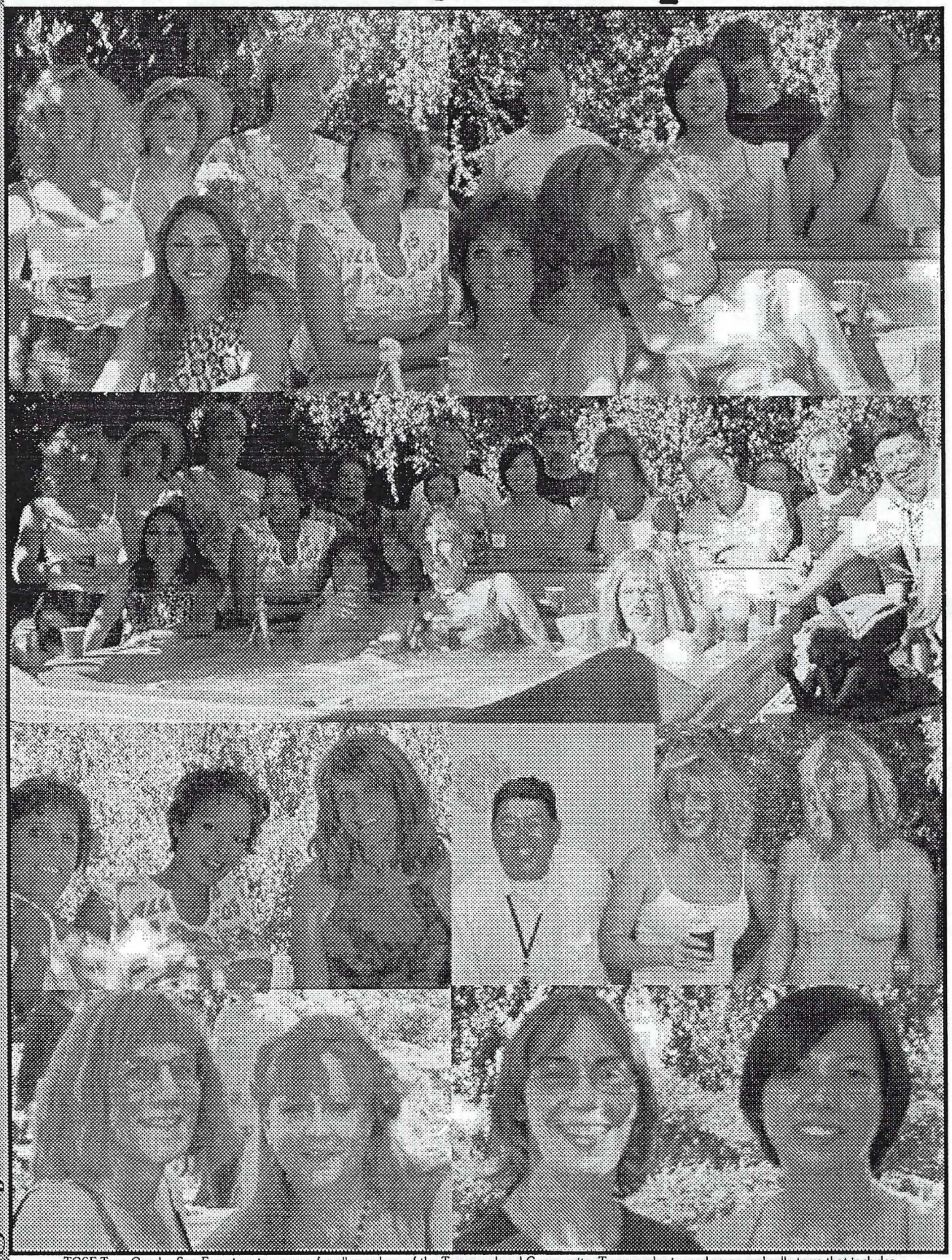
October 2003 | Dedicated to the Memory of Gwen Araujo | Volume 22, Issue 10

TGSF BBQ Is A Splash!



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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Vice President ..... Susan Laird
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Fine Print

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

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

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To boldly go where no duck has gone before!

From The Editor...

So I was boarding a BART train one morning, and this guy I've never met follows me on. He's trying to make eye contact, acting attentive, and seats himself across from me, coyly brushing his hands against my knees as he settles in. Then he asks if he can sit next to me and I shrug non-committedly. He gets touchy-feelie, starts asking me questions or making flirty comments. "How long have you been dressing?" "Are those your real breasts?" "I love your hair." "Do you go to Diva's?" - all the while draping an arm over my shoulders or caressing my thigh. All I want to do is read my novel for the next half hour, and I tell him so, but clearly he wants something more and he starts to fuss and fidget, taking his sweater off from around his shoulders and draping it, bunched up in his lap. He then leans over and whispers in my ear, "can I show you how excited you make me?"

I have to do a double-take. This guy wants to expose his penis to me, right there on a busy, crowded morning commute train! I glared at him, giving him a firm "No!" I purposely ignore him the rest of the trip, but now I'm a little rattled. Do you believe this shit? I bet no-one else in my office - not even one woman in the entire building - has gone through something like this on her way to work. And it wasn't until much later, after I had a chance to reflect on this incident, that I realized I had some conflicting emotions and several unanswered questions.

At first, I was secretly flattered by the attention (up until he started unzipping his pants). Most T-girls seem to want validation from the mainstream (or from men in particular), that they've passed well and are found attractive. We work hard at it every day of our lives, striving to be as convincing as possible. And if a man shows some interest, then you've hit pay dirt. Well I definitely had this guy going. He was putty in my hands and I could have asked him for anything. That kind of power and reinforcement does wonders for the ego. It's been a couple of years since I was hit on like that, and I'd almost forgotten what it was like. Nice to know I've still got the goods, even at my age. Some of you are probably asking yourself, "what is she complaining about? Why can't I get a date like that?"

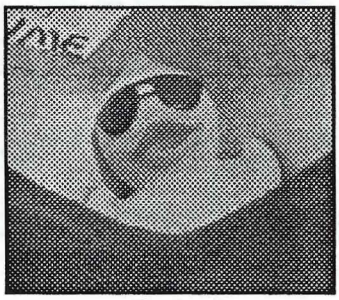
But then I got to thinking, if this bozo was interested in a genetic girl, would he behave towards her in a similar way? Instead of the usual tete-a-tete men and women go through when first meeting, would he jump right to the quick and start flashing his privates at her? Common sense would tell you "of course not. How uncouth!" So did he do this to me then, because I was a transsexual woman? And if so, where did he learn that this type of behavior was acceptable?

So then I started to get really angry. Now I felt degraded and dehumanized. What's worse, I was mad at myself for believing I had encouraged it somehow. How does he get off thinking that, just because I'm a TS, it's OK to behave like a sex-crazed dork from the get go? And in public like that! I remembered he said he liked to go to Diva's, and this is undoubtedly where he learned how to interact with a T-girl. I don't go to Diva's anymore. The place has a "reputation," so to speak. Not that that bothers me so much - I like a sleazy atmosphere from time to time meself. It's just that I haven't been there in many years. So what is it that the girls at Diva's are teaching straight men these days?

Whether it's conscious or not, they're teaching them how to behave like idiots. By acting and dressing like tramps, they reinforce the stereotype that we're all starved for attention, and that it's OK to treat us like fantasy sex objects. We're teaching them that it's alright to act far outside the boundaries of acceptable social behavior, as long as they keep buying us drinks or fancy baubles or pretty clothes.

Granted, a few of these Tranny Chasers (the nom de plume du jour) are real gentlemen. They're kind and attentive, polite, courteous, generous. They have their ulterior motive to be sure, but at least they're civilized about it. They know how to woo and court, that it behooves them to take time for the niceties. And some real, loving relationships have sprung up between them and a few of the luckier trannies. But when it comes down to brass tacks, it's sex, and the chance to realize a fantasy, that is the impetus driving these men's behavior.

I say luckier ones, because when I read the news today, it's obvious that trans women the world over are getting hit on literally, big time. Fatally. It seems when we garner attention, we're damned either way. We either get obnoxious overtures and maybe some unfulfilling sex, or we get a trip to the hospital. Or worse, the morgue. I suppose I should count myself amongst the lucky ones. While all I had to endure was some unwanted attention and humiliating sexual harassment, I'm still here, healthy and alive.



Viaduct?

President's Report For October

By Roxy Carmichael-Hart

Cotillion Tickets on Sale!

That is correct. By the time you receive this, tickets for Cotillion 2004 will be on sale. As I speak, they are sitting here in my office ready to be stamped and recorded.

"Come Together", the official title of Cotillion 2004, will be held on Saturday, January 24, 2004 at the San Mateo Marriott, Highways 101 and 92 in San Mateo. The doors will open at 5 pm and the show will begin at 7 pm. Before the show, you can enjoy a light snack and beverage in our social area where you can meet and chat with many old friends and perhaps make some new ones. We are keeping the show details top secret (even I don't know any of it yet, except for my own parts) but Susan Laird is putting together a spectacular show. (If you saw our Pride Float, you know that she is one creative lady.) She is looking for people to fill various roles so if you have a skill or a talent that we might be able to use, please contact her at [redacted]@141.com. We would love to have you as part of the show.

We can also use candidates for Mr. and Miss TGSF. If you have seen past Cotillions, you will know that it is hard work but very rewarding. You will have the opportunity to meet a lot of wonderful people and make perhaps lifelong friends. Let me know if you want to "take the plunge".

A special moment is always the "Debutante and Guys Walk". This is the first-timer's opportunity to appear before the community and to walk with pride into the light. Last year I participated in the "Debutante and Guys Walk" and got an incredible buzz that lasted several weeks. It is an opportunity for you to know that you are accepted and welcomed and loved for who you are.

Tickets for this year's Cotillion are priced at $50 if you purchase them by December 31, after which time they will go up to $60. So you can save considerably buying tickets early. Only 400 will be sold and when they are gone, they're gone. You'll be able to buy tickets at Carla's and likely many other locations. You'll be able to buy tickets by mail (see enclosed flier for details) and we are working to get PAYPAL established so you can get them online.

Please stay tuned, lots more news to come.

Later this month on October 25, you'll be able to enjoy our Halloween party, which will be held at Carla's, 124 Race Street in San Jose. The party will begin at 7 pm and will last til everyone's tired and ready to go home. The cost is $15, which will get you food and one drink. I want to thank Anne Louise Mortenson and Tommi Watson (and of course the lovely Carla) for their work in spearheading this effort.

I hope by now you have purchased your ticket for the Diablo Valley Girls Annual Dinner in Walnut Creek, which will be held on October 11. Please call Donna Freeman (contact information may be found elsewhere in the Channel.) for details.

The Holiday Dinner at the Tarragon in Sunnyvale is coming up on December 14. If it is the same as last year, it will be a spectacular event. I will be raffling two Cotillion tickets and will be presenting Angel awards to some very deserving individuals. It is always a pleasure to honor those who give tirelessly and unselfishly to our community. If you aren't partied out, you can come to the TGSF Christmas Party on December 18 at the Blue Muse, in conjunction with our monthly meeting.

Speaking of the Blue Muse, in October we will have our annual "Leather and Lace" event. We will give prizes for best outfit so get that dazzling garb together. In November, we will turn somber. Our monthly meeting coincides with the Annual Day of Remembrance" and this will be our End of the Month Event (i.e. no Blue Muse that night). As I understand it, there will be a candlelight march at Harvey Milk Plaza beginning at 6:30 pm and ending at the LGBT Center at 7:30 pm. It has been one year since Gwen and we see the all too frequent news of members of our community being harassed assaulted and even murdered. We must continue to stand united. We also must thank Gwen Smith for her tireless work in this effort. We will continue to publish details of this event as it is learned. If you cannot make it to the City that day, there is scheduled to be a parallel event in San Jose.

Upon hearing the news of TGSF's participation in the Day of Remembrance, someone remarked to me "when are we going to put this behind us?" My response was "we will never forget because Gwen could have been any of us." Thanks to Ayme's continuing efforts in this *Channel*, we won't ever forget.

Last month's winner from "Roxy's Snap Cup" was Anne Louise Mortenson. Anne Louise has not only been TGSF's Secretary, but she has worked on the Halloween party, helped with the Cotillion and has been working to recruit candidates for Mr. and Miss TGSF. She is a bundle of energy and I wish I could bottle and sell what she has. I wish I had a dozen more like her, but I would settle for another two.

I wanted to extend my gratitude to the City of Hayward for its support of the first annual Hayward Pride, which was held on September 13. I am proud of my city and even more proud because I work in City Hall, only one block from the location of the festival. My City has accepted me fully and without hesitation and it has been business as usual – exactly how I wanted it to be. You can read more about my transition in my column.

Lastly, while I was in Seattle, I had the pleasure of meeting Debra Darling from the Emerald City group. We had dinner together and enjoyed some jazz. Debra's roots go all the way back to the beginnings of ETVC so she had a lot of history to tell and I enjoyed hearing about our origins. Hopefully, you'll see a picture of Debra and me somewhere in this *Channel*. [Editor's Note: Directly above, Madame.]

I am off to go stamp Cotillion tickets...see you next month.

Love or whatever,
Roxy

PS – thanks to Alicia for the Almond Rocca candy!

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September 7, 2003

TGSF ExCom Meeting Minutes

Present: President Roxy Carmichael-Hart, Vice President Susan Laird, Treasurer Brooke Miller, Education -Chairs Kara Flynn and Kelly Anne Marsh, Outreach Co-Chair Marla Selby, Social Co-Chair Tommi Watson. Absent: Secretary Anne Louise Mortenson, Outreach Co-Chair Kalani, Social Co-Chair Aiyanna Eveningstar.

The minutes of August 3, 2003 were approved.

President's Report

Roxy reported on the following:

The next Mr. /Miss TGSF events include Ayme's BBQ and the Folsom Street Fair and the Leatherwalk. The next fundraising event is Ayme's BBQ on the 13th.

TGSF has been requested to provide its 501(c)(3) status for California Dreamin'. Roxy noted TGSF personal shortage and the ExCom asked if California Dreamin' would help with manpower, and also inquired as to the benefit to TGSF.

TGSF was requested to support Hayward Pride. Roxy offered to donate $25 towards the cost of the booth. Tommi also pledged $25. The ExCom approved the remaining $25 to be paid for by TGSF.

TGSF was requested to provide support for the Day of Remembrance. The ExCom approved the expenditure of $100 towards this effort. TGSF will be present at the memorial for Gwen Araujo when it is scheduled.

Items are needed for the September End of Month raffle.

Vice-President's Report

Susan reported on the Cotillion Planning meeting. She noted that ticket pricing and other logistics had been set. (see details elsewhere in this Channel.)

Susan noted she has been trying to work on getting Visa/ Mastercard for ticket purchases. She is working with Kara on getting a PAYPAL account set up. It was noted that FRANTIX was too expensive.

Ad prices have been set: $300 for the back cover, $200 full-page, $100 half page, $50 quarter-page.

Roxy noted that we must ensure that the rooms and the stage are ADA accessible. Susan will check with the Marriott on this.

Kara noted she had checked into the cost of printing the programs at Kinko's and it was too expensive. Roxy will have Anne Louise check with Kevin Anderson regarding printing of the postcards and posters.

Ticket distributors will be Carla, Jo-An and Marlena. Roxy will be ticket mistress and will keep a strict accounting of tickets.

Treasurer's Report

Brooke noted that there is $3500 in the bank. A payment of $500 to the Marriott was approved as was $100 for the Design Center. The outstanding balance for the Design Center is now less than $1,000.

A payment of $300 to Rachel Hill for the Pride float carpeting was approved as budgeted. Roxy noted that a $100 pledge is still outstanding which will help cover the remaining balance.

Brooke noted she will separate the 2003 and 2004 Cotillion accounts.

Secretary's Report

Susan reported on website updates and notification to members regarding their membership accounts.

Roxy noted her desire to remove the TGSF name from Yahoo groups. Yahoo will be so notified although the link will stay for the time being.

Kara will be the profile for the next Channel.

Education Report

Kara noted that a TG Law Event with Dylan Vlade is scheduled for September 27. A job preparation event is scheduled for September 30. Both events will be held at the LGBT Center.

Outreach Report

Kara will help Marla with the arrangements to answer the hotline.

Social Report

A budget was of $400 was approved for the Halloween party. This will cover room rental, food and drink. Marla suggested that a keg was probably the most cost-effective way of providing alcohol. Tommi discussed the other arrangements that were being worked on.

Ticket cost will be $15 which will include food and one drink. Additional drink charges will be $1 for non-alcoholic drinks, $2 for alcoholic drinks.

It was noted that there would be awards for best costume. Categories will be decided.

Roxy discussed the upcoming End Of Month events. As the November End of Month coincides with the Day of Remembrance, the regular EOM will be canceled to allow members to participate in the Day of Remembrance.

The September 13 BBQ at Ayme's was discussed. It was stressed that TGSF will not condone use of illegal drugs at any TGSF sponsored events.

New Business

As discussed above, the ExCom approved support for Hayward Pride.

Next Meeting

October 5 at Susan's, 4:00 P.M. Kara noted she will be out of town. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50.

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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Club Lets Businessmen Cavort in Dresses

By Karina Balderas
Contributed by Jodie Miller, Rachel Smith, and Rachelle Austin

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Talking into his cell phone, Juan says he's in a meeting. He makes other business calls while he picks out what he's going to wear: a black dress, sensual stockings and high heels.

Juan, who asked that his full name not be used, is part of a group of high-flying Mexican businessmen who meet every week at a special club set up for transvestites where they are free to be women for a time — chatting, playing bingo or having a drink with their "girlfriends." In famously macho Mexico, such clubs are rare.

Juan's club — called "Versus Life Style" — opened last year. To belong to its exclusive circle costs between $36 and $93 a month, depending on what services the client wants.

Tania Ganem, of Transvestites Mexico, an organization grouping some 700 transvestites via the Internet, said he knows of such clubs in Spain, Britain, the United States and Argentina but in Mexico there are only two. "In European countries there is more openness," Ganem said. Luxury cars and armor-plated Cherokees are a common sight outside the unremarkable building that jealously guards the secret of its temporary occupants.

"I've been dressing up since I was six years old. ... When I dress as a woman, I do it to express my emotions and sensitivity, something I can't do as a man," said Juan, a top executive whose wife has no idea where he is. Many of the men say that, contrary to the public perception of cross-dressing, the practice has nothing to do with homosexuality but is about getting in touch with their feminine side or simply enjoying dressing up.

Inside the house, wigs, carnival masks, out-sized high-heels, fancy lingerie, lace-up stockings, cocktail dresses, bridal gowns, school uniforms and fetish wear hang in the main hallway. Here the fantasies of the successful executives take off.

Accessories used at the club like wigs, high latex boots and fake breasts cost between $200 and $600. Their high price tag is all they have in common with the Armani and Hugo Boss suits left draped over chairs as the men change into women.

Under club rules, visitors may not come in search of sex or use their male names. Men get into the house either by recommendation or after passing an extensive Internet obstacle course that only genuine transvestites would know how to do.

Owners Rafael and Elizabeth Landin are a heterosexual couple who set up the business three years ago after a man came to their lingerie shop asking for corsets and stockings to dress up in. "All sorts of people come here but most are top directors or company bosses, used to giving orders or living under a lot of stress. This is an oasis for them," said Rafael Landin.

Services on offer include special lockers for clothes, parking, manicures and pedicures, maintaining a personal wine cellar and access to special events. To enter without being a member costs $129, including rented clothes, wigs, use of make-up and a four-hour stay.

Unlike the flamboyant transvestite world shown in films like "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert," "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar" and "High Heels," the house these executives frequent is more sedate and is even used as offices at times.

Shantal, 27, is unusual because she accompanies her husband to the house. "You look gorgeous!" she told her husband, known in the club by his female name "Anxie," the first time she saw him dressed as a woman. This unconventional couple was introduced by a friend in common. They have been together for seven years and have two children.

"Normality doesn't exist. Everyone has their own idea of it," said Shantal. "Anxie," 34, tall, blond with green eyes and parading in a black mini-dress with red velvet coat, admitted that before he met Shantal he thought he would never find a partner. But his whole family knows and accepts his preferences.

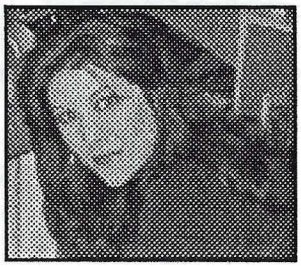
"At the start we played with fantasies about a visiting aunt. ... My son now boasts 'I taught you to go out dressed up as a girl Daddy,'" said "Anxie," an artist and vocalist of a pop band called "Queen Ass." "Yazzmin," not his real name, is a 53-year-old director who has been married for 32 years and has four children. He took refuge in the club after more than 20 years of renting the occasional room in a cheap motel so he could dress up as a woman.

"I'm worried my family will find something out. They are from the countryside and maybe wouldn't understand," he said. "There are times when you do start to wonder if other men are attracted to you," he said, "But that's as far as it goes. I am heterosexual." For the Landins, the high-point of their business is seeing these men fulfilled.

"The best thing is when they are made up, to see the excitement in their faces as they tell you 'You made me happy', that's my life's dream," said Elizabeth Landin.

Beauty Boost

by Wendy R. Schultz



Facials

Once considered a luxury, facials are now a staple in skincare, right up there with monthly haircuts. Spas and salons offer express services for those in a time crunch in addition to extensive treatments for those who want more pampering. Services and prices vary from business to business. Some guidelines are listed below.

The Basic Facial

The basic facial consists of a cleansing, scrub, mask, massage, and moisturizer. At the beginning of the service, a magnifying lamp is used to look closely at the pores so that the Esthetician can see skin imperfections as well as acne or sun damage. The Esthetician may do extractions to remove whiteheads or blackheads. However, this procedure is best reserved for facials used with steam. This facial takes the least amount of time, and can also be the most inexpensive.

The European Facial

The European Facial is more intensive than the basic facial. It too consists of skin analysis and a good cleansing. Steam can also be used during cleansing. This helps the pores to open and prepares them for the extraction process. If no extraction is necessary, the pores still release oil and dirt, called sebum. Depending on the client's sensitivity, the Esthetician may use an enzyme, which helps slough away dead skin cells for easier extraction. Most enzyme comes in powder form and is mixed with a liquid activator. The enzyme is usually left on the face for 10 minutes. Some clients benefit more from a glycolic acid solution instead of enzyme. The glycolic acid is also applied directly to the face after cleansing. Glycolic acid can be as gentle as a 30% strength, or as strong as 70%. It too is left on for 10 minutes to prep the skin for extractions and mask. While the mask is working, the Esthetician should do a 10-minute massage. After the mask is removed, the final step is a toner followed by a moisturizer.

Things to Consider

When choosing a salon or spa for a facial, there are several things to keep in mind. Sanitary conditions should be a major consideration. Avoid any establishment that looks dirty, unsafe, or disorganized. A business license and an Esthetician's license should be prominently displayed. Should these items be absent, ask to see them prior to scheduling the appointment. Anyone performing a facial must be licensed to do so.

Don't schedule a facial prior to a big event, such as a wedding. First time clients may experience mild breakouts, redness or peeling. This is a very normal skin reaction and should be expected the first time, so allow time for these reactions to subside. Your skin will feel clean, smooth, and polished. The results are amazing.

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.

TGSF
TransGender San Francisco
(formerly ETVC)

Events in October

October 3 -19, 2003

Pageant at Glenview PAC!

See notice under Special Events later in this issue for all the details!

Saturday / October 4 / 7:00pm

Gwen Araujo Memorial

A Memorial will be held for Gwen Araujo, commemorating the First Anniversary of her Death. It will be held at Newark Memorial High School 39375 Cedar Blvd., Newark CA 94560, in the Cafeteria (Commons Area), at 7:00PM on Saturday, October 4. See notice on Page __ for more details.

Sunday / October 5 / 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 in planning for the Day of Remembrance, Thanksgiving, Cotillion 2004 and more!

Friday / October 10 / 7:30pm

TGSF: Dance With Diva II

Aiyanna is hosting another Dance at her home this evening. $5.00 Donation requested. Come out dance, talk, laugh and relax with the girls. [redacted] in San Francisco. (415)[redacted]

Saturday / October 11 / 6:30pm

DVG 2003 Fall Dinner

The Diablo Valley Girls have again chosen Blake's at Boundary Oak in Walnut Creek for their sixth annual Fall Dinner. Entree choices are prime rib or salmon at $40/person or pasta primavera at $35/person. No-host cocktails begin at 6:30; dinner starts at 7:30. Sign up soon — reservations are on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information, call the hotline at (925) 937-8432, or see Donna or Janet at a social. Email dvg@transgender.org or visit www.transgender.org/dvg

Saturday / October 18

Mr. and Miss Gay San Francisco

The event will take place at the Swedish American Hall (2174 Market @ Sanchez).

Sunday / October 19 / 9:00am

San Jose AIDS Walk.

Discovery Meadow in San Jose registration starts at 7 AM Walk begins at 9 AM. For more information - www.walkforaids.org

Saturday / October 25 / 7:00pm

TGSF /Carla's Annual Halloween Party

Save the date for this year's TGSF Halloween Party at Carla's! The party begins at 7 p.m. and will run to 1 a.m. Admission is $15, and includes a full buffet and one drink. Tickets will be on sale soon. Check back soon for more information! Email carla@carlas.com

October's Birthdays

10/00	Chrys Salt	10/09	Carolayn Hughes
10/00	Constance	10/09	Val Shoaps
10/00	Jessica Connor	10/12	Jaime Mcconnell
10/00	Michelle Amber	10/13	Scott Smith
10/00	Star	10/16	Jean Darien
10/03	Erin Brush	10/18	Ronald Gray
10/03	Rachel Hill	10/20	Cassi Anderson
10/04	Bobbi Marotz	10/21	Tricia Paskell
10/05	Anne Giles	10/22	Marilyn Thurau
10/06	Joan Thurau	10/26	Janet Bowman
10/07	Katrina Bugher	10/26	Rachael Janelle
10/08	Shamrock P. Hall	10/28	Janet Smiley

Many Happy Returns of the Day!

Thursday / October 30 / 7:30pm

TGSF End of Month Event

Leather And Lace Night! There's certain to be a contest this evening! Be at the Blue Muse 409 Gough Street, San Francisco. For more information contact the hotline or Roxy Carmichael-Hart via email.

Friday / October 31

RGA Gals and Guys' Night Out!

Watching your figure? Why not avoid all that fattening Halloween candy by joining your sisters for a less fattening dinner (hey—it could happen) at the Iron Gate restaurant in Belmont? The Iron Gate is located at 1360 El Camino Real, and serves continental cuisine. Wear your best formal, or formal cat suit! If you plan on attending please RSVP to Gelsey at (408)[redacted] or visit: www.transgender.org/tg/rga/rgapage.html

Coming in November!

November 5-9, 2003

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force - **16th Annual CREATING CHANGE Conference**, in Miami Beach, FL. Visit www.creatingchange.org.

Thursday / November 20 / 6:30pm

Day of Remembrance

Gwen Smith, and the Remembering Our Dead Project, sponsors this world-wide observance with a March on Market Street beginning at 6:30pm. The speechifying will commence in the LGBT Center around 7:30pm or so. Please see announcement elsewhere in this issue for all the details. And be there.

Saturday / November 22 / Time TBA

Thanksgiving Dinner

The Feast will be held at Carla's 124 Race Street San Jose. This will be a potluck and a workshop hosted by Transpowerment Program (TAPP). This program is designed to address issues faced by transgender women who are HIV positive or negative. An advisory committee is being formed to look at the various issues. For more information call Carla at (408)[redacted] or Jen or Hector at (408) 289-9260 x 214. The next meeting of the advisory group will be Thursday November 6, 6 PM at Carla's.

Calendar – October 2003

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 7:30 PM MPTG	2 7:00 PM DVG RCC	3 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	4 **7:00 PM Gwen Araujo Memorial**
5 **4:00 PM TGSF: ExCom Meeting**	6 5:00 PM CCHH 7:00 PM PISSR General Meeting 8:00 PM DVG	7 7:00 PM SCT	8	9	10 7:00 PM SVGA **7:30 PM TGSF: Dance w/ Diva II** 8:00 PM PacCtr	11 **6:30 PM DVG Fall Dinner** 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
12	13 5:00 PM CCHH	14	15	16 7:00 PM DVG RCC	17 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	18
19 **9:00 AM SJ AIDS Walk**	20 5:00 PM CCHH 8:00 PM DVG	21 7:00 PM SCT	22	23	24 7:00 PM SVGA 8:00 PM PacCtr	25 **7:00 PM TGSF Halloween Party!** 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
26	27 5:00 PM CCHH	28 7:30 PM SCOUT	29	30 **7:30 PM TGSF: EOM LeathrNLace!**	31 **6:30 PM RGA GalsNGuys Nite Out!** 8:00 PM PacCtr	

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: _____

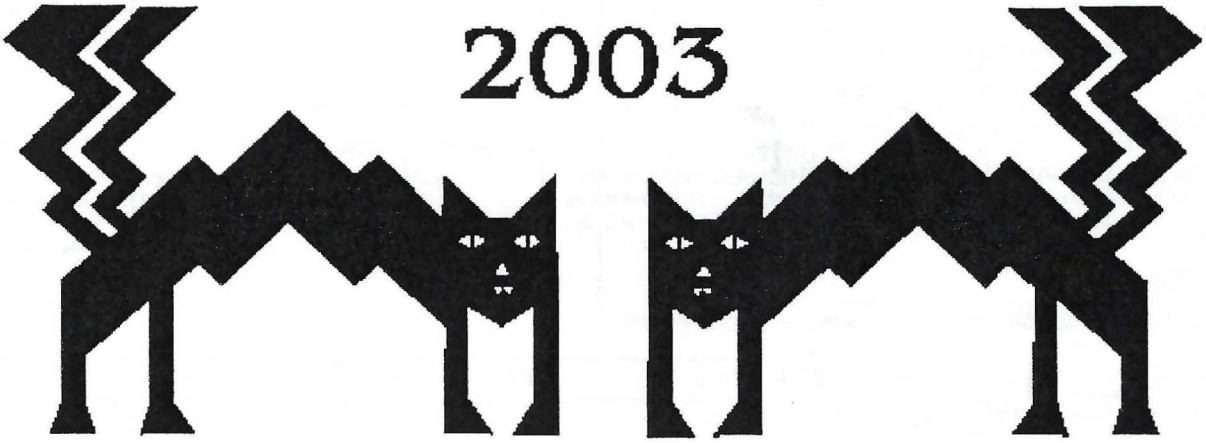
Would you like a link from the TGSF Website to your URL? ❑ Yes ❑ No

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!

TGSF HALLOWEEN 2003



Carla's Salon & Boutique October 25th
124 Race Street, San Jose, CA
Costume Contest and Prizes
7 PM till 1 AM with Buffet • $15 includes one drink ticket
Surprise Entertainment • Easy Parking next to Carla's
RSVP formorts@sonic.net

Coming in October!

DVG 2003 Fall Dinner

Saturday October 11, 2003

Blake's at Boundary Oak
3800 Valley Vista Road, Walnut Creek.

No Host cocktails at 6:30pm, Dinner is at 7:30pm

Roast Prime Rib of Beef - $40pp
Pacific Salmon Filet - $40pp
Pasta Primavera - $35pp

Appropriate evening dress is required.

Please RSVP to Donna at 925-937-8432,
or return check to DVG, PO Box 272885,
Concord, CA 94527-2885

Gender Identity Center of Colorado's

Annual Colorado Gold Rush!

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:
- Cross dressers
- Female to male transsexuals
- Male to female transsexuals
- Family, friends and co-workers
- Our significant others
- Those who want to learn more

Workshops include:
- Voice
- Presentation
- Demeanor
- Dressing
- Job/Family issues
- Various surgeries available

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.

Date: **February 26 - 29, 2004**
Red Lion Hotel Denver Central, 4040 Quebec St.,
Denver 80216 / 303-321-6666

More Special Events!

Memorial for Gwen Araujo on the First Anniversary of Her Death

Newark Memorial High School
39375 Cedar Blvd., Newark CA 94560,
in the Cafeteria (Commons Area)

Saturday, October 4th, 2003

Time: 7:00 PM

Please come join us in a respectful celebration of the life of Gwen Araujo.

There will be words from Gwen's family, her friends, and members of the community.

Please join our sponsors in a show of respect and support for this life lost and our hope that this will never happen again.

PFLAG, Newark Gay-Straight Alliance, GLAAD, NTAC, Billy Defrank Center, Carla's, Transgender San Francisco, AGUILAS

and your host;
Transgender Silicon Valley

For further information regarding this event, please see the URL
ReelFreedom.com/GwenMemorial.htm

Coming in November!

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

16TH ANNUAL CREATING CHANGE CONFERENCE

November 5-9, 2003

in Miami Beach, FL
www.creatingchange.org

"As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, NGLTF remains firmly committed to addressing the impact of racism in this country, in our movement and in our organization. The primary educational goal of Creating Change is to build an anti-racist GLBT movement that includes and reflects the perspectives, needs and priorities of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender activists of all ages, races, ethnic and language origins, spiritualities and incomes."

I have the registration form if anyone is interested. Please email me at [redacted]@aol.com.

Kara

October 3 -19, 2003

Pageant at Glenview PAC!

I thought I would forward this. For any of those that caught me in La Cage Aux Folles in May, some of the main characters from that show are now staging Pageant in the same facility. (Nope, I'm not in this one.) Peter, the main character from La Cage will be one of the "contestants" vying for MISS GLAMOURESSE. His performances are a must see!

Kara

GLENVIEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER in association with PM PRODUCTIONS presents Pageant. Book & Lyrics by BILL RUSSELL & FRANK KELLY. Music by ALBERT EVANS. Conceived by ROBERT LONGBOTTOM. Director, Mark Kramer. Featuring Greg Lynch as Miss Great Plains, and Peter Del Fiorentino as Miss Deep South.

Who will it be...Who will win the coveted title of "MISS GLAMOURESSE?" Please join MISS GREAT PLAINS, MISS DEEP SOUTH, MISS BIBLE BELT, MISS INDUSTRIAL NORTHEAST, MISS TEXAS and MISS WEST COAST as they hilariously vie for the title.

This is a musical comedy spoof of pageants where all the finalists are played by men, and judges are chosen from the audience. The evening's festivities are hosted by everyone's favorite MC "FRANKIE CAVALIER."

Each performance offers intimate table seating. Special treats and refreshments are available for purchase.

For tickets and show information, contact the GPAC Box Office at 510-531-0511 (get tickets NOW! We need the CASH!) http://www.glenviewpac.com .Ticket price: $20.00

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Heart To Hart with Roxy

Walking into the Light Part 2 –

No Time Left For You

On Friday August 22, I arrived home from my job, went into the bedroom as I always do and began to undress. I looked into the mirror and as I took off the shirt, the tie, the trousers and the shoes for the last time, I smiled. "There's no time left for you." I said. And as I put on my wig, my boobs and my girl clothes, I smiled. Act 2 of my life was about to begin.

The next day, it was off to Seattle for my professional debut. Nothing memorable happened on my 835 mile trip to the Emerald City, although the night desk clerk at the Holiday Inn Express in Albany, Oregon greeted me with a cheerful "Hello Miss Carmichael" as I got my luggage from my car.

I gave a speech to the Institute of Professional Engineers in Seattle on the value of handling multiple roles in an organization, subtitled "How to Be One Giant Hat Rack". Since I am not a PowerPoint expert, I decided that my visual was going to be showing my many hats. So there I was, with all of the other engineers. All of them had their laptops, I had my flowery hatbox. When I arrived to register, they had my name badge ready for me but alas, they were out of programs. The lady at the registration desk loaned me the desk copy so that I could find the location of my session. I looked and saw my name in the program – Roxy Carmichael-Hart, City of Hayward. I looked at her and with my puppy dog eyes and in my little girl voice, I said "This is my first presentation as Roxy." The lady looked at me and smiled, then gave me the desk copy. "We'll make more", she said.

And then I met a few of my colleagues. "Hi Roxy", they said and some gave me a hug. They asked how I was and then we talked shop. It was as if I had always been Roxy to them. We even reminisced about last year's conference. When I gave my presentation, I was introduced as if I had always worked for the City of Hayward. The panel was over in 90 minutes and that was that. Then it was off to have dinner with Debra Darling from the Emerald City Group. Hopefully you'll be able to able to see a picture of us in this *Channel*. The next day it was time to come home. I stayed overnight in Ashland, Oregon, was called a he by some snotty little rug rat, but otherwise it was very uneventful.

After I arrived at home, I checked my e-mails that had piled up since I had been away. My inbox was flooded with welcoming wishes, congratulations and plaudits. "Brave", "courageous", "inspirational" and "admirable" were a few of the words used. "You are still my friend", one remarked. "We look forward to meeting you", said another. All of these statements brought a smile to my face and tears to my eyes. It made me realize that I work with an exceptional group of supportive and accepting people. So after a few days of rest in which I got my ears pierced, eyebrows trimmed and head shaved (you should have seen the gleam in Carla's eyes as she came after me with her razor.), I rested and then, picked out my outfit for my first day. Naturally, I slept very little.

Roxy - First Day on the Job!

Tuesday, September 2. I was up at 5 and after breakfast began the meticulous job of putting on my makeup. I left my home at 7, then met Kimberly, one of our secretaries and a good friend, in the parking garage. I had been thinking about how I would feel when I stepped across the threshold into City Hall, but we got to talking and before I knew it, I had said hello to my boss and I was at my desk.. My nameplate was on the front of my cubicle, my new business cards were on my desk and there were some more cards. A few minutes later, there were some phone calls asking how I was and welcoming me to the City. Then the visits started. I received hugs and more statements of admiration. I smiled and said "I am just going to do my job". Alicia, one of the secretaries in the Planning Department, brought me a box of almond rocca candy, which, in the movie "Welcome Home Roxy Carmichael", was Roxy's favorite candy. Later that day, Cindy, a colleague of mine with Alameda County Planning, took me out to lunch. A few days later, I had a meeting with the City Manager regarding a project I am working on. He smiled at me and welcomed me to the City.

But, you know, after that first day, it has pretty much calmed down. It's business as usual, which is how I wanted it to be. I wanted to be appreciated for my professional abilities and not as anyone special. The work did not magically go away when I transitioned, in fact it has increased. My brains did not disappear when I became a blonde. My bosses expect the same level of production from me now as they did before. I am still juggling six projects, wearing multiple hats and co-existing with my colleagues. There is one lady who refuses to give me eye contact but that's her problem. Our Department Head, the Public Works Director, was insistent that I immediately report any problems. Thus far, there haven't been any, nor do I expect that there will be. A couple of days ago, I had my first out of office meeting. I introduced myself as I always do when the meeting began and as if nothing were different. No one asked me any questions, no one wanted to know any details. Business as usual.

So is transition this easy? Of course not. I am grateful that I work for a very accepting City. I am thankful that I don't have loved ones that I had to hurt. I think my situation is unique but there are some lessons to be learned. I am an example, not a pioneer. The manner in which I handle my transition will be looked upon by others when a similar situation arises. I also think that my transition proves what I have thought all along. I am still the same person. Only the outside has changed. But now it matches the inside.

Is this the end of the story? No. It is just the beginning of Act 2. I don't know how it will end. I will have to keep writing it as I go along. I know that I am going to have to be very careful not to make any mistakes. Because when you are writing the story of your life, it is very hard to do a rewrite.

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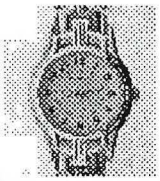

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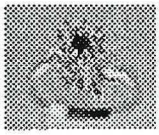

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Angel Level: $500

Recognition & Benefits:

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

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

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

Thank you for your support of TGSF!

Readers Respond

Book Review
"She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders"

The exuberant memoir of a man named James who became a woman named Jenny. She's Not There is the story of a person changing genders, the story of a person bearing and finally revealing a complex secret; above all, it is a love story.

By turns funny and deeply moving, Jennifer Finney Boylan explores the remarkable territory that lies between men and women, examines changing friendships, and rejoices in the redeeming power of family. She's Not There is a portrait of a loving marriage-the love of James for his wife, Grace, and, against all odds, the enduring love of Grace for the woman who becomes her "sister," Jenny.

To this extraordinary true story, Boylan brings the humorous, fresh voice that won her accolades as one of the best comic novelists of her generation. With her distinctive and winning perspective, She's Not There explores the dramatic outward changes and unexpected results of life as a woman: Jenny fights the urge to eat salad, while James consumed plates of ribs; gone is the stability of "one damn mood, all the damn time."

While Boylan's own secret was unusual, to say the least, she captures the universal sense of feeling uncomfortable, out of sorts with the world, and misunderstood by her peers. Jenny is supported on her journey by her best friend, novelist Richard Russo, who goes from begging his friend to "Be a man" (in every sense of the word) to accepting her as an attractive, buoyant woman. "The most unexpected thing," Russo writes in his Afterword to the book, "is in how Jenny's story we recognize our shared humanity."

As James evolves into Jennifer in scenes that are by turns tender, startling, and witty, a marvelously human perspective emerges on issues of love, sex, and the fascinating relationship between our physical and our intuitive selves. Through the clear eyes of a truly remarkable woman, She's Not There provides a new window on the often confounding process of accepting ourselves.

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Roxy's Letter to Her Co-Workers

I would like to share my "Dear Colleagues" letter with everyone. So many people have told me that they understood what I was going through a lot better after reading my letter. People looked at it as honest and sincere and some were moved to tears. Perhaps my letter can assist another person who is considering transitioning at work.

Roxy Carmichael-Hart

Dear Colleagues:

This is the last time that I will be writing you as Don A. Frascinella. Please let me explain.

For the last 5 and one-half years, that is how you've known me. I have been the guy who comes in every day, goes into my cubicle, chats about the Giants and makes you laugh. I will still do all of those things, with one difference.

I have been living a lie. Not just for the last 5 years, but for the last 40. I am not who I seem to be. I have been, and am, a female trapped in a man's body, desperately trying to escape and unable to do so, until now.

Since June 2002, I have been leading a double life. By day I have been your Senior Transportation Planner, colleague, and friend. By night and on weekends, I have been Roxy Carmichael-Hart, passionate advocate for the rights of the transgendered. I have been living as a female because that is who I am. Some of you might have seen my polished fingernails and long eyelashes and may have noticed that I have changed certain aspects about myself such as the way I stand, the way I walk, the way I talk and even the way I take off my jacket. All of that has been part of my transition and now I enter the next difficult stage. According to the accepted standards of care for the transgendered, I must live full time as a female for a year or more, before I decide on the next appropriate step. It may be sexual reassignment surgery, or SRS as it is known. I am not sure if I will take it to that stage but at the very least I will be a full time female.

I can't give you specific reasons why I am doing this, other than I know that it is the right thing for me to do, as it was for me to emerge from the shadows on June 15, 2002. I can tell you that I am much happier, much more at peace with myself, since my outside finally matches my inside. I have met a wonderful and loving group of friends and supporters and I have been elected as President of Transgender San Francisco, or TGSF.

I know that this is a shock to many of you; to others it is no surprise. I want to assure you that I am still the same person. I still have the same abilities, same skills and same likes and dislikes. The only thing different about me will be my presentation. I realize that some of you will look at this as no big deal, others will be curious and others confused. Some others may reject me and that is your right. I am not asking for anyone to be uncomfortable. I will gladly answer any reasonable questions you have and allay any fears that you might have. One common fear is use of the rest room. I have been using the female rest rooms whenever I go out. But in order to avoid any discomfort, I will gladly use only the second floor unisex rest rooms. I don't want to cause any trouble, make anyone unhappy or angry. I just want to be the person I was meant to be. All I am asking is that you accept me as your co-worker and treat me as you always have.

I have been working with our Human Resources Department since October 2002 on this and have received the full support from the City Manager, Public Works Director, Deputy Director of Public Works and the Transportation/Development Manager. I have appreciated their support and cooperation and understanding. When I return to this office on September 2, 2003, I will return as Roxy Carmichael-Hart. I have legally changed my name and employment records. All of my contacts including telephone and e-mail address will change accordingly. I know that the adjustment will take some time but I would appreciate it if you would address me by my legal name and appropriate gender identification.

Other than the internal pain that I have suffered, the worst part of this has been the deceit. It has hurt immensely to keep things from the people I am close to. I have not been able to tell you where I go on the last Thursday of the month, or share with you some of my activities. But when you have casually asked me "How's it going?" and when I looked you in the eyes and lied "OK", that's the part that hurt worst of all. I have not been OK, but I am getting better and could not have made it this far without the help of a very supportive group of colleagues and friends.

I know that this process will take a long time but I have waited 40 years for it to happen. I want to assure you that it has not been a quick and hasty decision. I am leaving behind the mask I wore and will return as my true self, as how I should have been all along. My motto has been "Lift yourself from the darkness into the light" and that is what I am doing. I am walking out of the cold darkness of fear into the sunlight of hope for a bright future. The burden on my shoulders has been lifted. I am free at last.

ExCom Profile

Kara Flynn, Education Co-Chair

Just over a year ago I had my first profile for the Channel. So much can change within a year. I've been on hormones for just over that year, finally wearing my own hair out, gradually taking care of the facial hair, and working on everything else.

I feel like Dorothy, to a degree, although the rest of the gang is along as well. I started out in the Midwest, although not quite Kansas, and physically took the road to San Francisco. I still have a long way to go on my journey, but we'll just call San Francisco my Emerald City.

I found the Good Witch of the West last year. She and I talked quite a bit, and she's helped me along my own Yellow Brick Road. The Scarecrow, Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, and I are traveling along it. I also found the Good Witch from the North last year, and she works her zapping magic on these nasty evil hairs growing out of my face.

I can remember going out one of my first times over 2 years ago. I met Rachel and a friend for dinner. She just walked right in and found a table for us to eat. Now, I find myself doing the same, just going wherever I need to go, without fear and with extreme confidence. Me and the Lion get along quite well now.

I've also taken steps to lose the necessary male programming. I used to walk like a Tin Man, keeping the torso quite stiff, but the Scarecrow and I have been working on our stride. I performed in a play in May and worked with a few women on how to move and dance. They suggested taking a Jazz Dance class to learn some of the moves and work more with learning female movements. So, here I am, one month into Jazz Dance class. It's great. I still go to class in what's left of boy mode, but I'm having fun, and letting go of the restraints in my brain which kept me within the male borders. I've also found just conversing with women and being around them is such great camaraderie.

The Tin Man and I are friends, but I'm afraid the rains this past winter have just rusted him up too much. We're going to buckle down for a while and see if we can oil up the joints in order for him to find a heart. Two wizards are working on a powerful potion, but they are going to need time to work their magic. I visited Wizard O this past week, who works in the Emerald City. We talked about the magic he can wield over the face. I still have to contact one of the other Wizards, but his magic won't be ready until 2005.

So, the future in the Land of Oz also involves coming out at work. With the man behind the curtain working his own magic in Sacramento, AB196 gives power to the Munchkins, the little people who seem to get stepped on way too often. So, on January 2, 2004, I plan on having a face to face with HR. I've been in anonymous contact with them since February, and have sent in a few books for them to read. They seem to have come around quite a bit, and I feel like some of my coworkers will be fine with the change, while others I'm still unsure about.

The plan, though, is to go fulltime as "Dorothy" early in 2004 combined with a trip to Wizard O. It won't be an easy journey along that section of the Yellow Brick Road, but it's a bump in the road I need to get through in order to find my way home. I hope I'll get there one day.

And, yes, I still check the sky for those flying monkeys.

BC Supreme Court Hears Case of Discrimination Against Transsexual Woman

Queery.com

August 25, 2003: Last week, the BC Supreme Court began its one-week hearing of the appeal by the Vancouver Rape Relief Society against a decision of the BC Human Rights Tribunal in favor of Kimberly Nixon, a transgendered woman. Kimberly is represented by lawyer Barbara Findlay. The Vancouver Rape Relief Society denied a job to Kimberly Nixon as a rape counselor because she is a transsexual woman, claiming that it was necessary for rape counselors to be born as women.

"Egale affirms the right of women's organizations, including the Vancouver Rape Relief Society, to maintain a women's-only space, and to politically organize with peers," said Lisa Lachance, President of Egale Canada. "However, that this does not justify the exclusion of transsexual women from a women-only environment."

"One of the most common forms of discrimination experienced by transsexual people is the refusal by others to recognize and accept our gender identity," said Susan Gapka, a Board Member of Egale Canada. "As a transsexual woman, I have enjoyed membership in women's caucuses at a student and political level. For me, being accepted as Susan and as a woman on these committees is important to my self-worth and dignity. The denial of this acceptance of Kimberly Nixon as a woman undoubtedly had the opposite effect, undermining what she has worked so hard to achieve."

"A woman who is even less-represented and further marginalized because of the pervasive ignorance, fear and hatred of transfolk—however it shows itself— shouldn't be further marginalized from her community, but welcomed," said Romham Gallacher of the Women/Trans Dialogue Planning Committee. "We support the rights of all women to access women's spaces, however much work might still need to be done educating ourselves and others."

"This case will have national implications for trans persons generally, and for other equality-seeking communities," said Laurie Arron, Director of Advocacy of Egale Canada. "As a community which comprises a relatively small proportion of the population and which faces severe discrimination and public stigma, transsexual and transgendered persons often choose not to pursue human rights complaints, with the result that there are few opportunities to advance trans test case litigation. The outcome of this appeal will make a significant contribution to the jurisprudence determining the equality rights protection afforded to trans persons."

"Egale affirms the right of the Vancouver Rape Relief Society to establish reasonable policies and criteria to ensure that their staff and volunteers share the organization's commitment to anti-sexist and anti-oppression work; and have an understanding of sexism based on their personal experiences. It is Egale's position, however, that trans women are no less equipped to meet such criteria. In addition, any such policies would need to be genuinely and reasonably related to the goals of the organization and could not be developed as a pretext for excluding trans women."

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**.

Wendell Debele M.S. (T.C.M.) Dipl. L.Ac.

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Arrest In DC TG Slaying

by Doreen Brandt
365Gay.com Newscenter
Washington Bureau

(Washington, D.C.) Police have arrested a 22-year-old man in the killing of a transgendered Washington woman.

The murder was one of two killings of transgendered women in DC in as many weeks. A third transgendered woman was shot and is in serious condition in hospital.

The naked body of 25 year old Emonie Kiera Spaulding was found in a grassy area in Southeast Washington August 20. Investigators late Tuesday charged Antwan D. Lewis after he turned himself in. He is accused of picking Spaulding up in his car and then shooting her after an argument.

Police say they believe there is no connection between Spaulding's killing and the other two cases.

Popular DC drag artist Bella Evangelista, was fatally shot last Saturday. Antoine Jacobs, 22, has been charged with her killing. Police say Jacobs paid Evangelista for a sex act and then discovered she was born a male.

Several hours before Spaulding's body was found, another transgendered woman was found shot. The victim, a 24-year-old D.C. resident, was critically wounded but survived. There have been no arrests in that case.

TG Wins Name Suit

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Augusta, Georgia) A Georgia transgendered woman will be able to use her female name while she is transitioning. Vickee Gatliff had been told that she must continue to use her male birth name until after she had completed gender reassignment surgery. But, she was unable to continue transitioning unless she lived as a woman. It was a catch 22 that left her in limbo.

"It is an ordeal each time Vickee Gatliff does simple things like write a check or use a credit card because her driver's license and her appearance don't match," said Greg Nevins an Atlanta-based Senior Staff Attorney for Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, which represents Gatliff. Lambda went to court on Gatliff's behalf. Today a state judge ruled that Gatliff would be legally able to use her new name.

"This is a happy ending to a common barrier that many transgendered people experience," said Nevins. He said there had been no need for the earlier ruling that prevented Gatliff from using her new name.

Georgia law allows people to change their names unless there's a reason to suspect that the name change is being requested to commit criminal fraud, according to Lambda Legal. Established medical guidelines say that people seeking sex reassignment surgery should live fully as a member of the gender to which they are transitioning.

"When state judges deny these name changes, transgendered people are put in a double bind — judges say they must have surgery before being granted name changes, and doctors say they have to change names before having surgery," said Nevins.

Last month, Lambda Legal won a similar battle in Syracuse, New York, on behalf of a transgendered woman named Frances Fisher, ending her two-year struggle to obtain accurate identification.

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.

Homeland Security Eyes Transgendered

by Doreen Brandt
365Gay.com Newscenter, Washington Bureau

(Washington, D.C.) New security precautions at the nation's airports and border crossings will make it more difficult for the transgendered to enter the US. The Department of Homeland Security issued a warning on the weekend that terrorists may disguise themselves in women's clothing to avoid scrutiny. The warning cites intelligence collected globally by the Department leading the agency to believe that soft targets, and more clever approaches including use of disguise are considered the next trend in terrorism.

"Previous attacks underscore Al-Qaeda's ability to employ suicide bombers - a tactic which can be used against soft targets and VIP's. Terrorists will employ novel methods to artfully conceal suicide devices. Male bombers may dress as females in order to discourage scrutiny," the alert says.

The Department of Homeland Security also noted that "Recent mass-casualty attacks in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Iraq used car bombs against hotels and housing compounds, suggesting that "soft" targets with minimum physical security measures could be viewed as attractive options in the USA. Soft targets, it says, include apartment complexes, hotels, gas stations, shopping malls and restaurants.

The alert has prompted the NTAC, the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition Sunday to recommend the transgendered take precautions to avoid being mistaken for terrorists. The alert and increased security comes just before the Southern Comfort Conference and other fall conventions taking place around the globe that will attract large numbers of the transgendered.

NTAC says that airport screeners and other law enforcement agencies are likely to be much more vigilant than usual. It also says that they " may be more likely to commit unwitting abuses." The organization says that people transitioning should seriously consider doing any air travel in male garb until reaching their destination. Even for those who have transitioned, issues may arise if authorities suspect something NTAC said in a statement.

It advises the transgendered to bring court-ordered name (and gender) change papers. While terrorists may make fake identifications, they won't carry name change documents signed and notarized by a court, NTAC says. The organization recommends people be prepared to openly explain the truth about their gender status if stopped and questioned by authorities.

"As frightening as this scenario may appear, hesitation or evasive answers will only draw more intense scrutiny and could possibly lead to police holding one temporarily for further interrogation. Lack of cooperation with authorities will likely be treated unfavorably and unapologetically," NTAC says.

"This isn't a request for everyone to be 'out and proud' or for scare tactics," said Vanessa Edwards Foster, chair of NTAC. "We're trying to avoid having innocent transgenders jailed because a hesitant answer was inaccurately deemed as hiding terrorist motivations," as a result of the DHS security alert.

NTAC is also asking for transgenders to report any incidents where a transgendered party is forthcoming with all requests, and consequently is verbally or physically abused, or arrested under questionable pretense. "If something of this nature occurs, we encourage those parties to keep a detailed report of all actions taken. An increased need for security should not give law enforcement a right to make personal character judgments and to abuse cooperative innocents," Foster said.

"While the worst-case scenarios appear rather alarming, we don't want to discourage the community from traveling or conducting themselves as before." Foster said. "There's still a good chance this won't affect most travelers. Live your lives," Foster suggests.

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Transgendered Woman Murdered In Toronto

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Toronto, Ontario) A transgendered woman has been found strangled to death in her apartment in the heart of Toronto's gay village.

Cassandra Do, 32, worked as an escort in the sex trade under the name Tula. Police believe she was killed by a client. She worked out of her home and advertised on the Internet.

Tasha Jones, a friend and former co-worker said being transgendered and working in the sex trade is dangerous. "That's why I don't do what she did anymore," she told the Toronto Sun. It just got too scary."

"It could have been one of us. We need to bond and stick together," she said. "Being a transsexual is sometimes very lonely. We really can't trust a lot of people."

Investigators say they have few clues in the killing. Her computer has been taken to the forensic sciences lab and her phone records are being examined.

Suit Seeks Answers IN TG Woman's Killing

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) The mother of a transgendered woman filed suit Tuesday against Philadelphia police and emergency personnel and the owners of a downtown bar, contending they all played a role in her daughter's death.

On the evening of December 21, Nizah Morris attended a Christmas party at the Key West Bar and Grille. After the became too intoxicated to make her own way home, concerned citizens called 911 to obtain medical assistance for her. An ambulance was on route when Philadelphia police officer Elizabeth Skala arrived on the scene. Officer Skala called off the ambulance and drove Ms. Morris to the vicinity of the 1500 block of Walnut Streets where, minutes later, Morris was fatally wounded by a blow to the head. Morris was eventually transported to Jefferson Hospital, where she died on Christmas Eve.

Morris, 47, was a popular entertainer in gay clubs in Philadelphia. Her mother, Roslyn Wilkins, is suing Officer Skala and several unnamed officers; emergency medical technicians Teresa Height and Stephen McCarthy; and the owners of the Key West Bar and Grille. The suit seeks unspecified compensatory and punitive damages.

In documents filed in the case Wilkins alleges that Morris was visibly drunk when she arrived at the bar, but was still served alcohol. The papers say she was allowed to become more impaired. Outside the bar, the suit says, bystanders were concerned about Morris' condition and called 911 to request an ambulance. Instead, the suit says that Skala arrived at about 3:10 a.m., canceled the ambulance call and put Morris in her patrol car.

The lawsuit contends that Skala should never have cancelled an ambulance and she should not have and let her out on the street to find her own way home at about 3:20a.m. According to the court filings Morris had a blood alcohol level of .40 - four times the legal limit - and was "barely conscious and appeared to be quite ill."

Five minutes later, passersby found Morris lying in the street, bleeding profusely from the head. Another 911 call was made, an emergency crew arrived and began working on Morris. But, it was almost 30 minutes more before Morris arrived at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

Lee Carpenter, staff attorney at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights and co-counsel in the suit, said, "Although the damages suffered by Ms. Morris' family are staggering, this case is not about money. It is about using every means at our disposal to finally obtain answers to questions about how and why Nizah died."

"We hope that this suit results in accountability for those who are responsible for Nizah's death, and a small measure of justice for the transgender community. Our community is tired of seeing transgender people treated as second-class citizens," added Stacey Sobel, the Center's Executive Director.

No one has been arrested in Morris' murder.

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.

TG Convicted In Castration Murder Seeks New Trial

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) A transgendered woman serving an 11 year sentence in the castration death of her husband is seeking a new trial, claiming her lawyer was more interested in a book and movie deal than in defending her.

Tammy Felbaum was convicted of involuntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, reckless endangerment and the unauthorized practice of medicine in the February 2001 death of her husband, James Felbaum.

At her trial the prosecutor said the 40-year old man died following a "very crude" castration performed by his wife in their Marion Township home. The county coroner's office said pain from the castration, along with the effect of painkillers, suppressed his gag reflex and caused him to suffocate on his own vomit.

Investigators said they found blood-soaked bandages, bedding and clothing, as well as medical books, scalpels, sutures and forceps in the trailer, which had no running water or heat.

Prosecutor Timothy McCune said Tammy Felbaum apparently didn't intend to kill her husband by castrating him, but the operation contributed to his death. The victim's brother told investigators that Tammy often threatened to hurt her husband.

"She said, 'If you ever cheat on me, I'll castrate you and leave you for dead,'" Thomas Felbaum said. "She made the threats right in my house. She also said she would get away with it if she did it." James Felkbaum was Tammy's sixth husband following her sex reassignment surgery.

During her trail, Tammy's fifth husband, Tim Barner, who has since also undergone sex reassignment and now uses the name Lynn Barner, testified that after their divorce in the early 1980s, she asked Tammy Felbaum to castrate her and that she complied. "I knew she had the technique to do it," Barner said. "I knew she had the skill."

Tammy Felbaum has filed a handwritten appeal with Butler County Judge William Shaffer who heard the original case. Felbaum said her trial lawyer, Richard E. Goldinger, failed to contact experts who could have helped her case.

She also sent the judge a document purported to be an agreement between the woman and her lawyer regarding book, movie and television rights. People who have seen the document say it does not appear to be signed.

Roxy and Miss Ayme at TGSF BBQ

Injections Kill Three TG Women

Tom Musbach, Gay.com / PlanetOut.com Network

Illegal silicone injections have killed three transgender women in the Houston area in recent months, police said. According to the Associated Press, the most recent victim was 22 years old and died in May, days after receiving silicone injections from Guadalupe Camarena, 32. The older woman was charged with aggravated assault and is free on $50,000 bond.

Brenda Thomas, a transsexual activist in Houston, told AP the practice of injecting silicone is not uncommon. "These girls didn't want to wait three to five years for hormone-induced breasts to grow," she said.

"The problem of injectible silicone use has long been an issue within some parts of the transgender community, as the lure of quick physical alteration overrides the dangers of free silicone in the body," Gwen Smith, board member of Gender Education and Advocacy (GEA), told the Gay.com / PlanetOut.com Network.

According to a medical advisory compiled by GEA, injected silicone may enlarge breasts, buttocks, cheeks and other body parts for the short term. But the ultimate result can be disfiguring as the silicone migrates, changes shape or hardens. The practice is not approved by plastic surgeons, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has outlawed it.

Documented adverse reactions include respiratory distress, infection, toxic shock syndrome, scleroderma, cancer, neuropathy, lymphadenopathy, rheumatic symptoms and severe autoimmune and connective tissue disorders. Earlier this month in Florida, a transgender woman was sentenced to five years in prison for her role in injecting silicone into another woman who subsequently died.

"I would hope that most transwomen would look at cases like these in Houston as an example of just how dangerous silicone can really be," Smith said. "Look for other options, ones that don't result too often in death and disfigurement."

TG's Sue Gov't For Surgery Costs

by Jan Prout
365Gay.com Newscenter, Toronto Bureau

(Toronto, Ontario) Four transgendered women are taking the Ontario government before a Human Rights tribunal to have the cost of sex reassignment surgery covered by the province's health insurance plan. The Ontario Human Rights Commission will hear the case later this month. The Ontario government stopped funding the surgery on Oct. 1, 1998 leaving many transitioning transgenderds in limbo.

Prior to that date, Ontarians could have their surgery paid for provided they went through a standardized two-year program that included: psychological assessments, hormone treatment, and a "real life test" in which patients had to live as the other gender, full time, for one year. One of the women, Martine Stonehouse, a support worker with the Toronto school board, said she couldn't afford to finish her transition from male to female after the province removed sex-reassignment surgery from the list of procedures covered by Medicare.

"To leave any patient halfway through a recognized medically necessary procedure is medically and morally unethical no matter what the condition is," said Stonehouse. Between 1980 and Sept. 30, 1998, about six or seven surgeries were recommended by the clinic each year, at a combined annual cost to taxpayers of about $122,000.

The outcome of the hearing will likely hinge on whether or not sex-reassignment surgery is deemed a "medically necessary" procedure — a designation that makes a procedure fundable under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan.

I would say 'medically necessary' would probably be the main criteria that led to (the surgery's) de-listing," said Health Ministry spokesperson John Letherby, But lawyer Susan Ursel, who will represent three of the women said the government's decision was "inhumane" because her clients suffer from a medically recognized disorder.

"[The government has] taken a stance that doesn't seem to be supported by the majority of medical professionals in the field," said Ursel. Only four of Canada's ten provinces pay for sex reassignment surgery: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Newfoundland.

Takin' Care of Biz...

Statement of TGSF Assets, Liabilities, and Equity

as of 20 September 2003

Assets

Cash	$3,133.08
Event Equipment	
Decorations	$1,000.00
Food Service	$200.00
Office Supplies	$50.00
Total Assets	**$4,383.08**

Liabilities and Equity

Accounts Payable	$3,786.50
Equity	$596.58
Total Liabilities and Equity	**$4,383.08**

Statement of Income

Revenue

Memberships	$365.00
Donations	$273.00
Advertising	$166.67
Total	**$804.67**

Expenses

Cotillion	$750.00
Newsletter	$317.18
Operations	$49.52
Miscellaneous	$168.47
Total	**$1,285.17**

Net Income ..... **($480.50)**

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as of September 15, 2003

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Contact TGSF!

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

Editorials

OPINION | PlanetOut Open Forum

by Gwendolyn Ann Smith

"Open Forum" is a biweekly Op-Ed feature that showcases guest columns from a rotating pool of the best and brightest from across the range of political and cultural bents. Contributors will address and inspire pointed topical debate on current and ongoing hot-button issues of interest to the GLBT community.

I received a call on the evening of August 21. On the other end was a transgender activist from Washington, D.C. She was on the verge of tears — both of sorrow and of rage — over events spanning no more than 10 days.

I would like to sit here and tell you that I was able to be the calm, rational voice, there to heal the anger and pain she was feeling. But I feel all that, too. I see a lot of cases of anti-transgender violence, and each makes me cry those same bitter tears.

On August 12 in Washington, D.C., a memorial was held. Citizens in the U.S. capital joined together for one moment to honor two transgender teenagers, shot to death in their car a year ago that day. It was a time to hope for positive change and respect for transgender citizens.

On August 16 in Washington, D.C., a transgender woman — Bella Evangelista — was shot multiple times at close range. Another event was held in Ms. Evangelista's honor. Again people turned out, adding to a makeshift memorial: Photos and signs intermixed with stuffed teddy bears and cut flowers adorned a pole at the street corner she was murdered.

On August 20 and 21, two attacks occurred within hours of each other in D.C., leaving Emonie Spaulding dead and another transgender woman severely injured. The same evening these attacks took place, the public memorial set up for Bella Evangelista was demolished — crushed by vandals into little more than scattered paper and broken glass.

In little less than a week, two transgender people were dead and a third lay critically wounded in a local hospital — this in a city rocked by the murder of two transgender youths almost exactly a year before. A city that is rapidly becoming the deadliest place for transgender people.

It isn't just the deaths that make me angry. These are murders that did not need to happen, of people who could have fared a lot differently, who are still disrespected in death as they were in life.

At the most basic level, there was no need for anyone to be attacked. Though some in the mainstream media want to paint this as just what a man will do when "ultratestosterone kicks in," it is obvious that the killers are responsible for their actions, not the victims. No one made these murderers pull the trigger.

The D.C. media, in contrast, wants you to believe that it was the "lifestyle" that Bella and Emonie were living that led to their deaths — as if their transgender status was a simple life choice, and that this choice somehow forced their killers' hands.

Being transgender can be a recipe for a difficult life. Many transgender people are cut off from the employment and education opportunities that are basic expectations in our culture, and discrimination leads many into sex work as their only means of survival. Such may well have been the experience of Emonie and Bella.

Some studies have put transgender unemployment as high as 70 percent, well above even the worst levels in these economically troubled times. While many places have enacted legislation to protect the rights of individuals seeking and keeping employment — regardless of their gender expression or identity — no such protections exist nationally, or in Washington, D.C.

The same applies with hate crime laws. While Bella Evangelista's confessed killer, Antoine Jacobs, is being tried under an existing (though unclear on the issue of transgender) hate crimes statute, Emonie Spaulding's murderer, Antwan Lewis, has not been charged with any sort of hate crime.

In addition, Antwan has been released on his own recognizance pending trial. That may be the first instance of such a release in a murder case in D.C., showing yet another "double standard" in action. Kill a transgender, go free.

Add to this the local media's calling the deceased by names they did not prefer and pronouns they did not use. The media called the deceased "transgender male" deceivers who "dressed as women." It shows an unwillingness to respect in death those who were denied respect in life.

Bella Evangelista and Emonie Kiera Spaulding deserve better. They deserved an equal place in society in life, and they deserve at least a little respect in death. A year ago in D.C., two transgender teenagers were murdered; this year, two more transgender people were killed.

The cycle continues, and I'm tired of bitter tears without positive change.

Gwen Smith (www.gwensmith.com) is the founder of the Remembering Our Dead Project, located at www.rememberingourdead.org.

I Too Have a Dream: My Dream and The Cold Realities of Sex and Gender

Lori Buckwalter
Portland, OR, transgal@yahoo.com

Much has been made about the primacy of gender expression as the basis for civil rights and social change. I am aware of these largely theoretical discourses on gender theory, and in fact think that as a personal or spiritual reality, we are of course "all" mixtures of gender expression traits and signal sets. We who are transsexual must accommodate ourselves to the reality that we are not reproductively trans (and for some of us, this matters). So, yeah, we're "in the middle"... but largely in theory rather than in practice.

It is also true that gender roles (on the whole) are not wholly arbitrary constructs, nor are they absolute, of course. They are instead derivative from roles and generalities of experience relating to reproductive capacities, which are in humans (still) binary. The egregious and pretentious absolutism of gender binaries relate to the role rigidification that is part of the status system of tribe/culture. In other words, cultures give status generally to those males who are powerful and prolific and females who are fertile, whose reproduction contributes to the viability of the tribe/culture, or whose identities are congruent with the prevailing ideology of the tribe/culture.

So for example, much of the repression intrinsic to cultures whose ideologies derive from Judaic, Islamic and similar sources relates to the subordination of individual identity to tribal reproductive needs, and the attendant rights of inheritance and descent that are the glue of the tribe/culture status system. Now, we can dismiss this as being merely "Western Culture" and I agree there are better models, but the real opposition that we are facing to trans identity from the Judeo-Christian and Islamic power elite (which by the way, has colonized much of the world) is about the ownership of reproduction and making sure that reproductive roles are central to personal identity. Things like transsexuality, intersexuality, homosexuality and the modern scientific control of reproduction by women are more than nuisances to this elite - they are perceived strike at the heart of the social glue of the tribe. They also aren't very useful for making babies to support you and run the farm, or to make armies that are more numerous than your foes (both of which are pretty strong tribal motives).

In this modern world, when we consider gender from a relativistic point of view, we can do so because we are (to some degree) no longer held captive by the constraints of tribal law per se and because we now have the excess population (and for us in the US an inordinate amount of the world's wealth) to work against the tribal mandates of survival by reproduction and family dominance. So, sex becomes more recreation (or personal expression) than procreation, and outlying identities like transsexuality have room to breathe (just a little). But down deep, we're a threat to the control urges and ideology of the breeders, and the backlash that we get in political and social terms comes from that perceived threat. Like the Catholic Church, fundamentalist religions want to be very specific about the ways sex is used as a reward for good social behavior and support of the power structure.

To my way of thinking, trans identity is an evolutionary trend towards individual empowerment as opposed to group subordination, but then the same folks who don't like evolution don't like individual freedom, do they? Heresy, they call it...

I just think we're at an interesting time, when we can talk about the possibility of a gender-relative world, but we don't have the power to make it happen. Given the regressive nature of the current political powers in the U.S., our beliefs that we are always moving forward are certainly being challenged. In even more benign times, many of our fellow trans people have perished because of "terminal marginalization". No jobs, no rights, no safety, no family, no life. I prefer to keep people alive and healthy (myself included) and realize that the true freedom from sex/gender repression is perhaps generations away.

Continued on Page 19

A Murder in Mississippi:

Remembering Erica Renee Mount

By Anita Lee

Erica Renee (Gary) Mount was murdered on July 9, 1988. Erica Renee Mount telephoned her mother July 4, 1988, to say happy birthday. Erica had given Carolyn Mount an expensive pair of gold earrings for Mother's Day and Mrs. Mount insisted the gift cover her birthday, too. "I love you mama," Erica said before she hung up. It was their last conversation.

Less than a week later, on July 9, 1988, Erica was shot along a dirt road outside an isolated home in Jackson County, on the Mississippi Coast. The couple inside heard the shots, heard her banging on the door and pleading for help, but refused to open up. Instead, they telephoned for help. Sheriff's deputies found 23-year-old Erica laying on her side on the patio, just outside the door. She had bled to death from gunshot wounds; one to the chest, another fired at close range into her back.

The road happened to be just across the Harrison County line, so Harrison County sheriff's investigator Andy Calvanese was one of numerous officers who responded to the emergency call. "I was out at the scene when I looked at the lady, good-looking girl," he said recently. Other officers echoed the sentiment.

Erica was carrying a purse with her driver's license inside. It identified her as Erica Renee Mount because she had legally changed her name. Her hormone-enhanced breasts swelled beneath the pink blouse she wore with a skirt and sweater. Her auburn hair was long and she wore makeup. Soon enough, though, the officers discovered that the slender, 6-foot Erica was what they considered a man.

In law enforcement and court records, she became Erica Renee Mount AKA Gary Mount. Her best friend, another transsexual named Amy, was able to give officers a description of the man last seen with Erica.

They were at Le Bistro, a gay bar just off the Coast tourist strip in the city of Biloxi, in Harrison County. Amy and Erica might have been together any other night, Amy said in a recent interview from her home in Florida, but Erica was hanging out with friends who were into drugs, something Amy didn't care for.

At Le Bistro, the two women admired one another's outfits, then Erica turned to the man with her, saying, "This is my friend, girl, he broke a $100 bill to get us in here." Amy saw them leave together. Erica was murdered later that night. Law enforcement officers found her car parked in a small cemetery near the murder scene. Amy helped investigators complete an artist's sketch of the suspect. Despite these promising leads, the Jackson County Sheriff's Department was unable to solve the crime.

The Mount murder mirrored many violent transgender killings, cases that, more often than not, are unsolved. Ten years after Erica's murder, the stabbing death of Rita Hester prompted a "Remembering Our Dead" web project (www.gender.org <http://www.gender.org>), which has found that an average of one person a month dies from anti-transgender violence. In 1999, a candlelight vigil in San Francisco led to an annual Day of Remembrance. The 5th Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance, scheduled for Nov. 20, has grown to include 19 states and the District of Columbia, along with events in three other countries.

The Erica Mount case did turn out to be unusual in one way: Thirteen years after the murder, the killer solved the crime. Carolyn Mount recently watched from the front row of a nondescript courtroom as a judge sentenced Steven H. Roman to 20 years in prison after he pleaded guilty to manslaughter. His punishment amounts to only 14 years because Roman is already jailed until 2009 for arson and other crimes he committed in Harrison County nine months after he killed Erica.

Mrs. Mount was far from satisfied with the case's outcome and still has no idea why her child had to die. She believes the murder would have been solved long ago, and the killer sent away for life, had her son been a heterosexual male happy to dress like one. But then, he might not be dead at all. "The thing that hurts the worst," she said, "is that nobody cared. Nobody cared. Not a soul. Just another queer, that's the way they think."

A Loving Child

Sharon Mount was home with her mother when the police pounded on the door in 1988 to break the news of her brother's death. Gary was 5 years old when Sharon was born, but they were very close and also looked very much alike. For Gary, Sharon became an alter ego, a doll he could dress up. They liked to play Barbies together, too. He preferred her company to that of his two brothers. When Gary was still in elementary school, Carolyn Mount consulted her pediatrician about his behavior. Ignore it, the doctor said, he'll grow out of it. He didn't. But he was also the most loving of the four Mount children. He often climbed into his mother's lap for a hug, saying, "Oh, Mama, I love you, I love you."

Gary, Age 6

Gary was teased as a child for being a sissy. He had an easier time as a teenager, when he was accepted as "one of the girls." He tried to convince himself that he was straight, but spent most of his girlfriend time doling out advice on boys and makeup. He loved to help Sharon get ready for dates, blow drying her hair and helping with her makeup.

Sharon recalls that Gary gave up on heterosexuality around the age of 18. He had dropped out of high school in tenth grade, but later received his GED. He went to beauty school and worked as a hairdresser.

When Gary and Amy met, Amy remembers thinking, "Oh my God, he's so gay," very swishy, always leading with his wrist. They performed together in drag shows, letting their hair grow and taking hormones. Erica was adventurous and brave.

She picked up and moved to California for a year, where she had friends, but returned to Mississippi a few years before her death. By this time, Erica dressed full time as a woman.

Mrs. Mount allowed Erica and her friends into the house dressed as women. She said that she accepted her son, but she has never stopped thinking of him as Gary. His father, from whom she was divorced, was a different matter.

He refused to allow Erica into his home unless she dressed as a man, so they seldom saw one another. Erica had learned to laugh off the taunts, even in the gay community, for being a "drag queen." Her father's rejection, all agree, was her deepest source of pain.

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Cold Realities of Sex and Gender...

Continued from Page 18

If economic collapse and/or cultural fear and repression make the search for easy victims even more appealing to the savage breeders, we're all in trouble... The Afghan and Texas Talibans are alike in their urge to repress trans and other queer identities... hell, Ashcroft can't even deal with Justice having one bare bosom! For the time being, personal choice and freedom can be accomplished only within the framework of cultural roles that "people in general" understand and can support.

By ourselves, trans people are virtually powerless in political terms. This is why civil rights have generally referred to models of trans identity that are really transitional from one known state to another. People get this, but they don't get transition to some indeterminate or novel identity. And they just don't like the idea of building unlimited rest rooms instead of just two (sadly, this is not a joke)...

Having worked in political advocacy on these issues, I know first hand that those folks who would help us to gain our rights are scared by the Right to even try. Maybe this will change soon... maybe not. On the bright side, the longer we stay alive and can be a part of society, the better chance we have of changing people's hearts and minds. It's a real balancing act between visibility and integration. Everybody should get to choose, but not all choices are acceptable or understandable to the mainstream.

Most trans folks want to live and flourish, not lurk in the shadows. We've chosen the alternatives to these simple accomplishments too many times in the past. I mourn those who gave up on life, some because they would not accept the reality of our limitations to construct ourselves without consequences. We owe it to them to be warriors as well as visionaries, and to defend our future as well as to decry the outrages and injuries of the past. To do this, we must use the cultural terrain on which we live to our best advantage.

Like Martin Luther King, Jr., I have a dream, too. It's my life as a trans women of heart and mind, in a place where we are all safe and free. I just want to live to see it come true. Sometimes, that seems like quite a lot to expect...

GLBT Raps!

They're here, they're queer and they HomoHop. Gay and lesbian artists, long rejected by mainstream rappers, are stretching the genre's boundaries.

Neva Chonin, Chronicle Pop Music Critic

The Urban Hermitt was standing outside a school three years ago when she received her first explicit lesson in hip-hop gender politics. Waiting for her turn at a freestyling battle in front of Seattle Central Community College, the aspiring MC watched another rapper clamber atop a bus shelter, strip to his boxer shorts and, clutching a microphone in one hand and his crotch in the other, spit out a rhyme about his anatomy.

The assembled crowd cheered. When the Hermitt's turn came, she decided to go with the flow. Peeling down to her own boxers, she grabbed her crotch and proceeded to rap the praises of having a butch, female physique. The crowd froze. A film crew covered its camera. "Put your pants back on!" yelped one of the battle organizers. "We don't want no obscenity!"

That day the Hermitt (a.k.a. Andre) learned exactly what the hip-hop adage of "keeping it real" meant for the gay hip-hop fan. "Real" meant the straight world. "Real" meant denying her evolving identity as a transgendered female-to-male MC. "I've always had to fight for my time onstage," says the Hermitt, 25, who recently moved to San Francisco and now identifies as male. "I've had things thrown at me. I've had people try to beat me up."

It's a challenge gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender hip-hop fans face every day. Drawn to hip-hop's legacy of free expression, they too often discover that their stories are less than welcome in a genre filled with ethnically and socially diverse, but overwhelmingly heterosexual, voices.

For decades, gay hip-hop-heads have toed the line, rapping about everything except their sexuality and stifling their anger at homophobic lyrics by mainstream rappers. Like good street soldiers, they kept it "real" while the music they once embraced as a creative outlet became another closet.

Now that's changed. Thanks to the emergence of homohop, a growing genre that's equal parts music and community, gay MCs and DJs are staking their claim in uncompromisingly loud, rhyming terms.

Homohop is an international phenomenon — one of the most comprehensive online homohop sites, Gayhiphop.com, is out of London — but thanks to a recent QueerYouthTV documentary on the genre that spotlighted local acts such as Deep Dickollective (DDC), Jen-Ro, Hanifah Walidah, Katastrophe, God-Des and Jaycub Perez, the Bay Area is ground zero. At this week's Third Annual World Homohop Festival — part of East Bay Pride — gay rappers, DJs and spoken-word artists from across the United States will celebrate their growing prominence as they converge on Oakland's Metro Theatre for four nights of rhythm and revelry.

The festival, dubbed PeaceOUT, supplies a safe space and throws down a challenge. "Hip-hop fights against oppression, but at the same time it takes on the role of the oppressor by mirroring society at large: male-centered, patriarchal and classist," says DDC MC and festival director Juba Kalamka (a.k.a. Pointfivefag).

It's up to the hip-hop community to change that role, adds DDC's Tim'm T. West (a.k.a. 25percenter, and the author of the autobiographical memoir "Red Dirt Revival"). "It's one thing for GLAAD (the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) to say a lyric is homophobic; people in the community aren't going to listen, because they know GLAAD aren't hip-hop heads. It's altogether different when you have MCs and DJs coming out of the closet in growing numbers saying the same thing."

Gay-friendly rap faces a daunting task. Homophobia exists even within the hip-hop underground, where conscious MCs' progressive views seldom extend to gay rights. Lyrically, homosexual issues are spurned or mocked; historically, there have been few crossover alliances between straight and gay artists in the indie hip-hop scene, and gay MCs are discouraged from sharing the stage with their heterosexual peers.

West — who, like the Urban Hermitt, has been shut out of more than one freestyle match — says attitudes are changing, but masculine paranoia takes a long time to die. "There's this notion that if you allow a gay presence to enter a battle situation and someone who's gay out-rhymes you, you have to deal with being de-masculinized," he shrugs. "It creates a cultural shift."

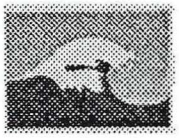
South San Francisco rapper Jen-Ro, 20, hit a wall early when she tried her first rap at age 10. "The first time I rapped onstage was at a school summer camp," she recalls, laughing. "They pulled me off, but I didn't let it stop me. It's important to let people know we're out here and we're no different. I feel like I'm speaking out for my peers who can't come out and say, 'Hey, I'm gay.' "

Urban Hermitt thinks providing an outlet for gay artists and role models for gay kids is more important than trying to change the attitudes of the straight hip-hop world. "It's 75 percent an outlet, 25 percent working for change," he says. "It's like, 'Hey, if you're going to diss queer people and make hip-hop an unsafe space, look what we're going to do.' "

Continued on Page 24

WAVE ELECTROLOGY

Permanent Hair Removal



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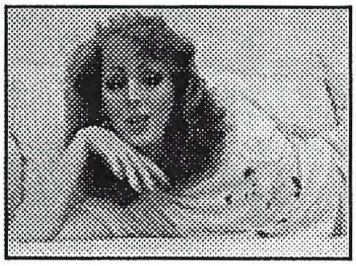
Remembering Erica Renee Mount...

Continued from Page 19



The police visited Amy the morning of Erica's murder. She told them what she could and said they seemed to be working hard on the case. They completed the sketch of the man who would turn out to be Steve Roman. The drawing looked just like him. It was released to local newspapers, but nobody made the connection.

Steve Roman, now 46 years old, has been in trouble all his adult life. His arrest record, beginning at age 18, includes numerous burglaries, armed robbery, grand larceny, kidnapping and at least two escapes. In April 1989, Roman was pursuing his obsession, a dental hygienist who worked on the Mississippi Coast. They had lived together in Florida, but she was now seeing the dentist.

Jealous, Roman got drunk one night and burned down the dentist's office. Law enforcement officers were working the fire when a patrol car pulled up on a car that had run off the road only a short distance away. Steve Roman initially was charged with DUI. But it soon became apparent that he had burned down the dentist's office. Harrison County sheriff's Capt. Andy Calvanese, the same deputy who had been to the Mount murder scene, was called to investigate.

Roman's hands were burned and blistered, Calvanese recalls. In the car's back seat, officers found a $3,000 fur coat, stereo equipment, guns and other items stolen from the dentist's office.

Roman attempted to escape a few days later while he was at a physician's clinic to have his hands treated. He wrestled a gun from a deputy, kidnapped a nurse and took off with her in her car. A deputy soon spotted the car and chased it. Roman fired at the deputy, then made a U-turn and rammed the deputy's pickup until he could no longer drive it. He hitched a ride with another deputy and the chase continued west, into Hancock County. The car Roman drove finally slammed to a stop in someone's front yard. He was shooting at deputies, who shot back.

Once deputies had secured Roman in a patrol car, an investigator went to talk to him. According to a police report, Roman said, "Why didn't y'all just kill me? That's why I did all this. Why didn't you mother fuckers just kill me?"

Roman received 20 years without parole for his crimes. He was sitting in prison, in December 2000, when he claims another death wish led him to confess to Erica's murder. He said that he wanted the death penalty in exchange for his confession to her murder and a second killing that has never been confirmed.

Roman's wish to die is a likely story because the death penalty would have been very slow suicide, with years of appeals and delays involved. More likely, Roman wanted to leave state prison for court proceedings so that he could try an escape from the Jackson County jail. However, he was heavily guarded and never got the chance.

Roman's confession to Erica's murder changed more than once. He said that he killed her because he thought she was a woman and turned out to be a man. He also said he was paid $20,000 to commit the murder. No one doubts that he did indeed kill Erica. He took investigators to the crime scene and the spot where he left Erica's car, offering details only the killer would know.

In the end, the Mount family agreed after the District Attorney's Office proposed allowing Roman to plead guilty to manslaughter rather than risk a murder trial that could end in acquittal.

Jackson County Sheriff's Capt. Mick Sears worked the case leading to the guilty plea, but not the original murder. "According to the notes," Sears said, "it was a date gone awry. But, I'm sorry, you don't pick someone up from a place like that and think it was a girl. A lot of people had a problem with the gay movement back then, didn't understand."

"It's good to get to the bottom of a cold case, no matter how long it's been. But we still don't have all the answers. We know who did it, we just don't know why he did it."

Erica Renee Mount was buried in the city of Biloxi's oldest cemetery, under the thick branches of Live oaks. Her transgender and gay friends took up a collection and, after the funeral, handed $5,000 to Sharon Mount. Erica's friends were dismayed to see that she would go to her grave groomed as a male, in a suit and tie. But Amy understood that Gary was Carolyn Mount's baby, the one she wanted to remember.

The plain tombstone sits beside that of Erica's maternal grandmother. The name etched into the marble is Gary W. Mount.

Why It's Tough To Be This Beautiful In Africa

By Declan Walsh
The Independent
Contributed by Jodie Miller, Cecelia Barzyk, and Rachel Smith

[Nairobi] - At first glance, Tamara cuts the figure of a striking African woman. She is tall and slender with dark ebony skin. Long black tresses fall to her shoulders, and a lipstick-coated cigarette dangles from fingers coated in violet nail varnish.

Perched cross-legged on her seat, the 27-year-old flicks through a ragged copy of Hello! magazine and enthuses about clubbing, gossip and the merits of "strong men". But it is a deception, of sorts. Under the made-up cheeks lies a pale shaving shadow. Her voice has a creaky high pitch and there is a modest bulge in her jeans. Because beneath the perfumed feminine gloss, Tamara is a man.

In many African societies, homosexuality is seen as a devilish aberration. If possible, transvestites are regarded as even worse. Whereas in Britain she might be accepted as a transsexual, in Africa Tamara - not her real name - betrays her secret only to friends and lovers.

Carelessness has a cost: being hounded down dark streets, stripped, shaved, beaten and jailed. It is a tough life, but not one of her choosing, she says. As the son of Rwandan Tutsi refugees exiled in Burundi, childhood was confusing. The young boy found he preferred dolls to balls; later he attended matches only to sneak a peek at the players' muscular legs.

When Tamara started experimenting with wigs and dresses in her teens, relatives were scandalized. But her mother, after some pain, has accepted her. "She loves me so much," she says with a smile.

Not everyone else does, as she has discovered in subsequent travels around east Africa. At 20, she left home. In Zanzibar, policemen denounced her as "sick" and chucked her in prison, where they shaved her head and confiscated her dress and jewelry. Inside the grimy jail, her savior was a sympathetic and "rather handsome" warden who saved her from beatings and shared his food.

A month later she got out, after a Norwegian boyfriend greased the magistrate's palm with $200 (£125). Returning to her parents' homeland, Rwanda, there was also trouble. Officials delayed her passport application for two years, scorning her as a "queer". Soldiers threatened to kill her. One night police hauled her from a hotel bar and beat her to a pulp. As she languished in prison, her father died. They released her the day after his burial.

Now she dresses as a man when she is in the capital, Kigali. "You don't play with the Rwandans," she says. "For them, you are nothing." In contrast, folk across the border in war-torn Burundi are more tolerant, she adds.

White men make the best boyfriends, because they are more "civilized". For a time, Tamara lived with a French aid worker in Uganda. But Africans are bad news. "They are hypocrites," she says. "They can make love to you at night but the next day they won't look at you."

A few times men have chatted her up, believing she was a woman. On discovering the truth, some have accepted her identity calmly, others with violence.

"Usually I tell them the truth at first. But not always," she says coyly. Tamara feels complete only when dressed as a woman. Every day she softens her skin with creams and almond oil. She shaves carefully, masking the shadow with foundation. The appearance of breasts comes from a special bra filled with water. She makes money from trading clothes and make-up, and from the men she dates.

Wealthy businessmen pay for beach holidays, rent and food. An elderly Englishman living in an upmarket Nairobi suburb is a current boyfriend. There are others, too. Tamara claims to have slept with more than 100 men. On a recent holiday on the Kenyan coast, she gave eight Indian teenagers oral sex in her hotel room.

But more often than not, it is a lonely existence. A circle of friends offers support, but Tamara's happiest moments are alone. "I often feel closed in, not at peace in my heart. I love being on my own, with music. That's how I feel alive." She wants to flee to Europe, where she feels she will find acceptance and perhaps that elusive sex-change operation. "I want to be a girl. I dream of it in my sleep," she says. A friend is helping her apply for a visa, but there are many complications. Yet Tamara is hopeful.

"If I leave I'm never coming back here," she says. "I want to live in another world."

Remember Gwen Araujo!

Coming in November!

Annual Day of Remembrance

Gwen Araujo

February 24, 1985 - October 3, 2002

Anti-transgender violence did not end with **Gwen Araujo**. Since last year's Day of Remembrance and as of this writing, there have been 22 reported instances of anti-transgender murder. 14 of those have been in the United States. Because of this continued threat against us, we will meet again for the **Transgender Day of Remembrance**.

San Francisco's observance will be on **Thursday, November 20th, 2003**, with a march on Market Street from Harvey Milk Plaza to the LGBT Community Center. The march will kick off around 6:30 p.m. A large remembrance event featuring music, speakers, and poetry will be held in the Rainbow Room at the LGBT Community Center following the march, at 7:30 p.m.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance was started in 1999 as a response to the growing issue of anti-transgender violence leading to death. Last year, the Transgender Day of Remembrance was observed in 90 locations in 8 countries.

For more information, or to view the Memorial, please see www.rememberingourdead.org.

Gwen Smith

Commentary
Concerning Yomi's Posting

I feel I should give you some additional information on what's going on here.

The transgender community has been recommending that the Merc adopt the GLADD guidelines when reporting on a transgender person. We also recommended that they refrain from jumping to conclusions about sexual orientation based on how someone is dressed. They instead decided to adopt a style that continues to allow the sensationalizing of transgender murder.

Their "new" policy is just a formal statement of the existing policy. When they write a sensitive article about a transitioned person they use the correct name and gender. They've been doing that for a long time. But when we are killed they fall back to sensationalized reporting. There is nothing in the style guide that prevents the same kind of reporting that they did with Gwen.

Why is Yomi sending this "news" out now, almost a year later? And why didn't she include the text of the change she was so excited to tell us about? I talked with Sylvia tonight to make sure I could share the following information with you.

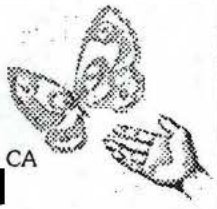
Yomi is in the middle of negotiating a book deal. She has been trying very hard to get Sylvia to sign an agreement with her. Sylvia does not want Yomi to write Gwen's story. The one-year anniversary of Gwen's tragedy is coming up. Yomi will be wanting to talk with us to further her reputation as the transgender knowledgeable reporter. I urge you all to consider this information before allowing her to use you.

[Please see] information about an upcoming Remembrance Vigil for Gwen elsewhere in this issue of *The Channel*. I hope to see you all there.

Thanks for your time and consideration on these issues.

Shelly Prevost

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]

San Jose Mercury News Changes Style On Transgender...

It's been nearly a year since Gwen Araujo's name first appeared in the Mercury News. In the beginning, our stories were full of inaccuracies about who Gwen was. We called her Eddie. One story headline referred to her as a cross-dressing boy, while others consistently used masculine pronouns. I came to understand how reporting in this fashion not only misrepresented this teenager's life, but perpetuated a climate of ignorance about transgender language and culture.

Many of you were outraged by our coverage. You made phone calls, wrote letters and organized boycotts of the Mercury News and other media companies who stubbornly refused to change their outdated stylebooks. Your efforts won out with the Associated Press. But my own company, ranked in the top 10 in the nation, was slow to evolve.

As a reporter who is bound by such "style" constraints, I have spent the year working behind the scenes to educate the editors who make decisions about my stories. In November, I helped set up a meeting between top editors and members of Silicon Valley Transgender Community. I've made subtle changes in my own reporting so that I dodge the pronoun issue entirely. And I've continued to dialogue with many of you about this and other stories as a way to improve my work in this area.

So it thrills me today to let you know that the Mercury News has finally made an addition to our stylebook, which did not have a separate entry for "transgender". The update (better late that never, I feel) was made in direct response to meetings with our top editors and members of the transgender community. So kudos to Shelly Prevost and everyone who championed the cause!

The style change relies partly on language suggested by the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association. The most important point is that we will rely heavily on a person's self-identification to determine gender. Previously, for example, we referred to a man as a man unless he had undergone surgery or hormone treatment to change his sexual identity. Under this policy, we usually will rely on how a person presents himself or herself to the world.

There still will be occasions when deciding whether to refer to someone as a male or female will require discussion, but at least this style update provides new guidelines for that discussion. This is a huge victory for the transgender community. Not only does the Mercury News serve one of the nation's largest GLBT populations, it is a paper with national esteem and influence. Other major news outlets watch what we do and I wouldn't be surprised if they follow suit. But either way, I hope you are as satisfied as I am with the results of your tireless advocacy. I look forward to working with each of you in the future.

Take care,
Yomi S. Wronge
Reporter, San Jose Mercury News
(510) [redacted]

Barbara J. Anderson

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Man Who Became Woman Wants To Be A Man Again

This story below my signature, while it may not be complete accurate, does show how important it is to be sure before proceeding with SRS and why the SOC were created and are important despite any flaws one can find with them. Of course many TS's are solid and are simply going thru the hurdles to get to where they need to be. Others are not. For those who are solid, please bear with the SOC as it really is necessary for those who are not so solid. Either way, interesting to hear a bit of how things are going in the trans community outside of the U.S.A..

Stephen L. Braveman, M.A., L.M.F.T., D.S.T.

Man Who Became Woman Wants To Be A Man Again

By Christine Hogan

Alan Finch's decision at 19 to become a woman - a decision supported by health-care professionals and his mother - took him on a journey from which he has painfully discovered there is no sure way back. Mr. Finch has spoken to ABC TV's Australian Story in the hope that people considering gender reassignment surgery will think fully about the procedure and then proceed very, very carefully.

As an adolescent boy, Mr. Finch thought he might have been gay. Then he thought, maybe not. Maybe he was "trapped" in the wrong body. In his 20s he had his penis and scrotum removed and a false vagina fashioned from the penile skin and inserted into his body, and he became a woman called Helen.

He got married illegally and was later in another relationship that fell apart when his male partner discovered Helen was born a boy. Then he had a relationship with a woman, who encouraged him to become a man again. "I knew with my whole being that was what I wanted to do," Mr. Finch, 36, of Melbourne, said.

About five years ago, he began taking male hormones, something he says now was "a roller-coaster ride emotionally". He was angry at himself for having been so gullible that he was sucked into the fantasy that becoming a woman would solve his identity crisis. And he was angry with his then-girlfriend. "I blamed her for having awakened this in me, and I just pushed her away. And there was this total confusion again wondering if I could function as a man, let alone function as a man who has been mutilated to this degree."

Like about 10 per cent of people in Australia who have the operation (about 80 a year in Sydney, Melbourne and on the Gold Coast), he was desperately unhappy with the result. Australian Transgender Support Association Inc president Gina Mather said there were between 48,000 and 50,000 transsexuals - most of them male to female - in Australia. Not all had had surgery.

Mr. Finch said: "Anatomically, I was never a woman. [The surgery] was creating a battleground within my own body. It's just rearranging flesh, but the tissue that's used is still male tissue. I was never able to have any orgasm or sexual pleasure. Everything was fake about it, from top to toe."

His psychiatrist Byron Rigby said: "In the absence of much more adequate counseling than I understand he received, the test showed that he in fact - even in the presence of estrogen treatment - was well on the masculine side of average." Just how did Mr. Finch end up in the middle of this fiasco?

Dr Rigby said it began with the lack of a positive father figure. "[Alan] never had any positive role modeling. The whole reason that he attempted to take refuge in womanhood was that he simply couldn't learn from his father how to be anything that he wanted to be."

When he was 19, Mr. Finch migrated to Australia with his mother and sister. It was a chance to begin a new life - as a woman. "My focus was to be the best-looking woman I could be. I got a job, I was getting attention from men. I felt powerful."

The final hurdle before the surgery that would effectively castrate him was the psychiatric test. First time around, he failed. Then he learned how to fudge the test and answer the questions to put him into the female zone. The operation got the go ahead. Dr Rigby wants to know how that happened. "He's more masculine than I am, if you like," he said.

"I would think a great spotlight should be placed on this kind of surgery in general, and this case in particular. I think it warrants a full investigation at governmental level."

Mr. Finch is looking at the possibility of genital reconstruction to restore his penis and is hoping to find a monogamous relationship - with a woman. Alan Finch's story, Boy Interrupted, will screen on Australian Story, ABC TV, 8pm tomorrow.

TGSF Clothing Drive 2003

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Final day for donations will be October 31, 2003

Commentary on HBIGDA-SOC...

By Holly

Alternatively, it shows how some immature people will avoid taking adult responsibility for their actions and will seek to blame anyone and everyone instead. Living as a man with a vagina is not so bad, in fact the HBIGDA recommends half the TS population does precisely that (FTM RLE).

For every transsexual hurt by receiving surgery there are a hundred hurt by not receiving surgery. The more visible ones end up like Debbie Fox, but that's only the tip of the iceberg. All the news and debate centers around that one in a hundred, for prurient reasons amongst others.

And whatever the present purpose of the HBIGDA-SOC may be, the reason why they were created was to provide a safe harbor for practitioners who are otherwise afraid to provide services (mayhem, malpractice, academic censure, etc.).

That there is no explosion of transsexual regrets now that the HBIGDA-SOC are so easily circumvented as to hormones and surgery proves the doomsayers had it wrong.

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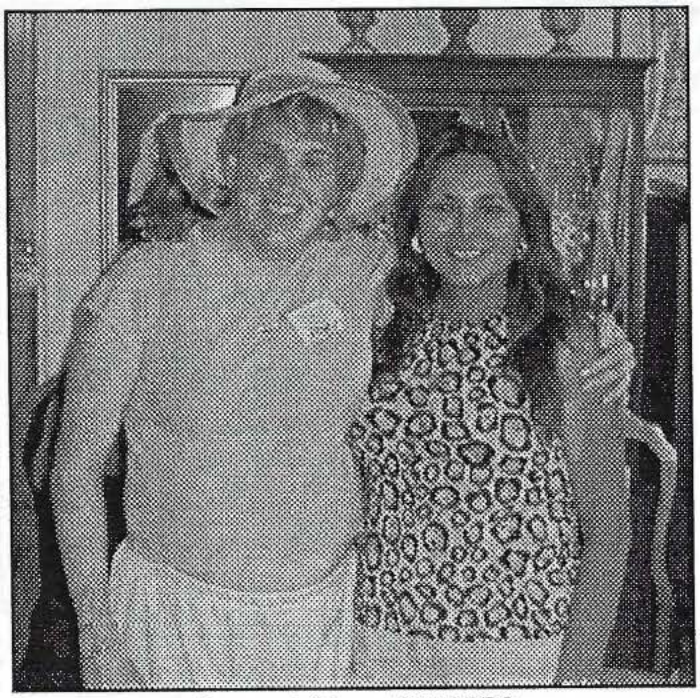
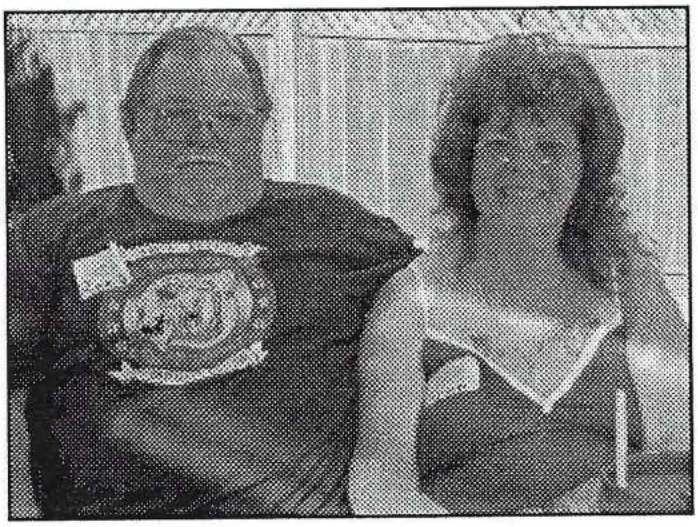


Roxy and Silia at TGSF BBQ
(A little birdie said Silia will be a Cotillion '04 Contestant!)



Sappho and Ayme's friends, Rees and Karen, enjoying themselves at the TGSF BBQ.
(No, really - we couldn't get him out of the pool!)

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HomoHop...

Continued from Page 20

Kalamka agrees that outreach through art is vital. "I have a community that supports me. It's different being 15 years old and queer in Hunters Point. What I try to do is provide a respite and let them know they're not in a vacuum."

Still, changing mainstream views on what it means to be a gay rapper, particularly a black gay rapper, is a concern, particularly in light of recent articles about African American men who live on the "down low" (or DL), playing straight in daily life while relegating gay desire to secret and depressingly unsafe sexual encounters.

"I think the media hype around the DL feeds into it," says West, 31. "A lot of the guys who now classify themselves as DL were out and gay a few years ago. DL is just something that's become fashionable. It's all 'no fags, no femmes.' Everyone wants a cut masculine thug, a hyper-masculine b-boy."

Controversy over the DL lifestyle isn't the only hurdle facing homohoppers: This year's festival nearly derailed when its funds were cut as part of cost- saving measures by the city of Oakland. But Kalamka, 33, decided to make the festival his full-time job, and Bay Area Pride founder and president Pete King stepped in with free office space.

Kalamka describes King's support as "critical" to the festival's survival. King figures homohop is equally critical to East Bay Pride. "Since the early '70s, 'gay' has been defined by white men in the Castro," King says. "We want to take people of color, hip-hop, queer punk, women's music and youth culture in general off the sidelines and put them center stage. "

Kayatrip's Kali B, 40, hopes someday inclusiveness won't require so much hard work. "I'm proud that we're having a showcase where everyone can be out," she says, "but really it's just a bunch of talented folks in a place where they can be themselves and do what they do without having to worry about anyone coming down on them."

"The 'homohop' name serves a purpose now, but hopefully in the future we'll just be a part of everything and won't need it," says Jen-Ro, who will release her first album next spring. "I don't want to be limited by labels. Hip-hop is hip-hop."

West sees just such a future in his students at the Oakland School for the Arts, where he teaches English and creative writing. "I rap with my kids every day," he says. "I want to cultivate a generation of young men who will check each other on sexism, misogyny and homophobia. And these kids — boys and girls — will grow up with different ideas of masculinity and make it easier for gay MCs to be who they are."

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