendous amount of energy to City Hall."

Her fans agree.

"Oh, my god – I'll vote for her!" said Jeanne Sanders, a close friend, upon hearing the news.

Continued on Page 10

Beauty Boost

by Wendy R. Schultz

The Right Tool For The Job

Have you ever used a flathead screwdriver when a Phillipshead was called for? ? The job gets done, but often the results are less than stellar and must be redone. That's exactly what happens when you use sponge-tipped applicators to apply makeup. These applicators are usually included with new pan of eye shadow or blush. They cause makeup to go on in one big glop, and blending is impossible. The result can be an unnatural look. Throw them out, and read on.

Synthetic vs. Natural

Natural hairbrushes are made from sable, squirrel, pony, goat, or weasel. With them, cosmetics go on subtly and evenly, and make blending a breeze. Their absorbency allows the product to go on softer and with more control.

Synthetic brushes are made from either nylon or taklon. They're not as absorbent, and don't grab liquids such as foundation or eyeliner. Thus, creams and liquids are applied without being absorbed into the brush. The less product used, the more natural-looking, plus you'll save money.

Brush Kits

Brush kits contain the basics, and often come with their own brush roll, which usually snaps or ties. However, I've found that many brush kits lack the really essential brushes, and I find myself buying brushes individually to supplement the kit (and my habit). Also, travel kits are available, and contain smaller versions of the full size brushes. This is an option, but personally, I never want to be without my full size brushes.

The following list contains essential brushes; some with dual purpose.

- Angled eye shadow fluff
- Small angled eye shadow fluff (for brow and crease)
- Flat eye shadow
- Angled eyeliner
- Contour or blender (for cheek contouring or blending shadow)
- Blusher
- Powder
- Lip color
- Eyelash comb (for lashes and brows)

As you build your collection, you'll find more brushes that suit your needs. After the basics, anything goes. The more brushes you find, the more creative you can be.

Care and Cleaning

Depending on frequency of use, wash brushes once weekly or every other week in mild soap or shampoo. Do not soak brushes in water, because the ferrule, the part that holds the glued hair in place, becomes damaged. Instead, swirl the brush in soapy water in your hand, and rinse thoroughly. Be gentle and smooth the hairs back into their natural place prior to drying. Place the brushes on their side and let air dry naturally. Happy brush hunting!

Questions and feedback are always welcome. My email address is BeautyBoost@msn.com.

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

Events in January

Sunday / January 4 / 4:00pm

TGSF ExCom Meeting

The Next ExCom meeting will be held on Sunday October 5 at 4 PM at the home of our Vice President, Susan Laird, at [redacted] San Francisco. A busy agenda is planned and volunteers are needed! Please join your ExCom and help out! Note the February 2004 meeting has been rescheduled to second Sunday, February 8.

Saturday / January 17 / Contact Siobhán for Time

Another TG Event With MAC At Bloomingdales

1 week before Cotillion and just in time to show off at the Sock Hop! Located upstairs in private rooms in **Bloomingdales, Stanford**. For more details or if you are interested in attending, please e-mail Siobhán at [redacted]@hotmail.com, so she can reserve you a spot.

Saturday / January 17 / 7:00pm

1950's Sock Hop Party

Hosted By Madame Steele & Rachael Janelle.Come in 1950's style dress or just come. Bring your battery powered hips for our always shakin' Hula Hoops. Also, don't forget your rubber legs for the Limbo Bar contest. We plan to have Elvis in the house! Come and enjoy an evening of fun Doors open at 7:00, Show starts at 8:00. At the Savoy Club, 3546 Flora Vista Ave, Santa Clara. Savoy Phone — 408 244 6909. $6.00 Donation will be asked at the door for the IRLM court. For more information contact: Rachael at 408 [redacted]

Saturday / January 24 / Doors open at 5:00pm, Show begins at 7:00pm

TGSF Annual Cotillion!

Come Together at the San Mateo Marriot Hotel, Hwy. 92 & Hwy. 101 in San Mateo, CA. For the complete scoop Betty Boop, visit www.tgsf.org. See you there!

Thursday / January 29 / 7:30pm

TGSF End of Month Event

The Blue Muse, 409 Gough Street, San Francisco.

Coming in February!

Saturday / February 21st / 7:00pm

The Red & White Ball

Carla's Salon & Boutique, 124 Race Street, San Jose, CA. Dress Semi-Formal in Red & White (but you don't have to). Dance Contest and Prizes. Refreshments! $15 includes one drink ticket. Surprise Entertainment. Easy Parking next to Carla's.

January's Birthdays

1/00	Glenn Marzillo	1/14	Mai Ku'uipo
1/01	Laurie Fuhrman-Lowry	1/15	Miki O'Donnell
1/01	Kim Power	1/15	Roberta Price
1/02	Ruben Lopes	1/15	Georgia Castleberry
1/03	Susie Schang	1/16	Rachael Dettmer
1/05	Carla Cecchetto	1/18	Millicent
1/05	Jennifer Wilhelmi	1/19	Akiko Ellis
1/08	Billie Jean Kanios	1/23	Pamela L.
1/09	Bob Lieberman	1/23	P. McLeod
1/10	Valerie Russell	1/26	Vicki Reiman
1/11	Aqua Marine	1/27	Mary Crawford
1/11	Andee Werthman	1/30	Lori Fox
1/14	Diane Giles	1/30	Elizabeth Ruggiero

Many Happy Returns of the Day!

TGSF presents

The Red & White Ball

Carla's Salon & Boutique ♡ February 21st

124 Race Street, San Jose, CA

♡

Dress Semi-Formal in Red & White

(or in something fun)

Dance Contest and Prizes ♡ Refreshments

7 PM till 12 Midnight • $15 includes one drink ticket

Surprise Entertainment • Easy Parking next to Carla's

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Calendar – January 2004

Other Bay Area Groups

Pacific Ctr for Human Growth (PacCtr)
A counseling oriented growth center sponsors all-inclusive gender support groups on every Friday at 8:00pm, 2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley. 510-548-8283

Rainbow Gender Association (RGA)
Meets 1st and 3rd Friday of the month 8:00pm at the New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Drive, San Jose. Mail: PO Box 700730, San Jose, CA 95170 or call 408-984-4044.

Sacramento Gender Association (SGA)
Blue Rose Chapter meets 8:00pm the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month in Sacramento. Write PO Box 162907, Sacramento, CA 95816 or call 916-364-7212 for meeting locations. Website: www.transgender.org/sga; email: sga@transgender.org

Diablo Valley Girls (DVG)
Meets 1st and 3rd Monday of every month. 8:00pm at Club 1220, 1220 Pine Street in Walnut Creek. Write to DVG, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885 or call 925-937-8432.

DVG Rap Group (RCC)
Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month, 7:00pm at Rainbow Community Center, 2118 Willow Pass Road, Suite 500 in Concord. For more information call 925-937-8432.

FTM International
A support group for Female-to-Male CDs and TSs; Holds open Informational Meetings and closed Support Meetings. Write FTM International, Inc., 160 14th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 or call 415-553-5987.

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

Silicon Valley Gender Association (SVGA)
A new trangender support group meets at the Billy De Frank Community Center in San Jose on the 2nd and 4th Friday of every month from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. For more information, call 408-293-2429.

Santa Cruz Trans (SCT)
Bi-weekly social/support group for gender-gifted persons serving Santa Cruz and Central Coast. 1st and 3rd Tuesdays every month at The Diversity Center, 177 Walnut Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (831) 425-5422; 7:00pm

SCOUT (SCOUT)
Santa Cruz Organization for Uniting Transmen, meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Diversity Center (listed above); 7:30pm

The Mid-Peninsula Transgender Group (MPTG)
A support group for the LGBT community that meets at 7:30 pm on the first Wednesday of each month at the Women's Health Boutique, 1115 South B Street, San Mateo - (408) 619-2908.

Central City Hospitality House (CCHH)
288 Turk Street, SF. 415-749-2167. Facilitated TG discussion group every Monday, 5:00pm - 6:30pm.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:00 PM DVG RCC	2 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	3
4 **4:00 PM TGSF: ExCom Meeting**	5 5:00 PM CCHH 7:00 PM PISSR General Meeting 8:00 PM DVG	6 7:00 PM SCT	7 7:30 PM MPTG	8	9 7:00 PM SVGA 8:00 PM PacCtr	10 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
11	12 5:00 PM CCHH	13	14	15 7:00 PM DVG RCC	16 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	17 **7:00 PM 50's Sock Hop Party** **TG MAC Makeovers @ Bloomie's**
18	19 5:00 PM CCHH 8:00 PM DVG	20 7:00 PM SCT	21	22	23 7:00 PM SVGA 8:00 PM PacCtr	24 **5:00 PM TGSF COTILLION!** 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
25	26 5:00 PM CCHH	27 7:30 PM SCOUT	28	29 **7:30 PM TGSF: EOM @ Blue Muse**	30 8:00 PM PacCtr	31

TGSF Membership Application

Membership Year is May 1 to April 30 / $40 Single Membership; $45 Family.

Please Print / Check all that apply:

❑ Special $35 Single Membership w/ Email-Only* Delivery of CHANNEL

❑ New Member | ❑ Renewal ❑ Member #:_____ | with ❑ Family Member | What Year did you first join TGSF? _____

Preferred Name: _____ Birthdate (Month/Day): _____ / _____

Mailing Name: _____

Family Member's Name: _____ Birthdate (Month/Day): _____ / _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Optional: ❑ Telephone: (_____) _____ What Name should we ask for if we need to call you? _____

***Email:** _____ Website URL: _____

Would you like a link from the TGSF Website to your URL? ❑ Yes ❑ No

May we use photos of you taken at TGSF events in our newsletter or website? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Send Check or Money Order to: TGSF, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486, or hand to any Board Member at a TGSF Social.

Special Events!

Another TG Event with MAC At Bloomingdales

Saturday / January 17, 2004

In October, in conjunction with MAC, Makeup Art Cosmetics, at Bloomingdales in the Stanford Mall, we ran our 4th semi-annual makeup event. The very foundation of the company is based on cosmetics for photography, so MAC colors tend to be more vibrant, and foundations tend to have excellent coverage.

This event started 2 years ago when one of the artists on the counter, Maycher who is on the right in the picture, noticed that they were getting a number of transgendered customers at the counter. She suggested to the manager at the time, Patty, that they run an event for us. Patty took the idea and worked it through Bloomingdales management, and the idea was born. She first approached me, but I felt it needed more official help from TGSF, and the first event was really organized by Kara, with a little help from me.

Over the last 2 years we've seen increasing support from this team. Keith, who is now the manager of the MAC counter at Nordstom's at Stanford Mall did makeup for participants and officials at the Cotillion 2003.

Now we have some new faces. Patty left to pursue a different career and Lydia, pictures center, took over as manager. Maycher re-floated the idea with Lydia, who was more than happy to help, and so a new event was born for Nov 2003.

We managed to keep 3 makeup artists continually busy from 11am, when the store opened, until 7pm when the store closed, without any breaks. I'm pleased to say that all the ladies who attended turned up on time, or kept me informed as to where they were. One girl, Tommi, even had a motoring accident that morning, but still attended!

The format of the event was that we had a private room on the main floor, very near the MAC counter, and nibbles and drinks were provided by MAC. When arriving for an appointment, we would choose our look and colors and the makeup artists would not only apply the makeup, but spent one hour showing how to apply the makeup so the look could be re-created.

Admittedly, this is not a charitable event. MAC does expect to make money from us. The normal expectation is that someone spends $40 in product for a makeover. With this event we have agreed that as long as it averages to $40 a person, this is OK. This enables the less well off from the community to still go to the event and learn, and are effectively supported by those who spend more.

I'm pleased to say that Lydia considered this event a complete success, and looks forward to continuing to run events with us. Although a TGSF event, it is open to anyone. To show their support for our community, the MAC counter is providing two prizes for the silent auction and will, again, be providing makeup services to contestants and participants at the Cotillion in 2004.

Lastly, we will be running another event on January 17th, again at MAC in Bloomingdales, Stanford Mall. It will, again, be in a private room. This will give you the opportunity to get your look together for the Cotillion on January 24th, and even look fabulous for any event that Saturday night, such as Rachael Janelle's San Jose Imperial Court event, Sock-a-Hop, at the Savoy, Santa Clara. I hope to see you at both events.

Siobhán Ellis
[redacted]**@hotmail.com**

MAC

AT
Bloomingdales
Stanford Mall
January 17th 2004

Contact:
[redacted]@hotmail.com
408[redacted]

Gender Identity Center of Colorado's

Annual Colorado Gold Rush!

COLORADO GOLD RUSH 2004

The Colorado Gold Rush is an annual conference held every year in beautiful Denver, Colorado! Come for the excitement and leave with something of value.

All are welcome to attend:
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- Female to male transsexuals
- Male to female transsexuals
- Family, friends and co-workers
- Our significant others
- Those who want to learn more

Workshops include:
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- Dressing
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Saturday night is our ***Mardi-Gras Gala Ball***, so be sure to bring your best evening gown or tux and let the glamorous person in you out to play!

For more information, call 303-202-6466
or our visit website at http://www.cologoldrush.org.

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Special Events!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17 / 7:00PM

1950's Sock Hop Party!

Hosted By **Madame Steele & Rachael Janelle**.

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We plan to have Elvis in the house!

Come and enjoy an evening of fun!

Doors open at 7:00pm

Show starts at 8:00pm

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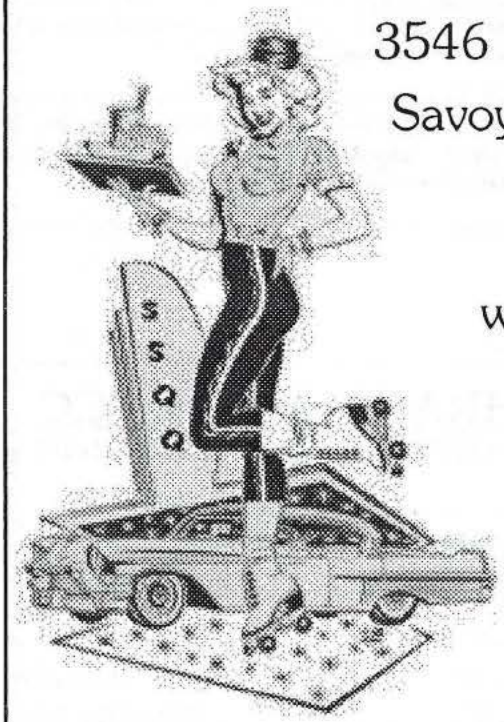
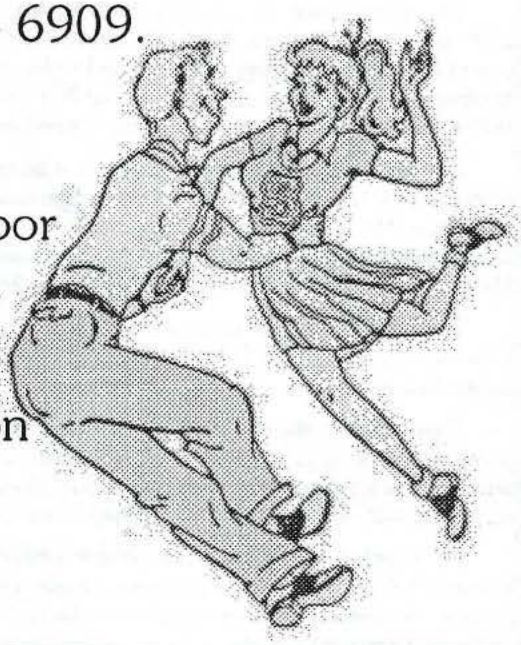


$6.00 Donation will be asked at the door for the IRLM court.



For more information contact Rachael

408 [redacted]

Monica Greene...

Continued from Page 5

"Politicians, you know, are always worried about skeletons. One of the remarkable things about the way she's chosen to live her life is that there are no skeletons in Monica's life," Ms. Sanders says.

There may not be. But her journey was by no means easy.

Monica was born Eduardo, the seventh of eight children in a conservative Mexican family. Her mother died of cancer when Ms. Greene was 3. "We're talking about a conservative upbringing created more by tradition than will," she says. "What the neighbors think is very important."

As a boy, Ms. Greene says she had to deal in silence with an unsettling reality: being a girl trapped in a boy's body. Many nights, she tried on dresses behind locked doors.

"I struggled all my life with my identity. This is not a sexual thing. This is not a fetish. Imagine walking around wearing a mask for 18 years," she says, referring to how old she was when she learned there were other people who felt they were a different gender. "It was a struggle, especially because where I come from, I never even heard the word. I came to hear the word – transsexual – when I came to the U.S."

At 17, on a whim, she drove with two friends, headed to Indiana, with the intention of winning the heart of a Mexican girl who lived there. Ms. Greene says she has always been attracted to women – never men.

The road trip was cut short at the border because her two friends didn't have proper visas. Ms. Greene arrived in Dallas shortly after midnight on Jan. 5, 1974. She vowed to stay the least amount of time possible. "I said, 'There are no mountains here, I can't stay in this city,'" she recalls. "But life has turns you don't necessarily see ahead."

She stayed. Her father wanted Ms. Greene to enroll in business school. She was put off by the idea. He gave her an ultimatum: Go to college or support yourself.

Ms. Greene opted for the latter. "It gave me freedom," she says. "In retrospect, I guess it opened the door, unknowingly, made me feel that eventually I could be myself."

She found work as a busboy. Initially, Ms. Greene was blatantly ignorant of the ins and outs of a restaurant. Once, she brought cream for coffee to a customer who had ordered sour cream. On another occasion, when a diner ordered A-1 sauce for his steak, she ran to the kitchen and demanded, "I need some 81 sauce!"

But she worked her way up, first as a server and later as a manager at some of the hottest restaurants in town. She also married twice. Ms. Greene had two children with her first wife, who was 16 when they wed. The couple divorced seven years later, and Ms. Greene retained custody of the kids, now 26 and 27.

Two years into her second marriage, Ms. Greene opened Eduardo's Aca y Alla in February 1992. The following year, her father died in Mexico. His death marked a turning point for her.

That summer, she shared her secret with her children and her wife. "I was struggling," she recalls. "Their reaction was what anybody's reaction would be after someone tells you something as surprising and challenging as that. They had a lot of courage."

On March 4, 1994, Ms. Greene announced to her staff that Eduardo's Aca y Alla would undergo a name change. With little fanfare, she showed up wearing a black plaid miniskirt, high heels and a white jacket.

"There were a lot of questions. A lot of fear," she recalls. "Emotionally, when you set yourself to go through a transition like this, you're prepared to lose everything. You become fearless."

Her family was concerned but supportive, Ms. Greene says.

But it was nonetheless a lonely road. People who want to have sex change operations are commonly encouraged to assume their intended gender for a year before undergoing surgery.

Ms. Greene left her wife in charge of the restaurant and moved in with an accountant who was undergoing the same operation. Ms. Greene's roommate underwent surgery first. Two days after what had seemed to be a successful procedure, she developed a blood clot in a lung and died.

Albeit devastated, Ms. Greene was no less determined to undergo what she refers to as a "reincarnation in the same lifetime."

With a passport that bore her new name, on May 7, 1995, Ms. Greene boarded a plane to Brussels, Belgium, where she underwent the surgery. Onboard, she wrote a poem that is now painted on a wall in her office.

"The moon leading the way, a beacon to my destiny. Eminently pure snow white tundra below, soft as feathered pillows, silent witness to a silver bird, hovering inside hundreds of souls, some male, some female, one both."

Gender realignment surgery is among the most painful operations.

"You don't think about the pain," she says. "At that point, physical pain was not important."

She returned.

"Many people that go through gender reassignment choose to go away somewhere to reinvent themselves," says her friend Ms. Sanders. "But not Monica. Monica stayed."

And her evolution is by no means over, Ms. Greene says. In May 2005, she says she intends to succeed council member John Loza, who will be barred by term limits from running again.

Although a political rookie, Ms. Greene's bid for office is already resonating in high places.

"Monica is bright, she is gutsy and she is independent," offered Dallas Mayor Laura Miller. "All very important traits in City Hall that few politicians possess."

After all, Ms. Greene says, few people have worn as many hats in a lifetime. She's a staple of the city's hospitality industry. She is familiar with the plight of immigrants. And she would appeal to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered voters.

"I have become part of the fiber of this community," she says.

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ExCom Profile

Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind

By Roxy Carmichael-Hart

The name on everyone's lips is going to be...Roxy (sic)....

Okay you know I like to talk in lyric, as my friend Wendy Schultz (author of Beauty Boost) has told you. But I look at lyrics as poetry, as a way of expressing myself and as a way of communicating. I mean, why use your own words when someone else's will work just as well? In other words, why reinvent the wheel? (a phrase I kind of hate.)

So, many of you are asking "Who's that girl?" Yet another lyric. I've been your president for the last few months and will be for a while longer. But I know that a lot of you who read the *Channel* don't really know me that well. I haven't been on the scene that long. If you've been reading the *Channel* for the last few months you have learned about my transition, an absolutely exhilarating experience. But here is a chance to get up close and personal with Roxy herself.

It all started in a ramshackle brownstone in Queens New York (a sign even then?). If you've ever seen the introduction to "All in the Family", that's where I used to live. When I was five we moved to Miami Florida. When I was ten I learned the joys of my father's clothing store and for the next few years I had a virtually unlimited supply of women's clothes to wear every Saturday when I helped my father do inventory (he went to the race track.) He came and went like clockwork so I always knew what time he would be back, except for the time he lost big and got back early and nearly caught me. He never suspected, probably because there was no reason to suspect anything. Not even when I was unusually demonstrative when he sold my favorite blue dress. We bounced around the area for the next 20 years and during this time I ran back and forth to college in Tallahassee.

Danielle (aka Roxy) on her first day. My first pic!

In 1979 in search of a job, I decided to move to Duluth Minnesota and stayed there for five years. I came to Modesto in 1984 and outside of my one year in exile in Portland Oregon (a long story) have been in California ever since. I don't count my seven months in Tahoe because they don't seem real.

I got married in 1994, divorced in 1995 and had an on and off relationship with the same woman for about 8 years. This is a rather pathetic and unhappy story and so I won't repeat it since it pretty much sickened everyone who knew me. Suffice to say that the only good that came from my relationship with her was her supply of nightgowns and lingerie. I guess it is kind of a good thing that she wasn't around very much. Also, our final breakup was the thing that finally led me on my true path so I guess my life with her wasn't a complete waste.

I collect "stuff". Lots of it. Everything from baseball cards, stamps, coins, snow globes, miniature houses, Hallmark ornaments. Baseball memorabilia. Beanie Babies, books, screenplays, TV Guides, videos and DVDs. You name it, I probably have at least one of it. And all of this in a two bedroom apartment. Coupled with my TGSF stuff, there is barely enough room for me. My ex-girlfriend said that she had never seen a man's apartment that looked like mine. I've never seen *anyone's* apartment that looked like mine. Ok so my ex-wife had a ton of airplanes and Coca-Cola stuff and other junk all over. I pretty much got custody of the airplanes since I bought them. But I digress.

My new passion is fashion dolls. I adore them. Tommy and Michelle introduced me to Gene Marshall at Rachael Janelle's and it was love at first site. I am taken with the extraordinary beauty of this doll, with the care and the love that went into creating her and into making her a real person. I am awestruck by the clothes and the incredible detail that was involved. As I told Tommy, you have to love something so much to take this much effort into creating it. From Gene has grown my interest in Tyler Wentworth, Brenda Starr and Sydney Chase. I will be attending two doll shows in January – one a week before, one a week after the Cotillion. I will also be meeting the creator of the Tyler doll at a signing. In the same manner as I enjoy attending book signings, I enjoy meeting artists and learning of their motivation in creating their masterpieces. When I first moved to Fremont I bought a painting that had been hanging in the art gallery in Hayward City Hall. I had the pleasure of meeting the artist and in knowing that I helped him and his wife purchase their first home. But I was more enthralled talking with him and discussing why he chose his subject. He has no qualms that a painting of his wife is hanging in my living room.

But am I an artist you ask? As you might have guessed from my monthly diatribes in the *Channel*, I love to write. I have been writing since I was eight years old when I helped my mother write a play for our elementary school. I have written short stories and more recently, screenplays. Although neither of my last two screenplays progressed at a screenwriter's convention I attended, that has not dissuaded me. I have written another and will submit that for consideration at another time. And I recently began another effort, a very personal one. But then all of my writing stems from my desire to express different points of view and look at my life differently from different angles. A couple of months ago, I came across a story I wrote in 1978 called "The Other Life". It was about a man who undergoes a "sex change" (as I called it) operation and has to live a new life. Although a lot of it reflects my basic ignorance (at the time) about the transgender community such as it was in 1978, some of it is very eerie. For example, in the story, the main character, ostensibly me, has a best friend named Linda. Well 24 years later I met Linda Edwards who became one of my best friends. The character undergoes her transition in San Francisco. In 1978 I was in graduate school in Florida State University and never would have any inkling that I would one day live in this area. Maybe then, my psyche was telling me to walk into the light.

Provacative yet defiant.

Danielle was born on June 15, 2002. Before that day was up, she would be called Roxy Hart (the "Carmichael" came about a month later). On October 4, 2002, Rachael Janelle asked me to become more involved in TGSF. I hadn't known her very long, in fact probably had really talked with her only a couple of times. Yet, she saw something in me that she thought could benefit our community. At the TGSF holiday party last year, she introduced me and joked "this girl doesn't know what office she wants to run for, maybe she wants to be president." Little did she, I and we know what was to come.

To this point, my life hasn't been anything like I expected it to be. But now, as Marty McFly told Doc Brown "History is about to change."

Final thought. How did I get my name? The Roxy Hart part is easy, especially if you've seen "Chicago". I've seen the play dozens of times and have loved the story. But one day, I saw the movie "Welcome Home Roxy Carmichael" with Jeff Daniels and from her pre-shoplifting days, Winona Ryder (I almost became Winona – heavens!). Since I've always liked this movie I couldn't decide if I wanted to be Roxy Carmichael or Roxy Hart, so I decided to be both. I have trouble with decisions. I am glad I don't have this problem with houses or cars. But when people ask me why the three names, I tell them "Roxy Tyler Moore or Roxy Zeta-Jones didn't quite sound right. Of course I could have been Roxy Janelle Light but I think those names rightfully belong to someone who does justice to them.

So now you know the rest of the story.

trans gender san francisco

tgsf

presents

Cotillion 2004

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Miss TGSF 2004 Contestants!

The New Contestants for Miss TGSF 2004

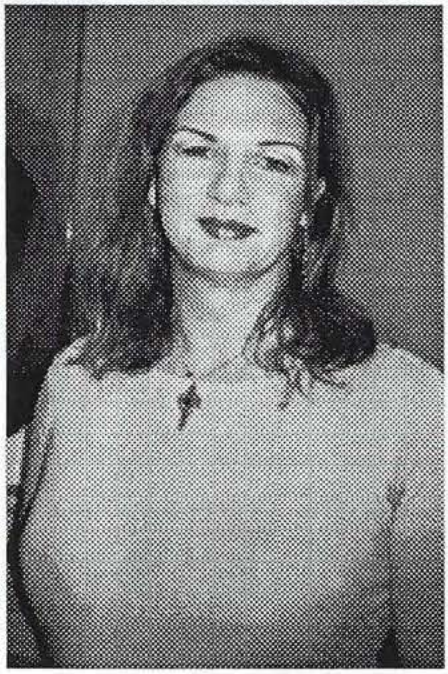
The Cotillion is getting closer every day. Here are the six wonderful ladies who are running. It sounds like in the words of Kara "...this Cotillion is going to be a blast".

I'm **Kara** [redacted]. I debated long and hard about whether or not to run for Miss TGSF, but I decided that this event really gives one the opportunity to give back to the community. It's a chance to reach out to a part of society that doesn't quite understand the transgender community, and to let them know what we're all about. I've been active with TGSF for nearly 2 years in the Education Co-Chair position, as well as filling in for some other positions before I was elected. I've also been involved with some of the setup of the past two Cotillions, and have seen what a good time the previous contestants have had. Win or lose, I know this Cotillion is going to be a blast!

Hi, I'm **Anne** [redacted]. I had the opportunity to be a contestant in the last two Cotillions and I can't wait for the next. It's a lot of fun being a contestant, especially getting to know the other girls and sharing the fun and excitement. I don't think any of us forget though, how important it is to be Miss TGSF and the challenge of representing the transgendered community. I've been the secretary for TGSF this year and it's been wonderful getting to know so many people in the community. I've also been helping plan the Cotillion. I'm definitely as busy as I'll ever want to be. Everyone is getting excited about the grand event of the year. It's going to be a great Cotillion.

Hi, I'm **Chrysanthemum** [redacted]. I have been a member of TGSF since January, after emerging as an MTF transsexual on December 5, 2002. Although I live in Santa Cruz, TGSF was the first contact I had with the transgender community, for which I am grateful. The people I met early on helped show me the ropes on how to do this in practical ways, referred me to the health care providers and consultants I needed, and helped me see that this gender issue is not just some deranged thing I made up all by myself. So many of you were telling my story. After thriving through my first year of full-time trans-womanhood, I look forward to giving back by being out there on stage, showing the world what a beautiful thing a t-girl can be. I will do the best I can to make us all look good. If I should win, I will bring to bear on the tasks before me my newfound skills in being a leader and public face of the transgendered that I have been applying as leader of the all-inclusive trans organization in my own community, and in any case, continue to build ties between my local community and that of the greater Bay Area.

Miss TGSF 2004 Contestants!



I'm **Siobhan** [redacted]. I have been to every Cotillion since 2000, when I didn't even live in the US. As the years have gone by, my participation has increased to where this year I am a contestant. I've always admired any entrant for the sheer courage of standing on stage and presenting themselves to the audience. Whilst it is an honor to compete, I can assure you that the butterfly's have already started in my stomach. This role is extremely important, not just to TGSF, but to the Transgendered community as a whole. Win, or not, I'll be joining the ExCom next year, and will use the experience to help further our cause, but also to learn from those who have gone before me. Lastly, this is a great event. Go. Enjoy yourselves, support our community, but most of all...be FABULOUS!

Hi, I'm **Marla Genevieve** [redacted]. I'm the Outreach Co-chair of TGSF. I'm a very blessed woman indeed. I have my wife, Judy, my musical career as a trumpet player, have not lost any friends, have the support of the family members that count, and even that lousy job driving a hack that I've done intermittently since 1983. Basically I want to give back to the community that's given me so much. I wouldn't have found myself for the help all you girls have given me. I was a chronic malcontent and if it weren't for TGSF and my wife, I wouldn't be the person I am today.

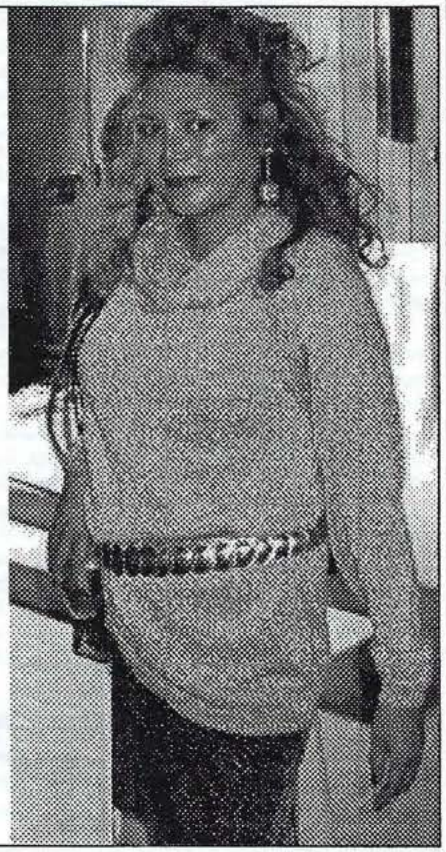
Hello, my name is **Sili**[redacted]. One evening, I met Angela Borges at Faces. She took me under her wing and exposed me to the TRANSGENDER community; my life was changed. She has truly been a blessing. Dealing with the ignorance of today's society hurt me dearly when I began meeting my sisters and brothers and sharing their journeys. Never having realized that the TRANSGENDER community consisted of Crossdressers, Transvestites, Drag Queens, Transsexuals, gay, lesbian and probably a 100 other variety of individuals suffering with an identity crisis. I thought TRANSGENDER meant transsexuals and nothing else.

Next thing you know, I found myself running for Miss Transgender San Francisco, being recognized in the TRANSGENDER community and working with Jo-An Torres, who has put her faith in me by selecting me to be her Hospitality Hostess for "I LOVE IT" located in Fremont. My excitement and passion became overwhelming as I started to actually understand my own existence.

My life now has a meaning. When I look back, I realize that the Lord has always answered my prayers by protecting me, giving me an understanding and supportive husband and the ability to find a respectable place of employment. It's time to return my gratitude by giving my all to the TRANSGENDER community.

Because we have been silent for too long, I have so much passion and so much to share by speaking out. I BELIEVE it is time for all of us to unite and let today's society know that we are NOT freaks, over sexed or villains. "WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS AND WE ARE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN".

With no disrespect intended, don't you feel it is time to put our vanity aside, work together as a whole, and reach out by supporting one another? We already have the desire and the passion to make a difference. Come together! Build it and they will come to a safe haven for support.



TG News!

Oakland Protects Transgender People

By Heather MacDonald, Oakland Tribune STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND — Transgender people will be protected from discrimination under an ordinance adopted unanimously by the Oakland City Council on Tuesday night. Oakland is set to join Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas and Boston by widening its sexual orientation anti-discrimination ordinance to include gender identity or sexual expression in order to protect transgender people.

Final approval of the ordinance is set for Jan. 6. Advocates said the ordinance, which covers public facilities as well as restaurants, shops and cafes, was a long over-due first step, and called on the City Council to re-establish the Oakland Human Rights Commission to enforce the ordinance.

"This is not just another ordinance, but just a real step forward for human rights," said Oakland resident Jill King. The new law will allow transgender people access to bathrooms and dressing rooms set aside for the gender they identify with, even if it is different than their actual or perceived gender.

"There is still work to be done," said Councilmember Danny Wan (Grandlake- Chinatown), who called for education for the public and training for city employees. However, because the city's budget has been stretched thin, there is no funding available at this time for sensitivity training or an outreach campaign.

Patricia Kevena Fili, development coordinator for AIDS Project East Bay, said the change is an official acknowledgment of the right of transgender people to demand protection under the law. "The ordinance lets them know that the city cares about them and considers them part of the community," Kevena Fili said. "A lot more is needed, but it's a start."

TG Inmate Denied Hormone Therapy

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Topeka, Kansas) A transgendered prisoner has been told she is not eligible for hormone treatments.

Christine Sorrels, 29, is a pre-operative transsexual who has dressed as a female since the age of 13. For the past ten years she has undergone hormone treatments. She has had breast implants and intends to have sex-reassignment surgery once she is released from prison where she is serving an 18-month sentence for forgery.

Sorrels was placed in El Dorado prison, a facility for men, and taken off estrogen despite her protests.

She was then turned down for the therapy by her final avenue of appeal. Sorrels had filed an official appeal with the Kansas State legislature's Special Committee on Claims Against the State. The committee, members of the legislature, act as a forum of last resort for Kansans who have grievances against the state but cannot get relief in the courts.

In her claim, Sorrels argued that the Department of Corrections has shown "deliberate indifference to my serious medical needs" by refusing to provide hormone therapy. "I have continuously tried to explain my need for estrogen," she wrote in her claim.

Sorrels said that she has suffered physical discomfort, depression and mental anguish because he cannot continue the therapy, which may jeopardize her surgery when she is released next fall.

"It's not the state's responsibility or a medical necessity to fund that elective surgery," ruled Rep. Bonnie Huy, chairwoman of the Committee. Huy said that Sorrels fails to qualify for hormone therapy under guidelines set by Prison Health Services, a Tennessee company that provides medical services for inmates under a contract with the Department of Corrections. Those guidelines require an inmate to have seen a licensed psychiatrist with an expertise in gender disorders for at least 12 sessions and to have undergone sexual reassignment surgery.

Important Website Update!

If you want an ID/Password to access the new **Member's area** on the TGSF website, send an email request to Susan Laird: [redacted]**@hairzapper.com**.

2003 Exceeds Others In Transgender Killings

Patrick Letellier, Gay.com PlanetOut.com Network

The year 2003 has been the most deadly on record for transgender people, with more victims of anti-transgender killings reported this year than in any year prior.

Thirty-eight transgender people have been reported killed so far this year, twice the number reported just two years ago, according to experts who monitor anti-transgender violence. Last year, 27 such killings were reported.

"It's brutal and it's gut-wrenching," said Shawna Virago, a transgender activist at Community United Against Violence, a San Francisco agency that provides support to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender victims of hate and domestic violence.

Virago and other experts attribute the increasing killings to a number of factors, including diligence on the part of the transgender community to track the crimes, increased media interest, and, in some parts of the country, better relationships between law enforcement and the transgender community.

"Then there's the intense hatred," said Jennifer Rakowski, a board member of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects, an alliance of 26 organizations that tracks hate violence in the United States. Rakowski believes that some people who assault transgender people do not see their victims as fully human. "The killers view them as 'it' as opposed to seeing them as people," Rakowski told the Gay.com/PlanetOut.com Network. "That leads to their expectation of societal permission to go through with the killing."

Other experts attribute the increased violence to the growing visibility of transgender people in the United States and around the world. "As transgender people are becoming more visible, we're becoming a bigger target," Gwen Smith told the Gay.com/PlanetOut.com Network. Smith has been tracking transgender killings for the past six years on her Web site, Remembering Our Dead.

"As trans and LGBT rights become a bigger issue in society, these killings are part of that backlash to it," Smith said. Smith believes transgender people are often the main targets of a backlash in part because they are the most visible, sometimes clearly challenging stereotypical notions of "appropriate" male and female attire or gender expression.

"It's especially true for M-to-F's (male-to-female transgender people)," Smith said. Many of the 38 people killed in 2003 are low-income, transgender women of color, who, in large part because of anti-transgender discrimination," Smith said, "end up in situations that might be dangerous."

Many transgender people, for instance, face employment discrimination. As a result, some move to poorer neighborhoods where there are higher levels of crime, and, as such, may end up the targets of hate violence. "This is not a cut-and-dry pattern," Smith said, "but by and large, if you end up on the street in a poor neighborhood as a transgender woman, you may end up a target."

Virago said that domestic violence is also a factor in many anti-transgender killings that is rarely discussed. "That also has to do with transphobia: the belief that trans people don't have legitimate relationships," she said. "Because we are only often seen as sex workers, the domestic violence piece is far too often left out."

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TG News!

Police Appeal For Help In Year-Old TG Murder Case

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Philadelphia police and the district attorney are appealing for help in solving the killing the of a transgendered woman nearly a year ago.

But, allegations that police were responsible for the death of Nizah Morris because they could have prevented it were dismissed by investigators. Morris, 47, was found unconscious, with massive head injuries on a downtown street in December 21, 2002. She died two days later, on Christmas Eve, in hospital without regaining consciousness.

Friends said the popular gay club entertainer had attended a Christmas party at the Key West Bar and Grille. After she became too intoxicated to make her own way home, and appeared ill, a call was placed to 911for medical assistance.

An ambulance was on route when Philadelphia police officer Elizabeth Skala arrived on the scene. Officer Skala called off the ambulance and drove Morris to the vicinity of the 1500 block of Walnut Streets where she let Morris out of the car. Skala said Morris wanted out, appeared OK, and since she had not broken any law was free to go. Several hours later Morris was discovered lying on the sidewalk by friends on their home from the party.

The case drew criticism from Philadelphia's LGBT community. For months police insisted that Morris' injuries were an accident and were consistent with a fall. They said Morris had been so drunk she obviously stumbled and fell, a direct contradiction from what Skala had said earlier. Months later, in April, after a forensics review of the case determined Morris' injuries were the result of a beating, the District attorney became involved in the case. But, police have yet to make an arrest.

Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham held a press conference about her office's investigation into the slaying. Abraham found that despite claims to the contrary, police acted properly when they responded the call at the Key West Bar and Grille. The DA said that personnel who responded to the scene went beyond their call of duty adding they did what they could, given that she was not injured. Abraham also said the investigation to find Morris' killer continues. "There are people on the street who know something and saw something," Abraham said, calling on them to come forward.

In September, Morris' mother, Roslyn Wilkins, filed a federal lawsuit against police, paramedics and the owners of the Key West Bar & Grille. That suit is pending.

Thailand: Transgendered Boxer Subject of Movie

BANGKOK, Thailand— He'd put on mascara, a layer of blush, bright red lipstick and finally the gloves before stepping into the testosterone-charged ring to knock the stuffing out of his opponents. Now Parinya Charoenphol, one of Thailand's most famous kickboxers, is the subject of a movie.

"Beautiful Boxer," which premiered Wednesday night, is about the effeminate prizefighter who earned 22 wins and 18 knockouts in a career that lasted six years.

Parinya, 22, hung up his gloves at the peak of his career three years ago to undergo a sex change operation and become an entertainer in Bangkok's famous bar district of Patpong.

"In the end it is not just a story about a transvestite boxer but a story about a human being who goes through an emotional journey to match his heart with his body," director Ekachai Uekrongtham told The Associated Press. Ekachai said he almost gave up making the movie because he couldn't find a suitable actor to play Parinya. He finally chose Assani Suwan, a 22-year-old kickboxer who took ballet lessons to bring out his feminine side.

"I am a man, 100 percent," Assani said. "So the biggest challenge was how could I make the audience believe that I have the heart of a woman."

Scotland Transgender Law Snags On Marriage

Gay.com U.K.

Transsexuals in Scotland are claiming that new legislation giving greater recognition to them is riddled with faults, because of the United Kingdom's stance on same-sex marriages.

The Gender Recognition Bill is seen as a chance for transsexuals to be fully recognized under Scottish law, allowing people to change the gender written on their birth certificates.

But because couples of the same gender are not allowed to get married, when the certificate is changed, existing marriages must effectively be annulled.

Many transsexual activists say this is unfair, as they have no intention of separating from their marital partners and are keen to push the issue with local MPs. On Tuesday, the Scottish Parliament's equal opportunities committee heard evidence from leaders of GLBT rights groups and people who will be affected by the bill.

A statement read to the committee from two transsexual men expressed "unhappiness" at the bill, which they claim "forces transsexuals to choose between their human rights and the protections marriage provides their family."

"It is a very welcome bill, but there are some problems," Tim Hopkins of Scotland's Equality Network said on Tuesday.

Advocates for transgender rights hope their opposition will either lead to changes in the bill in Westminster, or will pressure the Scottish Executive to alter the legislation for Scotland.

Important Website Update!

If you want an ID/Password to access the new **Member's area** on the TGSF website, send an email request to Susan Laird: [redacted]**@hairzapper.com**.

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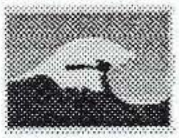

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Eddie Izzard

Why All The Girls Are Hot On Eddie Izzard's Heels

From Sue Carroll

A MAN dressed in designer skirt, teetering in high heels down Main Street, Smallsville, USA, is pretty sure to be in for a hard time. Americans don't do weird. And yet the country has been captivated by Eddie Izzard.

Night after night, his shows have been a sell-out across the States. Fans just can't get enough of Britain's most famous cross- dresser.

Baffling, perhaps, until Eddie points out the fascination in America with John Inman in Are You Being Served? "They love that unique British sense of camp," he says. "Don't forget Monty Python was huge over here."

But they didn't take transvestism to Broadway and beyond as Eddie has, thrilling audiences with a look that's been compared with rock star Pink, except that Eddie's prettier. The situation could hardly be more surreal as I sit in a macho American bar discussing chipped nails with a man. He's wearing pink lipstick and jeans, so am I.

On the cleavage front, no contest. I'm mesmerized by the bosoms poking out of his tight black T-shirt like a couple of juicy melons. He's very proud of his 38C falsies, is Eddie, and hasn't taken them off since he left the stage at Philadelphia's Merriam Theatre, where he wowed the audience in a lace wrap-around skirt and black basque. I'd love to report that he presented a picture of feminine beauty, but this wasn't the case.

These days, multi-millionaire Eddie, 41, can afford a better class of frock than your average transvestite, so he looks elegant and friendly, not frumpy or threatening in a stockings-and-suspenders Rocky Horror Show way.

But he must be a martyr to his feet because he wears killer heels that would cripple most women. "They do completely alter the way you walk, that's true," he admits. "Otherwise, when I'm dressed as a woman I'm still me. I use my own voice and gestures. When I first came out as a transvestite, I tried to pass myself off as a girl, but it's like tasting chocolate for the first time in 20 years - you go over the top.

I THINK now I'm more of a male Emma Peel. Or Lara Croft. If I had to choose a role model it would be Raquel Welch in the 70s. "But, really, I just always wanted to look as girly as I could with this boy's body that I had. I've always related to that feminine thing of painted nails, false eyelashes. When girls at school hoisted their waistbands up to make their skirts shorter I wanted to do the same. "That's not gayness, it's just a bloke having an extra girl thing. I felt all those feminine instincts.

"I was caught nicking lipstick from Boots. I used to keep a few in a shoebox with a false lining in the bottom. When I was confronted I said they were for a friend and I showed my dad a picture of a girl I'd met on a school trip and fancied. I couldn't deal with the question: 'Are you a transvestite?' Not then."

Eddie was four when he felt the urge to dress up but it was a secret until he emerged at 23, a fledgling comedian making regular appearances at London's Comedy Store.

He walked into the club one night in a skirt and top. If he was embarrassed or self-conscious he didn't show it. But he says now: "I was scared beyond belief. Facing it out was just the hardest thing I've ever done in my life, and even now I still get c**p in the street.

"People will look at me and say: 'What the f***'s that?' I start shouting back then. I can switch easily from being casual and laid- back into ultimate attack mode, especially if it catches you unawares. There's less hassle than there used to be. The last time, it was a bunch of teenage kids flexing the aggressive muscle. I can deal with it."

He's always been fit and lippy enough to look after himself. As a child he was a "boy racer", a superb footballer and a keen Scout. "I had all the badges," he says proudly.

He's not gay, and says he couldn't face the idea of kissing a man. In fact, it's hard to imagine a blokier bloke. He has irritatingly male traits: constantly channel-hopping on TV and talking incessantly about gadgets, gizmos and motorbikes - though he drives a Mini Cooper. "I did want a Rolls-Royce when I was a kid, but I like the navigator thingy in my car," he says.

If he wasn't a comedian Eddie, bizarrely, has the makings for a fine army officer. He has a fascination for guns and loves action- hero stuff and new technology. He's also an astute businessman, completely at home with figures, graphs and spreadsheets. Oh yes, and he loves women - as in wants to sleep with them.

"There are times when I do wish I was bisexual," he says. "I could wear all the clothes in the world then. But I'm not. I fancy women. I really, really fancy women. I like blonde, bosomy women with va-va-voom. The sex siren types." It's reciprocated - females from nine to 90 are wild about him.

"On stage I've had knickers and thongs thrown at me," he says, clearly very chuffed. "And I get these saucy Mills & Boon-type notes from girls and erotic literature."

All this must be very thrilling for a man who was 21 before he lost his virginity. "I'm not ashamed of that," he says. "I lost my sexual self-esteem. "I'd been a bouncy, pushy lad at St Bede's School in Eastbourne, but then that teenager stuff happened. I got acne, I was stiff and angular, plus there were no girls to practice on at college.

"I just couldn't get the sex thing off the ground at all. I also had this terrible, acute fear of rejection, so I wasn't very good at chatting up women."

The roots of this, he says, almost certainly lie in his childhood and the death of his mother from cancer when he was six. "I think you never really get over that rejection," he says, "and I guess that's why I go on stage looking for approval. The audience takes the part of your parent".

They couldn't, however, fulfil the most personal part of his existence and he says he once stayed celibate for three years. "That's why coming out as a transvestite was so amazing," he adds. "It made me realize I couldn't be rejected - it was all out there. It was tough, it takes guts and it's given me my confidence.

"I honestly thought it would be all over for me with women. Then I discovered that it turns a lot of them on. They find it very sexy. I found that at parties women wanted to talk about it for hours. "I've had things with all sorts of women - some lesbian, because it turns them on being with a guy dressed as a woman. Others not.

Girls have always loved men in make-up. Look at Glam rock, the New Romantics, The Rocky Horror Show. "I've lived with people. I just prefer not to talk about the women I've been with because I don't want to upset them."

Eddie's latest gig, his show Sexie, started last June in Australia and finally reaches Britain on Thursday. When a woman fan in Philadelphia realized I was meeting the star she was beside herself. "Tell him we love him," she insisted.

In the theatre foyer, Sexie camisoles and thongs were selling fast. In Britain, where he'll do four sell-out Wembley shows, cosmetic giants Mac are launching a special lipstick. Some progress for the boy who kept stolen Rimmel. Eddie says: "I need to make money to keep on making DVDs and films. I was born to do movies. When I was about 15, I broke into Pinewood studios. I got this map and traveled by rail from Eastbourne, then took a bus to Ivor Heath. When I got there they told me to f*** off, so I crept in by the tradesmen's entrance. I saw enough to know it was what I wanted to do."

Eddie says his drive comes from the fact he didn't achieve real recognition until he was 30. "Now I feel I have to work at double speed," he says. "There's so much catching up to do. I keep myself on form. I go to the gym, I eat healthily and I've stopped smoking."

It's paid off. In America he won two Emmy awards for his video Dressed To Kill and he is taken seriously as an actor after roles in the films Velvet Goldmine and All The Queen's Men. Last year he was nominated for a Tony for his Broadway performance in A Day In The Death Of Joe Egg.

He says: "I still feel that I've got too much stuff to do to settle down and have children, though that's certainly an ambition. At the moment work is the main challenge. On a good night it's like living on pure oxygen."

For the audience it's more like living on another planet as he conducts a conversation which veers from exploding bosoms to dental rip-offs - "That'll be the decay I planted last time" - before it's steered manfully back to the subject of what kind of transvestite he really is.

"I'm a walky, talky, climby-tree, hunter-gathery type of transvestite," he says.

I'll buy that.

Takin' Care of Biz...

TGSF Assets, Liabilities, and Equity

as of 19 December 2003

Assets

Cash	$4,250.00
Event Equipment	
Decorations	$1,000.00
Food Service	$200.00
Office Supplies	$50.00
Total Assets	$5,500.00

Liabilities and Equity

Accounts Payable	$3,395.12
Equity	$2,104.88
Total Liabilities and Equity	$5,500.00

Statement of Income

Revenue

Memberships	$0.00
Donations	$100.00
Advertising	$166.67
Cotillion Tickets	$444.75
Total	**$711.42**

Expenses

Cotillion	$100.00
Newsletter	$450.00
Telephone	$50.00
Miscellaneous	$0.00
Total	$600.00
Net Income	**$111.42**

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Thank You, and Bless You for Caring!

Contact TGSF!

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

Commentary and Notices

Liminality, Deliminalization, & GRS

By Jamie Faye Fenton

Recently I tossed out the term "deliminalization" in the context of GRS, resulting in some confusion. No, it is not the name of some liberal Dutch drug policy!

Rather, it comes from the terms liminal and liminality, which are from anthropology. Liminality refers to the concept of "rite of passage", or a ritual which an individual undergoes and the community recognizes as designating a new status for that person. Examples include the Australian Aboriginal Walkabout, the Bar Mitzvah in Judaica, and The Order of the Arrow in the Boy Scouts.

The liminal state is the period of spiritual transition. In the Walkabout example, it is the time when the boy prepared, wanders the desert, testing his survival skills and undergoing a spiritual transformation.

Weddings, births, deaths, and religious conversions are examples of other liminal rituals, although the core meaning is the rite of passage. Liminal is also the root of the term "subliminal", which we use to describe messages sent below the threshold of perception by a group.

The "Standards of Care" metaphor of liminal transformation is to us, familiar: The novitiate undergoes a period of trial living in the new gender, and after approval by an authority, undergoes surgical transformation. The actual liminal state occurs while the surgery is being performed. You "go to sleep a man, and awaken a woman" (or vice versa for FTMs). Mildred Brown, beloved by us all, sends each new post-op a Teddy Bear inscribed with a message "True Self at Last", designating the GRS date as a new birthday.

This attainment of new status via surgery became institutionalized in the 1970s when laws allowing gender change were passed in many jurisdictions. It also brought on the acerbic critique of the process by Janice Raymond in her book "The Transsexual Empire". I would argue that she was close enough to be wrong, for some of the right reasons. [Check out "Sex Changes" by Patrick Califa, for a satisfying and devastating critique of Raymond].

One of her points was that modern medical science had created a new liminal process in error. I like the way Lannie Rose put it: "SRS does not make you a woman any more than rhinoplasty makes you a rhinoceros". The argument backing this up usually includes the following points:

A neo-vagina is created, but not an entire reproductive system. Womanhood is more than the capacity to be fucked from the front. Genetic material not changed. The unfortunate consequences of the "forced masculinization" of a MtF (vice versa FtMs) are not remediated. GRS for FtMs is a much less developed and satisfying process that many forego, so there is a double standard. GRS can have undesirable side effects, including loss of sensation. GRS may be an unacceptable medical risk for some otherwise qualified.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly, making GRS a condition for the acceptance by others of one's transformation of gender greatly increases the pressures acting upon a TG person to undergo it.

I have known many TG people who, despite warnings to the contrary by caregivers, still expected some sort of magic result from GRS. I have also known TG people, some no longer alive, who thought that their transformation was "completed" by GRS, and neglected aspects of the crucial aftercare period.

For all these reasons, I advocate for the "deliminalization" of GRS. This means we shift the focus from this one momentous occasion to the broader process of transition. This means changing the laws and changing our own conceptions. How this is to be done is as open as the future. The process is already underway.

Make no mistake, GRS must still be available, and should be accepted as is any other life-saving medical procedure. Research funding should be increased, better follow-up studies done, and techniques improved.

However, "Pre-op or Post-op" should not matter to anyone but the individual involved. That is what "deliminalization" means.

The Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA)

Transgender Veterans March To The Wall!

The Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA) will march to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, on Saturday, May 1, 2004. Organizers hope to draw a significant group of supporters from the Transgender community to honor the many transgender people who served our nation with pride and honor.

Angela Brightfeather, Chair of the TAVA Special Projects Committee, noted many reasons for a march to the wall, most of which, "lie within our own hearts and the pride with which we served our country, and to finally pay our respects to our service members and friends, as we should, and in a way that they never knew us, as people of Transgender experience."

Credit has been given to many minorities in America. They have had their members recognized for their sacrifices in the military and in serving our country. Organizations have been formed to highlight the contributions and defend the rights of many of these veterans. This march will be the first time that transgender veterans will have been recognized and remembered for their valuable contributions and sacrifices.

Due to the ongoing neglect of rights of Transgender American Veterans, this march should provide healing and recognition for those who have been and continue to be discriminated against due to their transgender status.

Like all American Veteran's who need to share their experiences, Transgender Veterans have been unable to gather and share those experiences openly with pride. This march will establish the presence of Transgender veterans and provide a face and voice this group of American Veterans. It is time our country recognizes that the Transgender community has heroes who contributed to our freedoms.

Monica Helms, President of TAVA, stated, "This event marks the first time transgender veterans will gather as a group to show that they exist. Although the March will not make an overt political statement, the presence of these veterans will be noticed, and their quiet message will be heard."

Department of Veteran Affairs treatment of transgender veterans, particularly regarding health care for transsexual vets, is of concern to TAVA and to individual veterans. The VA is prohibited by law from performing sex reassignment surgery. Other treatment required by transsexuals, e.g., gender identity disorder counseling and hormone therapy, while not prohibited, appears to be strongly discouraged by VA headquarters. Requests for information from the VA Chief of Patient Services on legal and policy issues concerning treatment of transsexual veterans have failed to elicit any kind of acknowledgement.

Anyone wishing to join the march may check for details on the TAVA website: http://www.geocities.com/tg_vet_march_to_the_wall/ or contact: Angela Brightfeather at projects@tavausa.org or Tina Rice at media@tavausa.org

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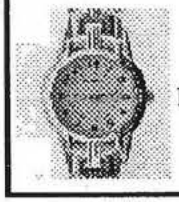

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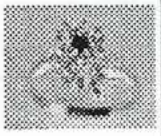

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A Misunderstood Life

Rockdale Teen Struggled for Acceptance Before Committing Suicide

By Michelle M. Martinez and Tony Plohetski
Austin American Statesman, Austin Texas

ROCKDALE — Tesia Samara loved to dance to tunes by Shakira, the popular Latin rump-shaker.

The Rockdale High School sophomore choreographed her own moves and put on shows for family members. She wrote poetry, read avidly and enjoyed watching old sitcoms such as "Designing Women" and "The Golden Girls" with her mother, Karen Johle.

Tesia was accepted at home. But at school, her mother and friends say, her peers could never see beyond the boy they had known for years — Benjamin Brownlee. It didn't matter that he had grown his hair long or that he wore girl's hip-huggers and eyeliner. They didn't understand that he thought he was a girl trapped in a boy's body.

"He took a lot of humiliation and degradation at school," Johle, 44, said. "You know how kids are. They snigger behind your back. Called him names. Gay boy, fag boy, hair girl."

He wanted desperately to be accepted as Tesia Samara — the name he gave his female persona.

Ben's younger brother, 13-year-old Christopher, found him hanging Nov. 18 in a garage at his home on North Wilcox Street with a one-inch black rope used to lead animals around his neck. Ben was 15. He didn't leave a suicide note, his mother said.

Some say Ben finally gave in to a belief that he'd never be accepted in Rockdale, a town of about 5,400 people, where Friday night football games and trips to the local Sonic on weekend nights are a staple of teenage life.

Social acceptance for Ben and other nonconformists is often in shorter supply in small towns, exacerbating feelings of loneliness and isolation, experts said. More often than not, Ben's friends said, he felt he was misunderstood, especially by his classmates. And in many ways, he was.

Johle asked funeral home workers to cremate her son's body.

"The foremost thought was he hated this damn place, and I sure as hell wasn't going to bury him in a city he hated so badly," she said.

Ben was upbeat before school on the Tuesday he killed himself, his mother said. He had had a successful therapy session at Waterloo Counseling Center in South Austin the night before. He had given his therapist feedback that indicated his thoughts of suicide were not as intense as they had been when he started counseling a few months earlier.

Johle said she is convinced that there is some validity to a rumor spreading through town that classmates assaulted and urinated on Ben after school the day he killed himself. Rockdale police officers checked it out and say it is merely a rumor.

"He was used to the mouthing and the words and all that," Johle said. "He could deal with that, but something had to have happened that afternoon that was just the straw that broke the camel's back, that made him say, 'This is never going to get any better. It's only going to get worse.' "

Rockdale High senior Francis Manning, one of Ben's closest friends, said she thinks living a life without acceptance became too much for Ben to bear.

"I don't think he could handle the thought that people wouldn't look at him as a woman, and he couldn't get that in Rockdale," she said.

Ben didn't try to hide who he was, despite living in a small town. He hoped to eventually have a sex change operation.

But in the interim, he identified himself as transgendered — a phenomenon that is the new frontier in Austin and across the nation among therapists who treat people struggling with gender issues. Academic studies have shown that about 1 percent of the nation's population is transgendered and that at least half of transgendered teens have attempted suicide.

Jesse May, another of Ben's friends, said Ben was courageous for being who he wanted to be, despite the harassment he faced at school. Even strong people have their limits, he said.

"You can take a rock and say that it's strong enough and it can stand anything, and you can hit it with a hammer and nothing will happen. You can hit it with a hammer for a whole year and nothing will happen . . . but if you throw that rock into a hole with a hundred hammers hammering away for eight hours a day, five days a week, eventually that rock is going to crack somewhere."

'He Really Did It'

Johle thought Ben might be at a local cemetery when she got home from her job cleaning rooms at the Rainbow Courts Motel & Apartments the day her son died.

He was often at home when she arrived at 4:30 p.m. But several times a week, he visited the cemetery, a peaceful place where he could read or listen to music.

"Not many people go there; hardly anybody was ever there to bother him," Johle said. "It was just a place where he could be alone and think. Be himself."

When Christopher got home, he and his mother decided to go for a grocery store run but stopped along the way to ask the mother of Ben's friend if she knew whether Ben was at their house.

By the time they got home around 7:30 p.m., still no Ben. Not long after, Johle noticed every pair of shoes he owned was tucked under the coffee table, and his headphones and CDs were nearby.

Suddenly, Johle got an unsettling feeling.

"I told Christopher, 'Please go check the garage,' " she said. "I think my gut almost knew. I was just having to hope against hope."

Christopher found his older brother hanging in the garage, his pain and frustration extinguished by the noose around his neck. Johle said Christopher ran back into the house, screaming and crying: "Momma, he did it. He really did it."

When Lt. J.D. Newlin and other Rockdale police officers arrived at the home, Johle was on the floor screaming and crying, according to a police report. Christopher directed officers to the garage, where they found Ben hanging from a rafter. Newlin said Ben was wearing what appeared to be a nightshirt and was already pale and cold. Authorities did not order an autopsy.

News of his death quickly swept through Rockdale, about 60 miles northeast of Austin.

Karen Muston, Ben's English teacher, said she had asked him after class that day — the last period of the day — whether everything was OK. He said everything was fine.

"He smiled that usual smile and left," Muston recalled.

Rockdale High School Principal Allen Sanders said he wasn't aware Ben was having problems. Sanders said he had talked to him about three weeks before the suicide, and Ben said he was doing fine.

Johle said it wasn't the first time Ben had attempted suicide. He had tried to overdose on Tylenol PM a couple of years earlier, she said. But there was a more recent attempt in January that she didn't know about that Ben described in a letter to Manning, his close friend, before school let out last year. In the letter, he said he felt ugly, unwanted and out of place.

Still, a crowd of about 275 people filled the Phillips & Luckey Funeral Home in Rockdale to attend Ben's memorial service on Nov. 21.

Rumors Of An Attack

Despite Ben's previous suicide attempts, Johle clings to the belief that something or someone provoked her son the day he killed himself.

Johle went to Newlin three weeks after Ben's death, a copy of Texas' hate crime law in hand, and asked him to investigate rumors that her son had been pushed to the ground and urinated on during his walk home from school the day he killed himself.

Newlin said he set out to investigate whether the incident happened but faced early obstacles: a dead victim and no witnesses. Just rumors.

Based on information Johle gave him, Newlin went to Rockdale High and interviewed a teacher and a couple of students. None had first-hand knowledge of the alleged assault, Newlin said.

Ultimately, after talking to students for about two hours, Newlin concluded that he lacked information to move forward.

"Basically, it was nothing more than a rumor, just gossip from the McDonald's or coffee shop or whatever," he said. "In a small town, there is always fuel for rumors, and that definitely made good fuel."

Continued on Page 23

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Remember Gwen Amber Rose Araujo!

Misunderstood Life...

Continued from Page 22

Gwen Araujo

February 24, 1985 - October 3, 2002

Newlin said the talk might have started when a student's foster grandmother asked the teen if she knew that Ben may have been beaten up in a physical education class last year. That student, Newlin said, then asked other schoolmates, who may have confused the timing of the alleged assaults.

He also investigated whether Ben was beaten up last year. School officials said they didn't know about such an incident.

As far as Newlin is concerned, the case is closed unless he gets more information.

Not A Choice

Those who knew Ben described him as an intelligent, talented writer.

He used that talent to write a plethora of poems and to communicate with his teachers. At the beginning of the school year, Ben wrote his teachers letters explaining that he was transgendered.

"This is not a choice, it is in fact a condition," he wrote to one teacher. "I just learned about this last year, and what I have is gender identity disorder, and I plan on taking hormones and making the transition into being a female so that my body will be congruent to my brain."

Transgenderism has given rise to therapy groups for transgendered people and prompted groups such as the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby of Texas to include them in proposed legislation.

Experts say transgendered people generally feel their sex doesn't match how they feel about whether they are a woman or man. Gail Goodman, executive director of Waterloo Counseling Center in South Austin, which works with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered clients, said most transgendered people feel they are in the wrong body.

"It's a continual disappointment every day that what you see in the mirror is far from what you feel inside," Goodman said.

Goodman and other therapists at Waterloo would not discuss Ben or confirm whether he was a client there.

Johle said Ben, after researching how to switch his sex, started taking hormones — Spirotone and Premarin — about three months before he died. He didn't have a doctor's prescription but bought them off the Internet, Johle said.

Johle said her son knew from a young age that he wasn't like other boys. At first, he thought he was gay. Later, he realized that he wanted to be a female and started to grow his hair long and wear girl's clothing to school.

"This year when he started school, he said, 'I'm going to wear my makeup, I'm going to wear my bell bottoms, hip-huggers.' " Johle said. "I told him I didn't care if he wore high heels, pantyhose and skirt as long as he was in compliance with the dress code."

Johle said Ben's father, Rick Brownlee of Pasadena, didn't support his son's choice. But Brownlee, who has been divorced from Johle since Ben was a toddler, said he didn't dismiss his son.

"Did I reject my son? No, I didn't reject my son. I loved him very much," Brownlee said, choking back tears.

Johle said Ben became even more determined to have a sex change operation after seeing an "Oprah" episode about transgenderism last May.

"He actually e-mailed this Jenny person that was on Oprah," Johle said. "She e-mailed him back and started trying to point him in directions in this area where he could go for assistance."

The family sought help and got Ben into Monday night counseling sessions at Waterloo Counseling Center.

Johle was optimistic the therapy was helping him combat his suicidal thoughts. His progress in counseling is one reason she is convinced that something happened to Ben the day he died.

"I may never know, but I want to try," she said. "I'm not out for revenge. Nothing's gonna bring my child back to me."

Please Help Sylvia!

Eddie Araujo, Jr. Memorial Fund *[Checks made payable to the "Gwen Araujo Fund" or "Araujo Family Fund" are equally and as gratefully accepted.]*

San Benito Bank, 300 Tres Pinos Road, Hollister, CA 95023-5578. Account number [redacted]

Online SO List!

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

Transcending Transgender

Sponsored by
City of Refuge UCC Outreach Ministries

A support group facilitated by Janetta Johnson and Portia Denard; Where: City of Refuge, United Church of Christ, 1025 Howard Street, San Francisco CA 94103, (415) 861-6130. When: Every Friday, 6 pm to 7:30 pm. Food and snacks will be provided.

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Important Website Update!

If you want an ID/Password to access the new **Member's area** on the TGSF website, send an email request to Susan Laird: [redacted]**@hairzapper.com**.

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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.

We Need Your Input!

Community Needs Assessment Survey

We all know there is very little reliable statistical data about trans and gender variant identified persons - here is a great opportunity to help change that! Sponsored by the NTAC (National Transgender Advocacy Coalition) and under the supervision of Claremont Graduate University, Elizabeth Green is running an online survey to collect statistical data about gender variant persons and their experiences. This study is available to anyone residing in the United States, with a particular focus on collecting demographic and experiential information about gender variant identified persons living in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino, CA counties. We are looking to have at least 200-300 respondents from the SoCal area and over 1500 responses from the greater US.

In order to participate you must be at least eighteen years old and self identify as a part of the gender variant community (including but not limited to transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc.) The survey is comprised of 75 questions and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Surveys are 100% confidential and your participation is most appreciated.

Also, if you would be so kind as to forward this message to anyone you think might be interested, including list-serves and organizations - that would be extraordinarily helpful to our cause. We are more than willing to arrange for on-site paper surveys for individuals or groups in SoCal if that is more convenient. Any questions, please contact Elizabeth Green [redacted]@trans-academics.org]. Thank You!!!

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