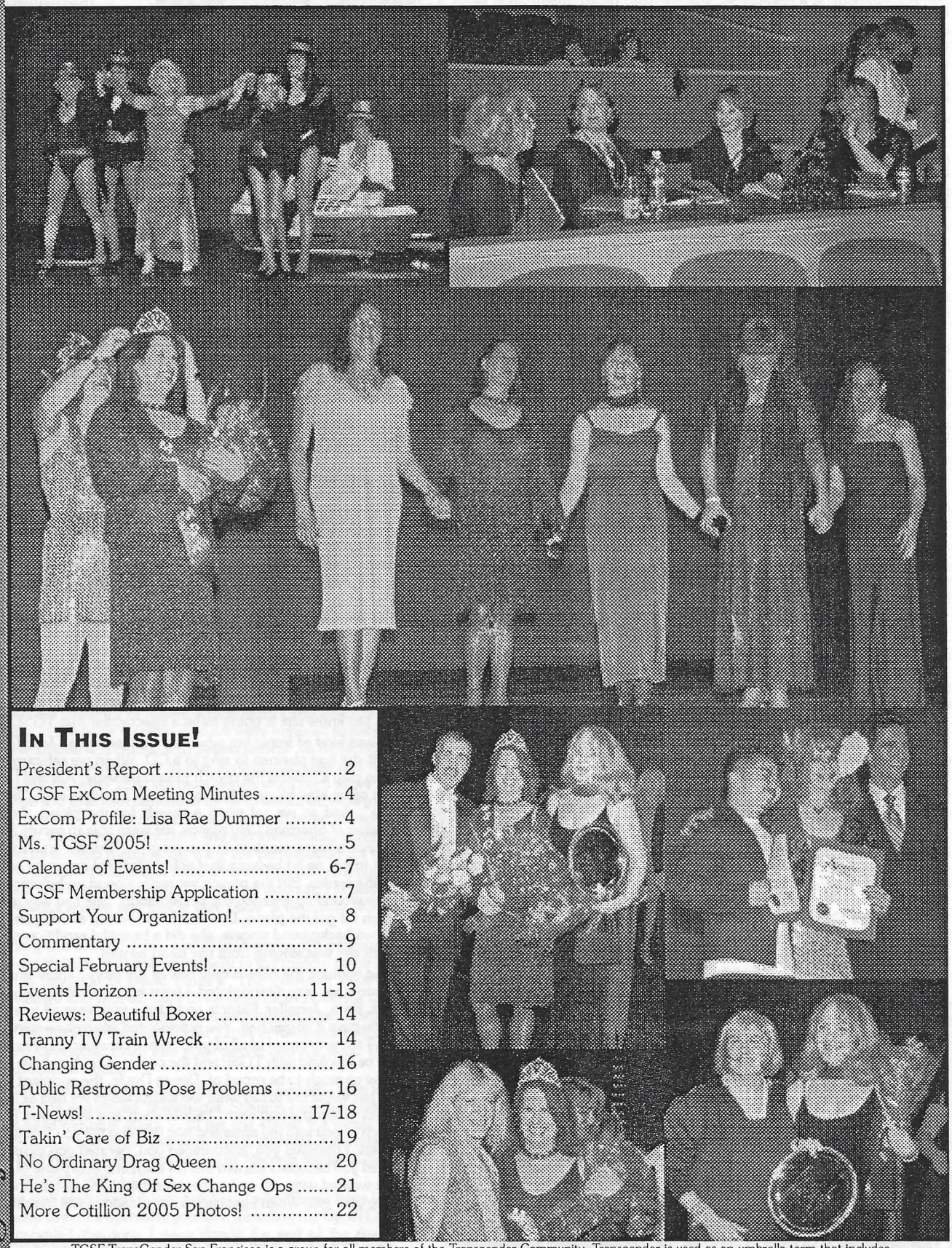
February 2005 — Dedicated to the Memory of Gwen Araujo — Volume 24, Issue 2

The Channel

# TGSF Cotillion Extravaganza!



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

# The Channel

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 2004 - 2005 Officers

*(Fiscal Year: May 1 - April 30)*

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Vice President ..... Laura Marlowe
Secretary ..... OPEN
Treasurer ..... Pamela Gray
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## Fine Print

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*Roxy with Denae Doyle at Cotillion 2005*

## President's Report

**By Roxy Carmichael-Hart**

### *I've Never Worked So Hard Yet Felt So Good*

I had written my president's report a few days before the Cotillion and I figured I would just edit then send to Ayme since I am going on vacation in the morning. But I need to rewrite this to give you my genuine feelings, not something that I planned four days ago.

This Cotillion was hard work. It was sweat, blood, and tears. And yet, I know that I speak for the entire crew when we say we have never felt so invigorated, so alive, so fulfilled ad so satisfied with something. We fretted and worried and stressed. Like magic, it came together.

Only, it wasn't magic that did it. It was dedication, commitment, sacrifice and believing in something and wanting to make it the best that it could be. It was the product of love from me, Laura, Dawnne, Alli and all of the others who so gave of themselves these last few months. We haven't had a lot of sleep but we will now all sleep with smiles on our faces, content that we all did something wonderful and beautiful for our community.

And now, Ms. TGSF 2005. Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy is her name. You may have heard us refer to her as Jenni throughout the course of the show. That was so we would not mix her up with our newly named Miss Congeniality, Jennifer Anderson. (Maybe I should change my name to Jennifer – or at least move to the North Bay since our Miss TGSF hails from St. Helena). But now that the Cotillion is over, we can go back to calling her Jennifer. We toyed with the idea of calling her Siobhán, but I think we need to retire that name.

I know that Jennifer will prove to be a classy, enthusiastic and dedicated Ms. TGSF. I thin you will agree that she was articulate, looked elegant and how about her piano playing! How about her song? When I first heard "Fly", I wanted to cry because I could hear the pain in her voice and I know how hard she has worked to overcome that pain. This lady has only transitioned for the last year but has made wonderful strides. She is a winemaker, software engineer and musician – you probably figured that out. She said during her interview that she found comfort and salvation in her music, which is something to which I can relate. Jennifer has some great ideas about fundraising and helping us with our database. She also sees a critical need in our community for more support for significant others. I know from her experiences with her wife, she will more than help others through similar issues. She has already offered to lend her services to one young lady I met at RGA. I just know she is going to be a spectacular Ms. TGSF.

It was kind of ironic but when we first looked at Jennifer's presentation, we saw that she had planned to sing to a CD. When we rehearsed at the church, she began to play a little on the church piano. Dawnne, Alli and I looked at each other and the same idea hit us at the same time. Dawnne said, "Stop. You are playing this live". And so we set upon a search for the piano. And thanks to Dennis Wadlington of Sherman Clay pianos, we were able to secure a piano that we could afford. For a mere mention in the program, Dennis waived the rental charge. I decided to run an ad because that act of kindness deserved more than just a mention in the credits. But the person we really wound up helping was Jennifer Anderson who wound up winning the presentation. She too was going to sing to a CD but when we got the piano, Dawnne found her an accompanist, and with the help of her two background singers, she did a beautiful rendition of "The Rose" I know that I felt she was singing from her heart as well.

But winning the tiara is only half of the story. There are four people tonight who I know are very disappointed. I have no words that I can say that would be of comfort. Kara, Jennifer, Patricia and Lisa – you were all wonderful. You did your best. You gave it all you had. You represented yourselves admirably and with much dignity. I am very proud of all of you. Please consider another run. And I know you will still be involved with TGSF and the community. You have so much to offer and you have so much to be proud of. Denae Doyle, the recipient of the Joanna Caron award, just wrote me to say what wonderful ladies we had as contestants. This was the finest group she had seen. I adore each and every one of you. I wish I could take each of you into my arms and hug you and tell you that it will be ok. You were my babies. I nurtured you, encouraged you, berated you (hopefully not too much!) and loved you because I wanted this for each and every one of you. I am very proud to have worked with you and to be your friend and sister. And I was touched very much by your gift. When I get back from vacation I will frame it and I will cherish it always.

And now it is time for pages and pages of thank you's much to the chagrin of those who hate it when I do this.

***Continued on Page 3***

## President's Report...

*Continued from Page 2*

My first thanks go to my colleagues on the Executive Committee. They worked their butts off. Laura, our producer did all of the grunt work from getting the deli tray to making the debutante cards and the badges and the debutante certificates. She also consoled me when I blew up at something (or someone as the case was). Alli, our technical director, stage manager and magician. I would not have done this show without her. She knew what buttons to push and when to push them. Everything that happened on stage was because of her hard work. I just wrote the show, she created it and brought it to life. Alli, thank you for giving life to my vision. Dawnne was our technical assistant, hiding in the booth all night, but so much more than that. When there was a job to do, Dawnne did it. When she wasn't arranging for some bodies to help us out, she was getting an accompanist for Jennifer Anderson. And it was Dawnne who arranged for us to be able to use the Metropolitan Community Church for our rehearsals. We are all very appreciative of the Church for this generous donation. Dawnne was also the "presentation coach" and helped to shape many of the performances. You saw the results of her efforts. And it was not just the presentation part. She worked with them on the active and eveningwear presentations as well. Kara put together the publicity packets and wrote the press releases and sent them out. Siobhán, although not on the ExCom any longer, arranged for the silent auction items from MAC and was an incredibly sexy, if somewhat funny, MC for the Debutante and Guys walk (you're in Australia now baby so you won't be able to get me back for a loooong time). We made fun of her all night long. Lenny took my jokes even further than I had written. When she saw the dedication to her in the program, she came to me and said, "You made me cry you bitch". I told her "I love you, you crazy slut". I adore Siobhán and I will miss her terribly. I am crying just thinking about the fact that she has but a week to remain with us. Pamela kept getting the checks into the bank. My dear, dear Anne Louise our Miss TGSF 2004 but forever Miss TGSF in our hearts designed our beautiful postcards and the program cover. Tommi, along with Terri Lee, whipped the debs to be in line. And Lisa, of course, was a contestant. She had the same smile whether she was up or down. Everyone contributed to make this show the best it could be. I am so proud of all of you. You were a wonderful team to work with and your seriousness and attention to detail made this show something special and gave me a lot less to worry about. Oh, and past Mr. TGSF boy Tyler did a great job with the silent auction and keeping that organized.

Has there ever been a more dynamic MC than Lenny Broberg? Once more, Lenny was a shining star on Cotillion night. He always knew just the right tone to interject. I kind of wrote some suggested words for Lenny but he is far better at expressing himself than I could be writing for him. I was very gratified when he told me that my script was one of the best he had ever seen. I think I speak for all of us when I say we want him at Cotillion 2006. We were also honored to have the presence of Assemblyman Mark Leno who has been fighting for our rights at the State Capitol. And we were honored to have him present TGSF, Anne Louise and Bobby with appreciations. To be recognized at such a high level speaks volumes as to our accomplishments and to our value and purpose. WE DO MATTER! We must always work hard to live up to the praise we received and to always remember those to whom we were formed to help. And it was a pleasure and an honor to have on hand noted transgender activist Jamison Green. I only recently met him and was immediately impressed. He also encouraged us to keep trying to get the FTM participation but not to get discouraged. He explained to me that there is an entirely different dynamic that works for FTMs and it is a very hard thing to get through. He also confirmed what I had always known and that is that TGSF is decidedly NOT unfriendly to FTMs.

What an exciting and eclectic group and diverse group of performers we had! From the offbeat stylings of Sherilyn Connelly to the mellow guitar of CJ Khing, to the soulful rendition of David White's "The Power of Love", the audience was entertained and moved. Sara Dreaming, Lisah Auberine and all of the I Love It girls put tremendous effort into their presentations. They took concepts that I had for Material Girl and for Fast Times at Ridgemont High and built upon them and developed them into entertaining and fun skits. That is what the creative process is about.

I want to thank David, Sherilyn and Lisah and Sarah for being such troopers. They arrived at 8 AM and stayed 'til midnight. Sherilyn especially deserves praise. We did not need her until about 2:30 but she stayed the whole time, uttered not one complaint and when she performed, she was dynamite (and pretty spectacular looking). She even ran to Tower Records for us to get the "Fast Times at Ridgemont High" CD.

Our backstage staff really kept things moving. Jo-An Torres from I Love It made many of those beautiful costumes you saw, including my Cyndi Lauper get up. She also provided the dress I wore during the rest of the evening. Madame Steele was the backstage manager and made sure that everything and everyone was where it or he or she needed to be when needed to be. Not once did she have to take out her whip. And she generously donated the tiara and sash. Greg and Jessica made sure that no unauthorized people came backstage to disrupt things. And when they weren't performing, the I Love It girls were helping everyone. All I needed to do was to keep things running on time and I did that as best I could. I not once had to throw someone on stage even when they weren't ready. Lee helped out as a stagehand.

I want to make special mention of someone who wasn't thanked on Cotillion night nor mentioned in the program- Veronica Nova. Veronica is new to TGSF but she has plunged right in and has gotten involved. She ordered the liquor and bar essentials, she bartended before Albert, our regular bartender could arrive. She helped with the ushers. And today she called me to say that she was donating the cost of all of the liquor to TGSF. What a truly wonderful and generous gift. It doesn't matter if you have been with this group for one week or for ten years. Everyone has a contribution they can make. Everyone can help. Thank you Veronica for being such a star.

Judges. What an extraordinary and distinguished panel we had! Thank you so much to Carla Blair, Sydnie Kohara, Fran Bennett, Chris Daley and Theresa Sparks. I am especially grateful to both Chris and Theresa for being able to step in at virtually last minute's notice. You asked insightful, thoughtful and probing questions. Thank you for giving us such a fabulous Ms. TGSF. Thank you for so generously donating your precious time to us. Thank you for always giving and contributing to our society and to making this a better world. Oh and Sydnie, I won your picture so I will not only being waking up with you but will be going to sleep with you as well. Thanks for being such a good sport and letting us tease you, although not nearly to the extent to which we tease Siobhán.

As always we had donations of time and items. Michelle Fiore donated the flowers, Madame Steele donated the crown and sash, Gloria Polo once again did a first class job on the program layout. Stephanie Anne Blythe and Roberta Klitgaard organized all of the judges materials and kept score. I swear I could hear Steph's keyboard clicking as she worked to make sure all of the scores were tabulated and gotten to Lenny on time. Monica Lamarr of Printmasters in Hayward designed the first group of fliers that you saw. She got to know me very well since her store is right next to City Hall and I was in there almost every day as Cotillion time got close. And Denae Doyle, our contestant trainer and pageant consultant and my shoulder to cry on when I needed. It was an honor to pass the Joanna Caron award to her. Only a year ago I was the honored recipient of this award. I received more pleasure from being able to give this award to Denae. She has been an integral part of so many Cotillions and has been an important and beloved member of our community. As I noted in my speech, she trained five winners. I know she is very proud of all of the ladies.

One person that I would like to mention is my dear friend Arlynne Camire. She bought the first Cotillion tickets, helped to promote the Cotillion among the many groups in which she participates, acted as an escort (along with her boyfriend Donald), she introduced me to Patricia who has become a good friend and when we were desperate for insurance, she found a firm for me and helped me wrap that up in less than a day. She also put an ad in the program, which I decided that in light of all of her help that we would run gratis. And also, when I was home recovering from surgery, she put aside her busy life to take care of me. Had there been a second Joanna Caron award, she would have won it. If you want to know what the word "friend" means, look in the dictionary and you will see her picture. Last year, she was known to all as "the girl in the beautiful dress". To me she has always been my friend.

Our other escorts included Sydney Mason (part of my favorite couple), and Cole. Jennifer Anderson had her own escort whose name I have forgotten. And I also want to thank Grace for being able to accompany Jennifer Anderson.

*Continued on Page 5*

Bagdad Café
The Best Café in the Castro
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*January 2, 2005*

# TGSF ExCom Meeting Minutes

Present: Roxy Carmichael-Hart, Laura Marlowe, Pamela Gray, Allison Laureano, Dawnne Woodie, Kara Flynn, Lisa Dummer, Anne-Louise Mortensen. Absent: Siobhan Ellis, Tommi Watson. Meeting Minutes of November 2004 were approved as submitted.

### *President's Report*

Roxy reviewed upcoming Mr./Miss TGSF participation events including the Cotillion, and that the future Ms. TGSF should plan on the San Francisco Coronation scheduled for February 19th. Roxy is checking on ticket prices. She also noted that China pulled out of judging for the Cotillion and suggested that TGSF not advertise at Coronation, but that we should attend.

Roxy also announced the resignation of Siobhan Ellis as Secretary and that we needed a new Secretary to fill in until the next election in April. Kara volunteered to be secretary for the remainder of the term.

### *Vice President's Report*

Laura and Roxy reported that we should hopefully have the insurance item for the Cotillion wrapped up in the next few days, but had a feeler into another firm. Ally was looking into the company that provided insurance for the Folsom Street Fair. We are down to 4 judges for the Cotillion, and Wednesday was the drop-dead date to add new judges. 135 tickets have been sold and we will need $2000 for the food. Tyler was working on ASL people, and there would be a deli tray backstage. The flowers have been donated, as well as the crown and sash. They are confirming brunch plans and Alli has reviewed the technical requirements.

### *Treasurer's Report*

Pamela announced that TGSF had approximately $4,380 in the bank account.

### *Secretary's Report*

The next profile for the Channel would be Lisa or Kara, so both should write a profile.

### *Education*

Lisa and Dawnne reported that they were talking to the MAC counter and Nordstrom concerning an EOM to talk about makeup. They were also looking to have Joy Shaffer on a panel to discuss hormones. Dawnne is following up on a TG Law event.

### *Outreach*

Kara provided a summary on recent hotline callers. Alli reported that the schools were out right now, so the speaker's bureau was a bit slow right now.

### *Social*

Motion passed on the change of EOM from the Blue Muse to the Cathedral Hill Hotel. The next EOM is January 27th finishing at the Blue Muse. It will then be moving to the Cathedral Hill Hotel. Advertising will be included in the Cotillion program and on the website. We need to notify the Blue Muse and post the information on the Yahoo Groups.

A Butterfly Carnival is scheduled for February 26th. We will need a place, decorator, and band. A discussion was held concerning moving the mid-months from Thursday evenings to Friday or Saturday nights.

### *Old Business*

None

### *Next Meeting*

The next meeting will be held Saturday, February 5, 2005 starting at noon in the Cathedral Hill Hotel restaurant.

### *Addendum*

Kara rescinded her offer to be Secretary after further thought.

## Mid-Month Social

### Volunteers Needed!

TGSF is looking for some enthusiastic and motivated people to help plan our mid-month socials.

All it takes to plan these events is for someone to call a venue that is hopefully very TG friendly and see if they would be willing to host our event. Mid-months can expect anywhere from 10-20 people. If you would like to help with these events, please contact [redacted] Thank you!

*ExCom Profile*

## Education Co-Chair: Lisa Rae Dummer

### *Sister of the Heart*

*I walked alone in darkness*
*Through the forest gloom of night*
*I longed to find the meadow*
*To feel the sun so bright*

*The forest was the people*
*The ones who couldn't see*
*The face I showed to them*
*Was not the real me*

*There was no way out*
*Of this prison made by man*
*The dictates of society*
*Kept me well in hand.*

*I had heard of others*
*Who escaped out of the night*
*They found the path of freedom*
*That led them to the light*

*I could not take that path*
*I could not take that road*
*The demands of my existence*
*Were much too great a load*

*And then I met another*
*Though it was just on line*
*Whose sorrows, thoughts and dreams*
*Were so similar to mine.*

*Although she did not take it*
*She knew where lay the path*
*She gave to me the courage*
*To face the world's wrath*

*Deserted by so many*
*Friends and family*
*She was always there*
*To set things right for me*

*She and others like her*
*Have become my family*
*She accepts me as I am*
*She knows the real me.*

*I have not reached the meadow*
*Though I have made a start*
*When I do, I'll find her*
*My sister of the heart*

## *Transcending Transgender*

**Sponsored by**
**City of Refuge UCC Outreach Ministries**

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

# Ms. TGSF 2005

## Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy

*Jennifer with Denae Doyle*

Here I sit, several days later, still recovering from the amazing experience of being crowned Ms. TGSF 2005. After the intense flurry of activity that the Cotillion entails, I can finally stop and reflect on my experience as a contestant. Reflect on how and why I got to the point of running for Ms. TGSF. And to contemplate where I am going for the next year representing our community and in continuing on the path of my own personal journey. But it is truly not an individual journey – it is part of the collective journey we all undertake together. My own personal journey to this point has been filled with the love and support of our community. And going forward, it will continue to be even more so as I take a more active role in helping to others along their own path.

I look back a year ago to where my life was at during the time of Cotillion 2004. I had come out to my partner of 15 years at Halloween a few months before, and the revelation was not all that well received – a comment made by my partner to a friend reflected her reaction, the comment being "...my life is f**ked!" So my personal relationship was under huge strain, likely not to survive the pain, fear, and confusion that gender issues cause. My job was in peril, the company I worked for was having financial issues and having an employee who was displaying confusing signs of instability like I did was making me top of the list for the first round of layoffs. And to further intensify all of this, I was staying out late quite often, exploring being myself anywhere that was comfortable. Those comfortable places included second homes like TrannyShack and Divas, dancing and socializing till all hours. While I did not stray, such activities are not conducive to a stable home and work life!

And to top things off, I was accidentally outed by my partner to most of my closest friends and also to a large part of our little hometown of Saint Helena in the Napa Valley. This is not a liberal community, but rather a community of money filled with idle Bush supporting trophy wives fundraising for George W. Bush who spend time every day at the country club with only one true calling in life – that being gossip. So virtually every encounter for me within the town was filled with bizarre overtones, and support was pledged to my partner to help her through this. But not to me. Being Transgendered was not considered socially acceptable, just marginally above being an axe murderer or a child molester. For them, if I was doing something socially acceptable like sleeping around or bilking consumers out of billions of dollars by gaming the energy crisis maybe they could accept these new revelations, but this Transgendered stuff was weird, scary, and to be shunned. (lol, yes, I am taking a little dramatic license with the town of St. Helena. There ARE nice folk there and those that are liberal. But note I still feel some bitterness in this area, obviously!)

But after months of ups and downs, things started to stabilize. I had found lots of wonderful friends at I Love It and Carla's. I was starting to attend more TGSF meetings, and become more active in the TG community socially. My partner and I made great progress in counseling sessions with the amazing Lin Fraser, finding out that the Transgendered stuff was less an issue between us than our own personal baggage. Friends in our home town started to support both of us, starting to accept me for who I truly am inside. By doing some short term tech consulting during my transition to fulltime made the worry about employment less of an issue (and the interim consulting is still continuing, lol). And I was finally able to envision building a healthy happy life as a transgendered woman. I had found a passion for rebuilding my life and a positive vision of my future. And I found deep joy in sharing my true self with my own partner, our children, and our friends. And my interaction with the Transgendered community changed, from an intense focus on me (besides dancing, socializing, and clothes) to a focus on the collective we of our extended Transgendered family.

So when Roxy asked if I was interested in running for Ms. TGSF, I thought what the heck, why not, it could be a lot of fun. Then I met my co-contestants. I was floored, what an incredible group of Transgendered women. Actually, an incredible group of Human Beings of any kind. So I went back home and really thought about what the title meant. I almost dropped out...personally, I would vote for any and all of them as Ms. TGSF before voting for myself! But the realization came over me - that the very aspect of the community that was so important in getting me to a positive place within my own journey was available for me to take an active role in. The TG community was instrumental in building my self esteem and shoring up my life as it was unraveling. I had learned a lot during my transition journey (with more yet to come I am sure), and it was time to start using this knowledge channeled back into our community. I realized that I should run. I did have a purpose in running, in possibly becoming Ms TGSF. I found that the depth of passion that I had saved originally for my own journey was something that I now wanted to share with others.

***Continued on Page 15***

## President's Report...

***Continued from Page 3***

Funny story, When Jennifer Anderson told me that she wanted to use her own escort, that meant we had 6 escorts and 5 contestants. What to do? Five minutes before the show, Reed and I talked with Lenny and we dreamed up the idea of putting Reed by the bar as another "bartender" - Woody if you will. He looked so real and so authentic and we loved this. All of our escorts were elegant, classy and beautiful.

We had numerous silent auction donations, from autographed books by Lisa Dummer to an autographed picture of Sydnie Kohara, to a two night stay from the Cathedral Hill Hotel. There is a list elsewhere because it is much too big to write here. And I also want to thank the many who advertised in the program. We set a record in ad revenue. We attracted new advertisers like Blake Richards (who did my photos), to Chase Lending to Tarbell Realtors. Lots of people wanted to be a part of this effort.

The Cowell Theater and Fort Mason staffs were a pleasure to work with from the start. Sharon Walton kept us on track and made sure we met all of our requirements. Stephen Clifford, the production manager worked with us from the beginning and helped us figure out what the theater could do. Our techs – Larry, Harry and Jamie – took all of Alli's concepts for lighting and made them happen. They were a joy to work with. And Karen, the house manager, kept things organized and kept her cool despite some last minute chaos. Working with professionals enabled us to worry less about the technical aspects and to focus more on the creative side.

Yes, it took me four pages to get through the thank you's. That should show you what it takes to put on this show. It's more than just showing up in your gown and having a few drinks. It's a labor of love for those of us who spent hundreds of hours on this event and in some cases, hundreds of dollars of their own money. They and we did it because we care enough about this show, enough about this community, and enough about you to want to bring it to you. And somehow, I just know that I have forgotten someone who made a major contribution to this show.

One more thing. The theme of "Cheers" for our eveningwear was done for a reason. We want to make sure that TGSF is and remains a place where everyone knows your name. Where you are among friends. Where you are welcomed. Where you can get a hug or a shoulder to cry on if you need it. Where you will never be judged for what you are and will be loved for who you are.

On Friday, my fortune cookie said this "Your Future is Bright". Karma indeed. It is so bright I gotta wear shades. It is going to be a great future for all of us if we all work together. Let's never look back, let's always keep moving forward.

I hope you enjoyed the ride. I am off to vacation.

*PS – Don't forget that the end of month is moving to the Cathedral Hill Hotel this month! See details elsewhere.*


## Hey!

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

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


## GenderQueer, Trans, & Gender Questioning Youth Group

**Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center**
**www.defrank.org**

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

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

# TGSF Events in February

**Saturday / February 5 / 12:00noon**

### *TGSF ExCom Meeting*

Cathedral Hill Hotel Restaurant, Van Ness and Geary.

**Thursday / February 10 / 7:00pm**

### *TGSF February Mid-Month Social*

**Open Mike** - Bring your spoken word, insturments or whatever you need for your performance. We'll have a mike and a plug ready for you. The event will start around 7 pm and last till around 10 pm. The Cathedral Hill Hotel, 1101 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco CA 94109. Tel: 415.776.8200. This is at the intersection of Geary and Van Ness so it is very accessible by Public Transportation - and in a nice area. The social will be held in the Restaurant area which has a full menu with appetizers and an excellent selection of California cuisine dinners.

**Thursday / February 24 / 7:00pm**

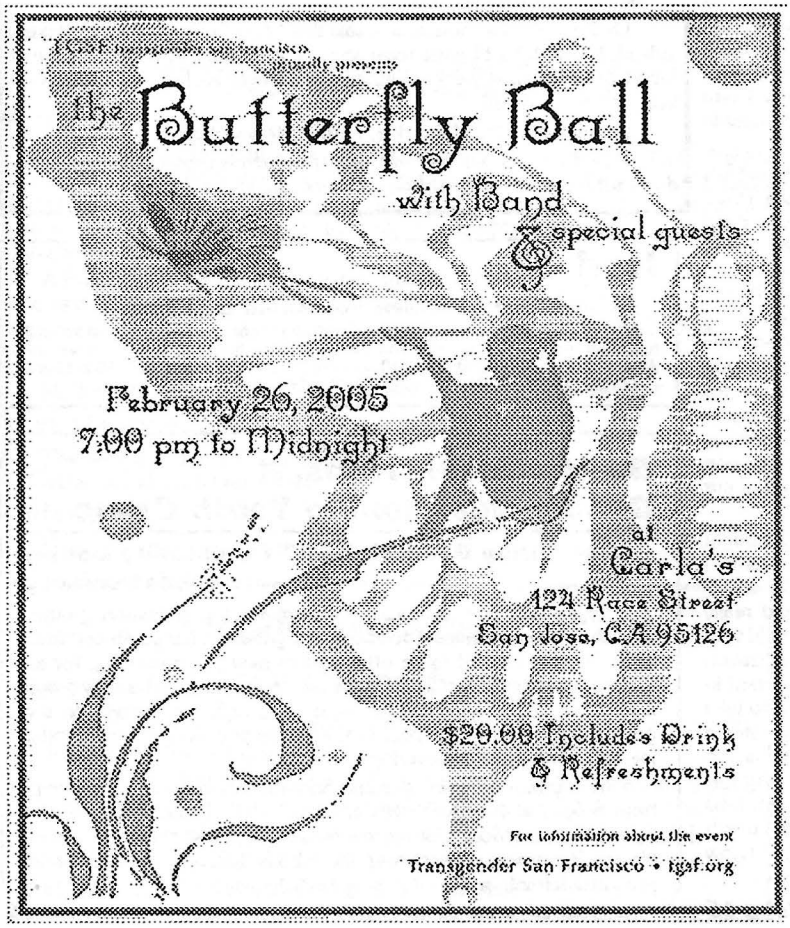
### *TGSF End of Month Event*

New location! Join Your Friends At The Cathedral Hill Hotel Restaurant, 1101 Van Ness Ave. Program begins at 9:00pm

**Saturday / February 26 / 7:00pm**

### *TGSF Butterfly Ball!*

with Live Band and Special Guests, including the new Miss TGSF 2005. At Carla's, 124 Race Street, San Jose, California. $20 with drink and refreshments. For more info contact Transgender San Francisco www.tgsf.org




## *February's Birthdays*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2/00 | Suzan Reed | 2/16 | Gloria Mitchell |
| 2/01 | Thea Homer | 2/17 | Karine Fresnel |
| 2/01 | Francis Vavra | 2/17 | Tom Schmidt |
| 2/02 | Roberta Ann Klitgaard | 2/17 | Carla Blair |
| 2/04 | Eve Summers | 2/19 | Jill Jansen |
| 2/04 | Michelle Hoffman | 2/20 | Michelle Anne Roga |
| 2/05 | Karen Clark | 2/20 | Sara Bird |
| 2/05 | Carol Anderson | 2/20 | Linda |
| 2/05 | Robin Barrett | 2/20 | Debra Darling |
| 2/05 | Anne Russell | 2/21 | Pamela K. Gray |
| 2/07 | Richelle | 2/22 | Willow Hills |
| 2/08 | Laura Butler | 2/23 | Jack Baxley |
| 2/10 | Alexis Haines | 2/23 | Audrey Jackson |
| 2/11 | Bree Wood | 2/23 | Lauren Hotchkiss |
| 2/11 | Diane Hutchinson | 2/23 | Brenda Altman |
| 2/12 | Vanessa Schaefer | 2/25 | Kate Goldman |
| 2/12 | Sara Warren | 2/25 | Hilary Howes |
| 2/13 | CJ Khing | 2/26 | Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy |
| 2/14 | Gia Luisa Cancio | | |
| 2/16 | Tamara Hinds | 2/28 | Gabrielle Marshall |
| 2/16 | Vicki Gray | 2/28 | Christine Miche Ricci |

***Happy Birthday To All!***


Cosmetics Lingerie Fashions Fem Wigs Nails Shoes Cosmetics

*Nails Wigs Lingerie*

**CARLA'S**
**Salon & Boutique**

**124 Race Street**
**San Jose, CA 95126**
**(408) 298-6900**

*Serving the Cross Gender Community's needs with sensitive help and understanding.*

*Cosmetics Fem Fashions Shoes*

Cosmetics Shoes Nails Wigs Fem Fashions Lingerie Cosmetics

# Calendar — February 2005

## Other Bay Area Groups

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

***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.

***I Love It Girl Socials***
Every Wednesday night at I Love It Boutique, 45979 Warm Springs Blvd., #7 in Fremont. Call Jo-An at [redacted] for directions and more information.

***Mid-Peninsula TG Group (MPTG)***
TGSF-sponsored support group for the TG community that meets at 7:00pm, First Wednesday of each month at Full Circle Books in Belmont, CA. For more details please contact Laura Patterson at [redacted]

***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

***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

***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.

***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 [redacted]

***T.R.A.N.S***
MTF support groups meet every Wednesday afternoon 2:00 - 3:30pm at 1145 Bush Street in San Francisco.

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1<br>7:00 PM SCT | 2<br>2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S<br>7:00 PM I Love It Social<br>**7:30 PM MPTG** | 3<br>7:00 PM DVG RCC | 4<br>8:00 PM PacCtr<br>8:00 PM RGA | 5<br>**12:00 PM TGSF: ExCom Meeting** |
| 6 | 7<br>5:00 PM CCHH<br>7:00 PM PISSR General Meeting<br>8:00 PM DVG | 8 | 9<br>2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S<br>7:00 PM I Love It Social | 10<br>**7:00 PM TGSF Mid-Month Social** | 11<br>7:00 PM SVGA<br>8:00 PM PacCtr | 12<br>8:00 PM FWW<br>8:00 PM SGA |
| 13 | 14<br>5:00 PM CCHH | 15<br>7:00 PM SCT | 16<br>2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S<br>7:00 PM I Love It Social | 17<br>7:00 PM DVG RCC<br>TG Legal Clinic | 18<br>8:00 PM PacCtr<br>8:00 PM RGA | 19 |
| 20 | 21<br>5:00 PM CCHH<br>8:00 PM DVG | 22<br>7:30 PM SCOUT | 23<br>2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S<br>7:00 PM I Love It Social | 24<br>**7:00 PM TGSF: EOM @ Cathedral Hill** | 25<br>7:00 PM SVGA<br>8:00 PM PacCtr | 26<br>**7:00 PM TGSF Butterfly Ball!!**<br>8:00 PM FWW<br>8:00 PM SGA |
| 27 | 28<br>5:00 PM CCHH | | | | | |

## TGSF Membership Application

**Membership is billed annually upon enrollment: $40 Single / $45 Family**

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

*Please Print / Check all that apply:*

❑ 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.

# Support Your Organization!

## TGSF Sustaining Memberships

### Fundraising Campaign

***Designated Sustaining Membership Giving Levels & Recognition***

### *Guardian Level: $2500*

Recognition & Benefits:

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

### *Patron Level: $1000*

Recognition & Benefits:

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

### *Angel Level: $500*

Recognition & Benefits:

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

### *Century Level: $250*

Recognition & Benefits:

Recognition in Cotillion Program
Framed Recognition Certificate

### *Merit Level: $100*

Recognition & Benefits:

Recognition in Cotillion Program
Recognition Certificate

*Clip & Mail Today!*

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

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

Please indicate your level of giving:

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

Your Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

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

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

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

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

# Commentary

## Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind

**By Roxy Carmichael-Hart**

### *Blowing Up the Boxes (with apologies to Arnold)*

Lat month I promised no diatribes. Your respite from that lasted exactly one month because I am now back in pissed off mode. Being pissed always propels me into action which I guess is a positive way in which to channel my disgust.

I am writing you the morning after our holiday party at which we had a grand total of 15 people show up. Half of that was our ExCom; the rest were people that usually show up at most of the events. Where were the rest of you? Granted there was another event or two (there always seems to be SOMETHING in the city that drains our audience and as Siobhán wrote in the yahoo groups, God forbid the transgender population could ever get its shit together and cooperate and not try to compete with one another). I know it's the holidays and I know we met on the third Thursday of the month instead of the last, a fact which has long been publicized (I am curious to see how many people show up on December 30 wondering where TGSF is). But I think the problem goes much much deeper and gets to the question about our purpose and if we are doing any good.

You'll recall a few months ago we were talking about whether the direction of TGSF needed to change relative to our target audience. I made the point that it was fruitless for us to consider expanding our base until we did an adequate job of reaching out to those whom we were formed to assist. Well, the fact that our last three end of month events have drawn less than 20 people is an indication that we aren't getting the job done and strengthens my point that we have a lot of work to do just to get our own house in order.

This seems to me to be a good time to take a look at TGSF and see how we can get back to our roots and increase participation in our organization. Therefore, I will propose a multi-step plan to this ExCom and hope that the next will carry it forward. This plan is composed of the following:

1. Change the focus of our End of Month. In August and September, we had two excellent programs at the End of the Month and our attendance exceeded 30 for both events. Dawnne, who had arranged those events, had proposed an event in October with the Transgender Law Center to discuss TG health. Fearing that it would conflict with our traditional "Leather and Lace" event, I turned it down. This proved to be an error in judgment on my part. Dawnne was right. We need to do more kinds of events like those Dawnne has proposed. We need to provide a service, not just a place to party. The population can get that anywhere. We need to have value and something that can't be gotten anywhere else. So starting in February, we hope to be able to bring back speakers and to make that a regular part of the End of the Month. Coupled with this, we would continue to have our mid-months which would be more of the social aspect, but we would use the End of Month to promote educational activities. I know that with Dawnne and now Lisa assisting on education, we should be able to line up some speakers of interest.

We also need to make sure that any events that we do are done with integrity. For example, the Leather and Lace event, while fun, is a dusty relic from our ties to the drag community and I think we are well past that as an image we want to project. I know that I for one do not relate to the drag queens. Lest I, as happened to Rachael Janelle, be accused of "hating" drag queens, I happen to admire the talent of many of them. The difference is that they are projecting the feminine image for the purpose of entertainment while many of us project the feminine image because that is who we are. This ought to be the focus of whatever we do. Our TGSF events will always be done in a manner that brings dignity and honor and respect to our community. Case in point: Our "Spoken Word" mid-month. Those that attended know that the people they saw are deep, caring, intelligent and articulate. That is a very positive image for the transgender community and that is what we should be striving to promote. We plan put on another of these events and also we plan to showcase the incredible talent that we have within our community, some of which you will see at the Cotillion.

2. Reduce the "San Francisco" emphasis. I have been on this kick before but now more than ever is the time to put it into action. Events done in San Francisco are expensive and quite frankly, they disenfranchise about three fourths of our members. The problem is that just because we have San Francisco in our name, people think we have to be in San Francisco. Wrong! The San Francisco attitude is at best elitist and at worst, snobbery. San Francisco, quite frankly, thinks that it has an exclusive right to anyone of an alternative lifestyle. The truth be told, there are more TGs in the South Bay than there are in San Francisco. And, as I said before, there is tremendous competition for events which is getting more and more intense. That is why we are not drawing flies. That is why "Unity" drew maybe 25 people when you excluded the ones that were part of the organization. Our continued emphasis on being a San Francisco based organization is blind to reality. We are one of few, if not the only, gender organization that has the name of a city in its title. We are a regional organization and the fact that we have NO Miss TGSF contestants from San Francisco and that most of the ExCom is not from San Francisco is proof that our influence is far broader and deeper than just one city. One of our members has in fact suggested that we become "Bay Area Transgenders". That is exactly how we should be thinking.

3. Move the End of Month to another venue and rotate events to other cities. I love the Blue Muse. Jerry and Sid and Will and all have been like family. But, like a game show that has been around for 20 years, the format is tired. The menu is the same. The setup is inadequate if we want to have any kind of program. As Jamie Fenton once noted, you can't even go to the bathroom without disturbing the speakers. And quite frankly, the atmosphere is not always the best, especially when the restaurant is crowded before the theater or ballet or symphony curtains. It can be quite intimidating for newcomers. But worse, as happened last night, our party was given short shrift because the restaurant was full. Our girls were shoved into a corner and made to feel as if they were second class citizens. Their food orders were ignored and they were told to wait up to an hour to eat. We had made our reservations a month in advance so for us to receive this kind of treatment was inexcusable. We want people to feel that they are happy to have our business and we will not accept being taken for granted.

We have been discussing this at ExCom and there is general agreement that we need to move our End of Month to the Cathedral Hill Hotel. They have actively sought our business, been very cordial and accommodating and the atmosphere is very pleasant and much calmer. The set up is much more conducive to holding events and our last two mid-months have been very successful. For this reason, beginning February 24 we will be at our new "home", the Cathedral Hill Hotel).

Now, the other part of this is that, in order to be a diverse organization that meets the needs of our population, we need to hold events in other cities. Someone complained a while ago that "everything seems to be in San Jose". Now it seems that everything has to be in San Francisco. Where is the diversity in that? We need to look at holding events in Oakland, Hayward, the South Bay and on the Peninsula. We need to go where the people are. I know that we being creatures of habit, and to the extreme at that, may be somewhat confused. But unless we are willing to face reality and accept the fact that most of our people don't live in San Francisco and quite frankly have no desire to go there, then we are never going to grow as an organization. From a selfish standpoint, I quite frankly hate the fact that I don't get home until 11:30 and then don't get to bed until 12, then turn around and have to get up at 5:30 AM. I find myself, on days like today, dragging and barely able to keep my eyes open which makes it hard to work and harder to get enthused for the RGA potluck tonight, to which I have committed to attending but which I would not miss for anything. I love RGA, I can get there faster and it's on a Friday so I can sleep in. After my term is up, you'll likely not see me at any SF events on a weeknight.

If we want to grow as an organization and attract new people then we must discard the old ways of the past. We have to quit thinking in terms of the ways we used to do things. We have to quit mortgaging our future and refine our focus. We need to de-emphasize the social, and emphasize the outreach and the community education. We need to be proactive as an organization in fighting for the rights of our brothers and sisters.

Case in point. As I write this, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors is considering a non-discrimination ordinance that would cover gender identity. Thanks to the efforts of Patricia Kevena Fili (one of our Ms. TGSF Contestants by the way), this ordinance will likely pass on January 11 and become law. We mustn't stop there. We must take this ordinance to every city in Alameda County and have them adopt a similar ordinance. We must go to every county in the Bay Area and have those counties and cities adopt similar ordinances. And we must have every city and county from Del Norte to Imperial, from Modoc to San Diego, adopt this ordinance. We must use the incredible resources within TGSF to get this accomplished. If it means that we don't do as much social stuff, then so be it. Because, quite frankly, unless we get our basic human rights and human dignity restored, nothing else matters.

We need to show that we are open to all, regardless of age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and location. It's not a matter of changing the logo or making token efforts to reach new people. It's changing the focus of what we represent. In short, we need to blow up the old boxes and start building new ones. The old timers may balk but they don't come around anyway. We need to stop looking at the past and start looking to the future. As Satchel Paige once said "Don't look back, something may be gaining on you".

# Special Events in February!

trans gender san francisco

tgsf

## Mid-Peninsula Support Group

**WEDNESDAY, February 2, 2005**

*and continuing on the first Wednesday of each month*

**NEW LOCATION!**

**Full Circle Books**

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

***7:30 – 9:30 P.M.***

All welcome regardless of race, age,
gender, gender identification, etc.
$1 donation will be requested but no one will be turned away.
For more details please contact Laura Patterson at Laura@simcbt.com

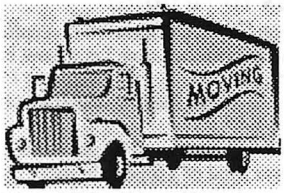
*Please note: This is a support group.*
*The views expressed in this group*
*are reflective of the attendees and do not necessarily reflect*
*the opinions of the ExCom and members of TGSF.*

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

***The TGSF***

***End Of The Month Event***

***Is Moving!***




***Join Your Friends at the***

***Cathedral Hill Hotel Restaurant***

***1101 Van Ness Ave***

***Beginning***

***Thursday, February 24 - 7:30pm***

***Program Starts 9:00pm***

***Everyone Is Welcome!***

## SF Coronation Week February 2005

### Sunday, February 13th

#### *In Town Show & Awards*

The Edge Bar, 4pm Hosted by Emperor Fernando & Empress China Silk

### Thursday, February 17th

#### *Mexican Bar Tour - Reception at The Edge*

Sir Francis Drake Hotel Lobby , 8pm Hosted By Emperor Fernando & Empress China Silk

### Friday, February 18th

#### *Anniversary Monarch's Reception*

Marlena's 488 Hayes Street, 5pm - 7pm Hosted by Emperor 16 Steven Rasher

#### *Out Of Town Show*

Grand Ball Room Sir Francis Drake Hotel, 7pm Doors 8pm Show, $10.00 Priority to Reigning Monarchs

### Saturday, February 19th

#### *Portland Party*

Ginger's Trois 246 Kearny Street, 12 pm - 2pm Hosted by Steven Rascher

#### *Coronation!*

**A Family Celebration - 4 Decades of History & Tradition** Gift Center Pavilion 888 Brannan Street, Doors: 5pm Celebration: 6pm. Advance Ticket Information: Marlena's at 415 864 6672. Celebration Seating $55.00 per person. History Seating $45.00 per person. No open flames, confetti, glitter, bare butts or breasts at Coronation

### Sunday, February 20th

#### *The Widow Norton's Trip to Joshua's Grave*

Woodlawn Memorial Park 100 El Camino, Colma, Bus Pick-up at Hotel Lobby 8am, Marlena's 8:30am

#### *Victory Brunch*

The Starlight Room Sir Francis Drake Hotel, 11:30am, $30.00, Limited Seating

#### *40th Anniversary Celebration*

Gift Center Pavilion 888 Brannan Street, Door: 6pm Celebration 7pm Formal Black Tie & Gowns

### Monday, February 21st

#### *Alaska Party*

Marlena's, 1pm - 4pm Hosted by The Court of Alaska

#### *Hawaii Party*

Mr. LeeOna's 220 Turk Street, 5pm - 7pm Hosted by The Court of Hawaii

#### *Contacts:*

Emperor 28 A.N. John Carrillo, [redacted]
Absolute Empress 25 Marlena, [redacted]
Reigning Emperor Fernando, [redacted]
Reigning Empress China Silk, [redacted]

# Events Horizon!

*Spoken Works Competition*

## TGVoices in 55 Words or Less - 2005

**Transgendered Voices, Inc.**, a Wyoming, USA not-for-profit corporation...has organized a spoken works competition for Transgendered people of all types and nationalities.

The final date for receiving the entries is **June 1, 2005** and submissions may be sent to Transgendered Voices starting on February 1, 2005.

There will be prizes of 500 USA dollars...currently the equivalent of 22,000 Indian rupees...for the best spoken work and the most innovative spoken work...and the total number of prizes will not be limited to two prizes.

An eBook of the text of the submissions and a CD of the spoken works will be published and sold for the benefit of Renaissance Transgender Association of Pennsylvania, USA...one of the oldest and most successful transgender organizations in America.

Each year TGVoices will choose another organization from a different country to support through the sales of the eBooks and CDs of that year's competition.

Please review our website at www.TGVoices.org to learn the full details of the competition and to download the entry application.

**Thank You,**
**Elizabeth D. Jeffords - Executive Director**
**Transgendered Voices, Inc.**
**3333 East Bayaud Street - Suite 111**
**Denver, Colorado 80209**
**303-320-6630 / MyOnePenny@aol.com /**
**www.TGVoices.org**

*Coming in April!*

## Open Heart/Open Mind: A Celebration of Human Sexuality

...is coming to Fort Mason, San Francisco in April 2005. As an organization involved in issues of interest to the LGBT community, we encourage you to check out the web site for this exciting event at www.openheartopenmind.net.

We have a terrific line up of presenters who are diverse, informative and provocative——and entertainment and fun are on the agenda as well!

Please feel free to call me at 925-[redacted] or reply by email if you have questions or want further information. We would be delighted to list your program as a community partner and would appreciate promotion of the event to your members and staff. If you would be interested in being an exhibitor at the event, you can find all the details on the web site.

**Warm regards,**
**Susie Baggot**
**Co-Producer: Open Heart/Open Mind**

*Coming May 2005!*

## Transgender Awareness Week

**Dear TGSF:**

Several San Jose State University on-campus organizations, faculty members, and students, myself included, are organizing a Transgender Awareness Week, May, 2005.

We are still at the beginning of our planning stage, but I wanted to inform the local transgender community ahead of time. One of our events will be a transgender symposium.

We have several FTM guest speakers and panelists already, but we would like MTF participants, as well. I am not in charge of this event in particular, so I do not know exactly what qualifications are necessary in order to be selected as a MTF guest speaker/panelist, but I do know that one of the selected FTMs is an author, another is with ACLU, and another produced a transgender-related documentary.

If anyone is interested in volunteering or has any comments and/or questions, please contact me as soon as possible. The best way to get a hold of me is through e-mail at **glbta_sjsu@yahoo.com**; specifically e-mails with catchy subject lines such as "Re: Transgender Awareness Week," "Transgender Awareness Week Volunteers," or something along those lines.

Thanks for your time and consideration! Your help is greatly appreciated.

**Andrea Miller**
**SJSU GLBTA Secretary**

***April 14 - 17, 2005***
***at the***
***Doubletree Hotel, San Jose***

*Scheduled Speakers include:*
***Dr. Douglas Ousterhout • Kim Hraca***
***Dr. Toby Meltzer • Judy van Maasdam***
***Dr. Joy Diane Shaffer***

***www.california-dreamin.org***

# Events Horizon!

## Transgender Vets to March Again

After assessing the success of the first Transgender Veterans March to the Wall held last May, the Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA) is moving once again to gather transgender veterans in Washington, DC.

The First Transgender March to the Wall was for history. The second March to the Wall on **May 20, 2005** will be for tradition. With the addition of a tour of the newly opened WWII Memorial, the March will be expanded. As with this year's tour, the 2005 March will also visit the Vietnam Memorial and Iwo Jima Memorial and will experience the very emotional and proud moment of dedicating a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

Fifty-five Transgender Veterans and significant others from across the country attended this year's March to the Wall. The emotional event was also supported and witnessed by many others in the GLBTI community from Washington, DC and around the country.

"No one could have anticipated the tremendous success of this year's March to the Wall in bringing together so many Transgender Veterans for the first time," said Angela Brightfeather, event organizer and TAVA Special Projects Chairperson. "Added to that success is the fact that so many other GLBTI people have recognized the importance of this March, not only to the Transgender Veterans, but also to our community in general. By providing the hub for other events to gather around with pride and determination, TAVA has touched on the emotion and great sacrifices made by the GLBTI community in the defense of our nation. By honoring our past, we will be able to more effectively and emotionally gather together to create the motivation that will change our future."

TAVA expects that the success of the first March to the Wall will encourage more Transgender Veterans to attend the May 2005 event. Pictures of this year's March can be viewed at the TAVA web site <www.tavausa.org> under the "Events" link.

"The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) is honored to support this effort to honor transgender veterans and all veterans," said Robyn Walters, NTAC Secretary and TAVA Veterans Affairs Liaison Representative. "NTAC was happy to coordinate its May 18 – 20, 2005 Congressional Lobby Days schedule with the TAVA March dates. Both organizations look forward to the same synergy seen in last year's events."

Karen Rice, TAVA Secretary and partner of Tina Rice, veteran and TAVA Media Director, captured the solemnity of the occasion with these thoughts: "On the first March to the Wall I stood proudly with men and women who served their country in at least four conflicts - WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm. For the first time in their lives they mourned their fallen compatriots [while standing] proudly and openly as themselves. They paid tribute to the many who have served in silence. We know, as some may not, that there are those who serve in silence now. They love their country, and they welcome those who would like to join us and support them."

Please join TAVA and the many transgender veterans as we once again provide a chance for healing from the many wounds of war and of life. Find details and updates via event links at www.tavausa.org. To participate in the March, or for additional information, write to Angela Brightfeather at projects@tavausa.org.

The Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA) acts proactively with other concerned GLBT organizations to ensure that transsexual and transgendered veterans will receive appropriate care for medical conditions in accordance with the Veterans Health Administration Customer Service Standards promise to "treat you with courtesy and dignity ... as the first class citizen that you are." Further, TAVA will help in educating the VA and the US military on issues regarding a fair and equal treatment of transgendered and transsexual individuals. TAVA will also educate for a change in public law and policy that will help initiate this fair and equal treatment.

## NTAC Sets Lobby Days for May 2005

Transgender activists will converge on Capitol Hill on **May 18 – 20, 2005** to lobby Congress once again for passage of transgender-inclusive hate crimes and employment nondiscrimination legislation. Lobby Days 2005 is sponsored by the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC), the country's largest and most active organization advocating for the rights of transgender Americans at federal, state, and local levels.

Participants are expected from all over the country and will likely include victims of anti-transgender hate crimes and those who have personal experience with employment and other types of transgender bias and discrimination. NTAC and the National Center for Transgender Equality will help attendees arrange meetings with their senators and representatives and staff members.

Marisa Richmond, Chair of the NTAC Lobbying Committee, noted that 30 lobbyists from around the country visited 81 Senate offices and 236 House offices in April 2004 to discuss the need for transgender inclusion in pending civil rights legislation. "This effort played an important role in identifying potential supporters of transgender inclusion in ENDA and LLEEA," she said. "This information was vital to the coordinated effort by transactivists in getting HRC to adopt a new trans-inclusive policy towards ENDA. We look forward to maintaining the momentum in 2005."

One major difference in the 2005 lobbying effort is the recent decision of the Human Rights Campaign decision to support only a transgender-inclusive Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA). It is essential to have demonstrably significant numbers of concerned community activists and supporters working together to educate their elected representatives on these vital issues. The need has never been greater, and HRC support can improve our reception in Congress.

"Since 1999, NTAC has been advocating in support of equality for the transgender community," said Vanessa Edwards Foster, chair and co-founder of NTAC. "We may well be on the edge of a new era for our community, an era of unfettered accomplishment in our fight for civil rights. It's essential that NTAC and the transgender community are distinctly visible and a key part of this effort towards our equality."

NTAC will hold a plenary session for training and assignments on May 18th. The plenary will consist of a brief lobbyist training session, review of handouts to be discussed and left at each office visited, and assignments for May 19th and 20th. Participants will have the opportunity to meet and interact with many transgender and trans-supportive activists and representatives from organizations working toward fully inclusive federal hate crimes and civil rights protections and to participate in other Lobby Days events and actions to be announced.

Registration and hotel information will be linked to the NTAC website (http://www.ntac.org) when details become available. In the meanwhile, those with questions about joining this grassroots lobbying effort can write to lobbying@ntac.org.

As done in 2004, NTAC and the Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA) are coordinating dates for their 2005 Washington, DC spring events. The second TAVA national gathering of transgender veterans, some of whom are also NTAC members, is scheduled to begin after NTAC lobbying ends on May 20. The TAVA event will include visits to veterans memorials on the National Mall and in Arlington, VA.

You can make a difference, for yourself, your family, and your community. Join your brother and sister transgender American activists, veterans, family, friends, and supporters in speaking truth to our leaders and working for a truly equal America for us all. Your support, your voice, and your active participation will make a difference.

*Founded in 1999, NTAC - the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition - is a §501(c)(4) civil rights organization working to establish and maintain the right of all transgender, intersexed, and gender-variant people to live and work without fear of violence or discrimination.*


### Significant Other Support East Bay

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



### Hey!

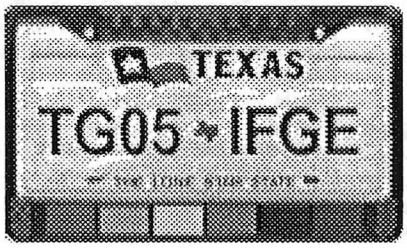
***$10 Bucks Per Issue Gets You An Ad Like This...!***

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

April 26 - 30, 2005

## IFGE Convention - TRANSGENDER 2005

### *Austin, Texas*




Transgender 2005, the 19th Annual IFGE Conference on Sex and Gender will be held in Austin, Texas at the fabulous Red Lion hotel, right in the middle of everything (well, almost). Malls and great restaurants are in walking distance; we will feature over 50 seminars and workshops on various trans subjects; have lots of free time for networking; there will be fun events and our gala (formals please) banquet on Saturday night.

This exciting event will be hosted by the Transgender Advocates of Central Texas, the Central Texas Transgender Society, and the Alpha Tau Chapter of Tri-Ess. It is being coordinated by Lisa Sheps, a member of the IFGE Board of Directors and an Austin resident and local activist.

Nobody can do anything like a Texan so we know we are going to be well fed, well entertained, and have a terrific event with great Texas barbeques, dancing and a Texas-style welcome. Registration will begin early in the week — you can check in Tuesday and enjoy all day Wednesday "on-the-town" with special sightseeing tours, mall shopping, night-clubbing and a special welcome party.

Conference session topics will include: TG workplace issues, TG Health & Medicine, Help for Emerging CDs, Sexual Identity/ Gender Identity, Trans-Youth, Parents, Religion, and Politics. There will be special programs for SOs, FtMs, and Transsexuals.

Open to all! — Transgender, Crossdresser, Transsexual, Transvestite, Female to Male, Male to Female, Significant Other, Friend, Admirer, Helping Professional, Student, or Educator.

If you have not attended a recent IFGE Conference and are not on our mailing list contact: S. Kristine James, Cioe Enterprises, P O Box 61, Easton PA, 18044-0061 or e-mail to convention@IFGE.org. Check the IFGE.org web site often to keep current on the program development, presenters and social events.

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*FTM Calendar 2005-2006*

## FTMI's Call for Diverse Images of FTMs and Their Lives

FTMI is creating an 18-month calendar (July 2005-December 2006) of DIVERSE IMAGES OF FTMs AND THEIR LIVES. The 18 entries will be selected by a panel of judges appointed by the Board of FTMI. This is an opportunity for amateur shutterbugs, aspiring and professional photographers alike to contribute to the community in a lasting way. The calendar will be available for sale from June 2005 forward.

Entry deadline is **April 15, 2005**. Photographs can be sent in as prints, through email attachments, or on a disk. Calendar pages are 11" x 8.5" (letter paper, printed landscape orientation). For the best quality, the image is printed at 300 dpi. This means that the minimum number of pixels required is 3300x2550 pixels (8.5 x 300 = 2550, 11 x 300 = 3300).

We will need a signed release of the photo for FTMI to use the image. Photographer and the subject are required to sign the release included at the end of this email, and return it to FTMI 160-14th St., SF, CA 94103, the releases will have to be in before the May 1st, or another applicant will be selected.

Include in the packet sent to Female-To-Male International the photograph, name of the photographer, a head shot of photographer, photographer signed release of photograph and name, biography of photographer, name of photo, subject signed photograph and name release form, and a $25.00 entry fee check made out to FTM International. Photographs will not be returned without a self addressed stamped envelope.

**Thank you**
**The Board of FTM International**
**160-14th St., San Francisco, CA 94103**
**Voicemail: (415) 553-5987 / Email: tstgmen@yahoo.com**

### *Sample Release And Authorization For Use Of Photographs*

I hereby grant Female-To-Male International the irrevocable right and permission, throughout the world, in connection with the photograph(s) that were taken of me or which I provided to Female-To-Male International, (copies of which photographs are annexed hereto and made a part), the following: the right to use and reuse, in any manner at all, said photographs, in whole or in part, modified or altered, either by themselves or in conjunction with other photographs, in any medium or form of distribution, and for any purposes whatsoever, including, without limitation, all promotional and advertising uses, and other trade purposes, as well as using my name in connection therewith, if Female-To-Male International so desires.

I hereby forever release and discharge Female-To-Male International from any and all claims, actions and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of said photographs, including, without limitation, any and all claims for invasion of privacy and libel. This release shall inure to the benefit of the assigns, licensees and legal representatives of Female-To-Male International.

Please check one:

__ I am over the age of eighteen years and I have read the foregoing and fully and completely understand the contents.

__ I represent that the subject of the photographs is a minor and that I am the parent of the minor and that I have read the foregoing and fully and completely understand the contents.

Please include the Subject/Photographer or parent/legal guardian's signature and date. Also print or type both Subject/Photographer's and/or parent/legal guardian's name, and include phone numbers and addresses.

## 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 **triess_family@yahoo.com** and explain a little about your situation.

## He's Got Legs

### *Thailand's Transgender Kickboxer Is A Good Story In A Bad Movie*

**By Melissa Levine**
**sfweekly.com**

*Pretty Boy: Nong Toom (Asanee Suwan) is drawn to the pageantry of opera and the violence of kickboxing.*

Beautiful Boxer, the true story of a Thai transgender kickboxer, is a well-intentioned film with a heart of gold. Unfortunately, it also has a brain of lead, a stomach of iron, and legs of jelly. Director Ekachai Uekrongtham is a student at the beat-you-over-the-head school of moviemaking, and his film's sensibilities are crude, its sentiments super-sweet, and its mechanics largely graceless. And yet, Boxer deserves an audience. Its intentions survive their manifestation, and its subject, Parinya Charoenphol (known as Nong Toom), is one in a million. His story, however cheapened by the picture, is worth knowing.

Born to a pair of migrant workers, Toom (played by an actual Thai kickboxing champion, Asanee Suwan) grew up in poverty nevertheless blessed by the stunning beauty of the Thai countryside. At 5, he attended his first temple fair, a carnival that featured the lush pageantry of opera as well as the bald violence of kickboxing. Toom was drawn to the former, mimicking the rarefied movements of the actresses, to the enjoyment of his mother. But soon enough, Toom's penchant for dance and for wearing flowers in his hair drew ridicule (and physical attacks) from his peers, even from his younger brother. His parents sent him to a Buddhist monastery, but he failed as a monk: One of the precepts forbade adornments of any kind.

In Toom's early teens, a series of family crises rendered his parents unable to work. Toom became the provider, relying first on odd jobs and later on the kindness of a local noodle vendor — a woman who turned out to be a former man. Then, in the wrong place at the wrong time, Toom was challenged to a fight in the ring at a temple fair. Taunted by his opponent for being a sissy, Toom knocked him out, earning his first taste of power and self-respect. When the winner's wad of cash was pressed into his palm, he saw a way out of poverty. He found a trainer and began the long and painful journey toward pro kickboxing (and, in the case of the movie itself, the long and painful montage toward multiple climaxes).

All of this occurs in the first hour of the film, which is the better of the two — though it's still plagued by any number of mistakes. Essentially, Beautiful Boxer is a lesson in the pitfalls of the biopic, which are as follows: 1) melodrama; 2) romanticization; 3) oversimplification; 4) the attempt to convert a life into a single lesson or message; 5) the unearned swelling of strings and plangent twinkling of piano keys; 6) the overuse of montage and slow motion; and 7) predictability — not because you know the story in advance, but because everything, from the moment the child is conceived to his triumphant whatever in front of a massive crowd of adoring fans, drips with portent. In Boxer, as in other failed biopics, reverence for its subject is an impediment to honest storytelling. With a little less worship and a little more grit, the film could have loosened its gears and ventured onto a road less traveled. The paradox is that a fictional character would have had the freedom to be more real.

Of course, there was promise here — namely, a potentially fascinating protagonist. How does a boy who has felt like a girl imprisoned in a male body since the age of 5 — and who, also since then, has wanted nothing more than a starring role in the opera, as a woman — become a national kickboxing champion? As it should, the movie's conflict hinges on this question; the opening credits cut scenes of hyperfemininity (a manicured hand, a slinky red dress) into a pastiche of the pounding, sweaty brutality of the fighter in the ring. (The director carries this bipolarity through the entire movie, often following the amped mania of boxing matches with Nong Toom's dark, tearful, and lonesome fantasy of femininity. The result is an unfortunate sense of jerky repetition.)

At the same time, Beautiful Boxer does attempt to answer its central question of how this complexly gendered persona (a boy who's a girl playing a woman and a man?) came to be. It's all in Toom's childhood, with its double-edged sword of poverty and ridicule, his twin towers of motivation to fight. First Toom boxes for money to support his parents; then, as his opponents taunt him, he fights for revenge. Still later, when he has long since tired of the violence and the publicity, he fights for a sex change. It's not until Toom ventures into international superschlock (battling a female Japanese wrestler in the Tokyo Dome) that he earns enough for the operation.

It's a good story, but a bad movie. Why couldn't we have a documentary? The saddest thing about Beautiful Boxer is that we never get to hear from the actual Nong Toom, now post-op and an actress and model in Thailand. From her pictures, and from a cameo role, she makes a far better impression than the man who plays her.

### *Beautiful Boxer*

## One-Two Punch

**By Johnny Ray Huston**

IN THE WAKE of Iron Ladies' success, recent Thai cinema has bent gender into ever more playful, and sometimes profound, shapes. Sayew charts the unresolved fantasies of a nerdy tomboy who writes porn for a dwindling family business. The Adventures of Iron Pussy imagines an avenging hero who is supermale or superfemale, depending on the occasion. Now Beautiful Boxer proves truth can be as wild as, and perhaps more poignant than, fiction: it's based on the story of Parinya "Nong Toom" Charoenphol, a kickboxing champion who, to paraphrase the film's concise tag line, fought like a man to become a woman. This biopic's framing device verges on being a P.R. ad for Thailand, and a pop-pulp approach dominates. Close-ups of oiled pecs and abs, check. Side plot about dying coach, check. Final showdown, check. But first-time director Ekachai Uekrongtham – as capable of finding dynamism in a makeup case as he is at capturing the aesthetic beauty of muaythai moves – faithfully visualizes Nong's life. The result is a tearjerker that kicks ass.

## Tranny TV Train Wreck

**By Tristan Taormino**
**Village Voice**
**Contributed by Rachel Smith**

"I performed fellatio on my wife," says the husband of a transwoman to investigator Gil Grissom on CSI. It's a sentence I never thought I'd hear on network television, and one, taken on its own, that has the potential to radically disrupt mainstream representations of gender and sexuality. Likewise, the appearance of many transgender characters on television in 2004 could have ushered in a new era of media visibility and inclusion for transpeople. Unfortunately, few embraced the opportunity with enough intelligence or accuracy to warrant celebration.

The recent CSI episode that spawned such a T-shirt-worthy quote featured a transsexual therapist who performed illegal sex changes in a storage facility (one procedure ended in a patient's gruesome death) and her husband, who murdered another trans-woman to cover it up. The investigation of these deaths caused gender confusion among the otherwise smart CSI staff (how could Catherine not know what genital reassignment surgery is?) which unintentionally paralleled how the show's usually sharp writers fumbled this subject. It was clear that producers were trying to be sensitive—witness brief cameos by well-known transwomen and some thoughtful dialogue—but this episode, the most watched in the show's history, ultimately portrayed transfolk and their partners as misguided, deceptive, and/or murderous.

On NCIS, a navy lieutenant commander faked his own death, murdered two people, and began living as a woman to avoid being discovered (preposterous reason No. 1 for transitioning). Before investigators found out the truth, one of them (a man) made out with the woman he thought was linked to the crimes. When he learned that she was the presumed-dead officer, he held her at gunpoint, then his boss shot her point-blank.

Another problematic portrayal came, unfortunately, from a show that's usually smart about gender: Nip/Tuck. In the season finale, life coach Ava Moore, the manipulative sociopath who slept with two teenage boys (her son and her client's son), was revealed to be a transsexual woman. To make matters worse, we found out that she became female to be with the man she loved, who was straight (preposterous reason No. 2 for transitioning).

In all cases, transwomen are used as clever plot devices, their identities metaphors for dysfunction and deception. These dramas deal with medicine and science, so bodies take center stage; but non-trans characters use anatomy to determine gender, even when some of these people have been living as women for several years. It reflects our obsession with drawing a straight line between genitals and gender, and not allowing for more than two choices in either category.

On television as in society, gender breeds tension and confusion around two of our culture's obsessions: body image and sex. One of the MTF victims on CSI worried about "how her husband would receive her on their wedding night." During a support group scene on Nip/Tuck, a transman says about peeing at a urinal, "What if the guy next to me sees it's a brand-new penis and he wants to beat me down?" The majority of

***Continued on Page 15***

## Patong's Ladyboys Struggle To Cope In Badly Damaged Tourist Industry

**Jonathan Watts in Patong beach**
**The Guardian**

Even without the high heels and the giant blue plumes of her feathered headdress, Jana is a very tall girl. In fact, she normally towers over most of the customers at the Moulin Rose (sic) cabaret club, where she performs lip-synch renditions of The Power of Love. But tonight, she is slumped in a chair and feeling low.

For Jana is one of the hundreds of "lady-boys" on the red-light strip of Patong beach who survived the tsunami but are struggling to cope with its economic aftermath: the devastation of a large chunk of Thailand's tourist industry.

Like the prostitutes, masseurs, go-go dancers and kick-boxers who make a living in this hotbed of exoticism and sleaze, the transsexual population of Patong are struggling to make ends meet because the foreigners they rely on for business are being warned by their governments to stay away from the disaster zone.

They are too much of an embarrassment to the authorities to merit much support from the government, particularly at a time when the world's attention is focused on the search for foreign victims of the disaster. But their plight - and the knock-on effect on their families - is as pitiful as the suffering of the thousands of diving instructors, tour guides and hotel operators who are also suddenly unable to make a living.

Jana is most concerned about her parents. Although her father beat her during childhood to try to make her more masculine, Jana sends home two-thirds of the 9,000 baht (£130) that she earns each month from salary and tips. A personal worry is how she will pay for the 700 baht she says she needs each month to make her breasts bigger.

"These past two days, I had to go to hospital, I was so upset. I've just been crying and crying," says Jana. "How can I keep going? How can I look after my family?"

She estimates that Patong is second only to Bangkok as the transsexual capital of the world. But of the 500 ladyboys who used to work in the town, more than a fifth have already fled to other tourist destinations such as Ko Samui in search of work. The story is similar across the 500-metre-long strip. Two weeks ago, the three giant waves destroyed about a dozen bars, nightclubs and trinket shops closest to the beach, but it is only now that the survivors are starting to realize its economic impact.

At the Tiger Bar, skimpily clad young women hang listlessly on the poles where they used to writhe. DJs at the cavernous Crocodile disco pump techno music out across an empty dancefloor. Masseurs chat idly on the street and grab desperately at the hands of the few remaining tourists they see walking by. "I haven't had a customer all week," says Phoy, a petite 25-year-old with a tiny, tight red miniskirt and pencilled eyebrows who works at the Tweety Bar. "Usually, I get Japanese customers, who pay good money - 2,000 to 5,000 baht to take me back to their rooms - but now, all the Japanese have gone. I worry how I will look after my five-year old daughter."

As their business is on the edge of accepted social norms, this large community of thousands has received little international sympathy. As one foreign visitor noted: "If there really is a god, why did he allow Patong beach to remain standing while the tsunami destroyed so many other places?"

But Patong's red-light strip exists because many foreign tourists enjoyed its exotic atmosphere, just as many other holidaymakers liked the golden beaches and azure waters of this area, which is one of the world's most popular tourist resorts.

When he visited Thailand on Friday, the foreign secretary, Jack Straw, toured Patong's beach, but understandably did not wander through its red-light district. Impressed by the rebuilding work, he said he would review the UK government's warning to tourists to stay away from the area.

That would be a giant step forward for the redevelopment of southern Thailand. Jana and Phoy are unlikely to ever be pin-ups for charity appeals, but they and tens of thousands of other tourist industry workers know that the best way to get this part of the world back on its feet is for foreigners to return here on holiday.

## Tranny TV Train Wreck...

*Continued from Page 14*

FTMs never elect to get a penis, since the surgery is risky and more often than not unsuccessful. Doctors can make a pretty pussy that works, but have not perfected a cock that's functional or looks good.

If television wants to medicalize trans bodies, they should at least get the medical stuff right and likewise the psychology and pronouns. The discovery of Ava's transsexuality came during sex, when plastic surgeon Christian Troy stuck his dick inside her and immediately knew that she had a surgically constructed vagina ("There was nothing natural about it"). Later, Ava's surgeon husband remarked "Sleeping with juvenile males makes sense, they're not experienced enough to spot a fraud." As if more seasoned lovers can identify an impostor cunt the minute they see or feel it. Ava herself admitted that she needed one more surgery to extend her vaginal cavity: "Finish me. Correct the one flaw that gave me away so I'm never found out again." It makes sense that Troy, who seeks all truth about himself and others through fucking, found out something pivotal with his cock. However, in all three examples, we've stumbled into dangerous territory where there are natural vaginas and fraudulent ones, real women and fake ones, and even (yikes!) women with penises—where being discovered having a vagina courtesy of surgery, a non-gender-conforming body, or a gender other than the one assigned you at birth is not acceptable.

Nip/Tuck's season finale was the episode of a basic-cable original series that was most watched by adults ages 18 to 49 in 2004. Lest you think people don't learn from TV, a fan reviewed the episode on tvtome.com and stated: "Ava Moore is a man. A MAN," which happens to also be a direct quote from Dr. Troy. Note to fan: She's actually a woman who's been living her life as a woman for more than 15 years.

Regardless of the shallowness of a character's twat, this fascination with genitals, gender, and sex runs deep. I can only hope that we're in that icky, but perhaps necessary, place we were before Ellen and Will & Grace, when there were only a few queer TV characters and most of them were one-dimensional. Slowly but surely, change has come. There were fewer positive examples but they do exist, including: Boston Legal's cross-dressing Santa, a transwoman on Cold Case, and my nominee for best representation of gender: runway diva J. Alexander of America's Next Top Model. A flamboyant African American man everyone refers to as Miss J., he's integrated into the cast, his gender and sexuality are never questioned or labeled, and everyone admires and respects him, whether he's sashaying down the catwalk in five-inch heels or not. No one representation is ever going to be definitive or perfect, but I challenge writers and producers to stop recycling old, titillating stereotypes and instead inject these story lines with solid research, complexity, compassion, and the authentic experiences of transgender people.

## Ms. TGSF...

*Continued from Page 5*

One funny aspect of the Cotillion process is that during the practice and work sessions leading up to the actual night, you do not really spend much time with your co-contestants. But each brief encounter with these women was illuminating. There is a bond that starts to form even in brief passings as one contestant enters practice and the other leaves. Then finally the day of the Cotillion is upon us, all contestants and participants have to arrive at 8 in the morning. The largest part of the Cotillion day is spent simply hanging out (for us contestants anyway). And I totally realized that my initial assessment was accurate, these are really amazing women that I have as co-contestants. And I am proud to be among them.

My partner did not just attend the Cotillion, she was my helper for the Cotillion – helping me to dress, accessorize, and fluff my hair (the joke backstage was about our fluffers, enough said). She was the loudest one there screaming with excitement when I won. I am sure you heard her if you were there or even if you were anyplace else in the Bay Area! And my daughter is bragging to everyone about my victory...what a long way we have all come in the last year as a family. It is more than just acceptance - it is empathy, understanding, and love without judgement. One cannot ask for more.

Much of the Cotillion is now a blur, but one thing that is not is how my co-contestants share a part of my experience that will stay with me forever. They are such a huge part of my Cotillion experience. I have no doubts that they all will continue to be active and important in our community. I am happy and proud to be chosen to be Ms. TGSF, and I have a lot to live up to. Anne Louise set the bar very high, and I look forward to the challenge of my new role. And in the bigger picture, that is how it is for all of us within the community. We need each other, and need to help and work with each other to further our acceptance everywhere. We deserve the right to be ourselves without worrying about what people think - anywhere, anyplace, anytime.

It is an intense experience running for Ms. TGSF. But I encourage all of you who think they might want to run next year to take the step forward and run. Win or lose, it is an experience well worth doing. As for me, I look forward to a productive and exciting year and I sincerely hope to see all of you at as many of the activities as we all can make it to. A toast to our collective journey and hugs to all!

## Changing Gender

**Melbourne Age**

***Michael Mardel tells Michelle Hamer how it feels to be a transgender man.***

*Michael Mardel: "I don't want to fit a stereotype and if I do things a bit feminine, well that's just me."*

*Photo: Cathryn Tremain*

I always felt like a square peg in a round hole for as long as I could remember. I was born female, but I always knew that there was something not quite right, something I was looking for. I became a nun in 1968 when I was 19. I thought maybe religion would be the answer to my problems. I stayed with the order for five years and was given the name of Sister Winifred.

Life didn't work out for me in the convent and when I came out it was like starting all over again - you give up all rights and you're taken care of, so it's hard to get going on your own. And I still had all these questions; where do I want to work, what do I want to do, who do I want be with, and who am I?

I went overseas for a few years, came back and ended up becoming a teacher librarian. I taught at a school where there was this really nice female teacher. I'm thinking "Oh wow, she's gorgeous - oh s—, I must be a lesbian. Shock, horror."

At the age of 35 I decided I was a dyke, so I moved into that scene and had a wonderful time, but after nine years and two partners I wasn't getting the buzz anymore. I knew there was still something else to discover about myself.

I thought maybe it was something spiritual or something I just couldn't grasp hold of. It was a constant search for 48 years, constantly trying to work out what it was about me that was missing or not right.

Then finally I met a transgender woman and I thought: "Well, they're really interesting, but I still don't understand the concept."

I was floating around a bookshop one day and there was this book (on transgender issues) called True Selves and I started to read it, going: "Hmmm, this is my story as well." From then on there was no doubt, I realized I was the wrong gender. When I worked out "Hey, I'm a guy," there was really no big fanfare, no big shock, it just made total sense.

It wasn't a hard change to make to become a man, I worked out at age 48 that that was what I had been searching for; it was nothing to do with courage, it was just like, right I've got it now - so what else can I do about it.

I got in touch with the Monash Hospital gender clinic in Melbourne, and they helped me out. The first thing I thought was "Let me get these breasts off so fast you can't blink". I was absolutely sure this was what I wanted to do.

Life has been pretty much the same since I became a man. I didn't change my dress. I've always dressed the same. I'm exactly the same person; the only thing that's changed is my haircut and the loss of my breasts. I'm not trying to be a male, I'm just being myself.

I was even probably already wearing jocks before I became transgender. On the internet I found a site in America, which sold prostheses, so then the jocks that I bought were the ones with a pouch so I could pop the prosthesis in and get a bulge.

My friends wanted to train me to be a man, they pointed out some things I do a bit feminine. But I want to be the man that I am, I don't want to fit a stereotype and if I do things a bit feminine, well that's just me.

I've always hated my breasts and I was thrilled when I got rid of them, I'm going to get tattoos to cover the scars up. When I was 34 I had a hysterectomy because I never, ever, ever wanted kids. I had to wait six months and have counseling before the hysterectomy. My mother was horrified.

The family can't really get their head around the pronouns, they can't seem to say "he" when referring to me. But my mother presented me with my grandfather's cufflinks a few years ago, that was a big moment.

The only thing that I miss about being a woman is the dyke friends, the intimacy that you have with other lesbians. That has all changed now because I've changed gender. Now I say I'm bisexual, but I don't deliberately go out to fall in love with a transgender woman, it's the person I'm interested in. I don't relate to men really, there's not enough emotion.

I think I'm much more successful as a guy than as a woman, but physically I can't change the size of my hips or my hands. I take the hormones so other people can see what I know; there's a man here. I'm still looking out through the same pair of blue eyes, nothing has really changed, but what does change is your sensitivity to how people are relating to you.

*Michael Mardel began life as Maureen (left, 17), then joined a convent for five years before realizing he was the wrong gender.*

I haven't really thought about gender reassignment surgery. I haven't heard of anyone who's really had great success with it and I really don't want anyone to mess around with my waterworks. It's not going to make me feel more like a man. I'm OK with my body, I'm happy with what I've got. I wanted a flat chest, I got a flat chest, and the penis part of it is not a big deal.

Talking about being transgender to some of the women I went to school with - it was an all-girls' school - they said "Well it just makes sense, there was just always something different that no one could put their finger on." I always tried to fit and not stand-out or be different, but I knew there was a difference, I just didn't know what it was.

Going to my school reunion as Michael was interesting. There were only a couple of people who had a problem with it. I can still slip into the girl-talk with them. But when they bitch about men I have a go at them.

The joy of life is that you don't know what's around the corner.

***Public Restrooms Can Pose Problems For Trans People***

## Toilet Training

**By Eartha Melzer**
**Washington Blade.com**

ADVOCATES FOR THE rights of transgender men and women did not sugarcoat "Toilet Training," a 30-minute film screened in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 13, about one of the most private matters that everyone faces daily.

"This bathroom issue is just a small segment of the violence going on in D.C. against trans people," said Ryan Shanahan, who helped organize the film screening at the Black Cat, in Northwest D.C., as a benefit for Visions in Feminism, a conference to be held May 7 at American University in Washington. "We hoped, by showing this movie, to build community between feminists and transgender people," Shanahan said.

About 100 participants took part last Thursday in the benefit, which included a screening of "Toilet Training," a 2003 film created to educate people about restroom access and discrimination that transgender individuals face.

Tara Mateik and the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, a New York-based organization focused on ending poverty and gender identity discrimination, produced the 30-minute documentary. It opened with someone describing how, before she identified as a woman, was beaten in the men's bathroom of a Maryland restaurant for appearing to be an effeminate man.

A medical doctor in the film said being barred from a restroom when you need to use it could cause different types of harm, from anxiety and cystitis to digestive disorders. Yet for some men and women, especially transgender people, finding safe places to take care of this most basic biological need, without being harassed, arrested or physically assaulted, can be frustrating.

Gender rights advocates said one of the challenges is that most public bathrooms are marked "men" or "women." Problems crop up when people who do not necessarily fit completely into one of these categories enters.

"Toilet Training" examines cases where transgender, gender-deviant, and disabled people have been denied the use of bathrooms or arrested for using the "wrong" bathroom.

It also examines and counters the generally accepted idea that labeling bathrooms by gender makes them safer for people who use them. Included were discussions about what happens when a disabled person needs to use a restroom and his or her caregiver is of the opposite sex. Another question pertained to what happens when a parent needs to help a child of a different gender in a restroom?

***Continued on Page 23***

# T-News!

## Disney World Accused Of Segregating Transsexual Intern

**by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff**

(Orono, Maine) A transsexual student from the University of Maine says she is being segregated in a student intern program at Orlando's Disney World. The woman, who wants to be identified only by her first name, Claire, was accepted last fall to the Walt Disney World College Program for a seven-month internship.

The 23 year old tells the Bangor Maine News that when she told Disney officials she is transsexual they said they offer only single-sex housing and gave her two options: Cut her hair and go back to living as a male, or live alone in a two-person apartment and pay double the amount of rent. "A lot of people don't want to understand," Claire said Monday. "It's so difficult to express [being a transgender person] to people that haven't dealt with it in some fashion."

Claire told the paper that the internship is important to her, and rather than fight the directive she opted to live alone and pay double rent. It is a decision that has left her nearly destitute. As an intern, Claire will make $6.35 an hour, working 30 to 35 hours a week at a job to which she has yet to be assigned. That adds up to about $200 a week, and rent alone will eat up at least $160, she explained.

Her friend, Matthew Small who is the liaison to the UM Deans of Students office for UM's LGBT students, is coming to her rescue. "Essentially, option one wasn't an option, and option two is blatant discrimination," Small told the paper. Officials at the University of Maine said they are considering taking action against Disney's recruitment on campus.

Meanwhile, Small, has begun raising funds to help Claire. With the help of the Wilde Stein Alliance, UM's LGBT student organization, a benefit concert will be held tonight. Repeated attempts by the Bangor News to contact Disney officials for comment on Claire's situation were unsuccessful.

## Former Sex-Change Doctor Retires After Losing Insurance

**Queery.com**

TRINIDAD, Colo. (AP) - **Dr. Stanley Biber**, who gained an international reputation as a sex-change surgeon until he stopped doing surgery in 2003, has closed his small office practice because he cannot get malpractice insurance.

Biber, 81, said he had been seeing a few longtime patients for minor ailments until Dec. 21, when he was told by the state Board of Medical Examiners he could not practice without insurance. "I was just doing a little office practice in the morning and I certainly wasn't aware of the fact that you had to have malpractice insurance to maintain your license," Biber said.

Geoff Hier, a spokesman for the state Department of Regulatory Agencies, said Wednesday he couldn't comment on Biber's case, citing confidentiality rules. He said Colorado is one of eight states that require doctors to have malpractice insurance. Biber said insurers refused to renew his malpractice coverage in 2003. He said they gave no reason but he suspected it was because of his age.

Starting in 1969, Biber performed thousands of gender operations, earning Trinidad the nickname of "sex change capital of the world."

Biber said he'll now spend his time managing his ranch east of town. "I guess I'm too old to practice medicine but I'm healthy enough to go do the physical labor on a ranch," he said.

Former Mayor and Harry Sayre said Biber, who served as a Las Animas County commissioner and was active in public affairs, was a pillar of the community. "I consider him probably one of the outstanding leaders in Trinidad of the last century," Sayre said. "He and I had our battles many years ago, but I consider him a real true friend."

## Transsexual Takes Marriage Fight To European Union Court

**by Peter Moore , 365Gay.com London Bureau**

(London) A woman whose marriage was invalidated after the British government learned she had been born biologically male is taking her case to the European Court of Human Rights.

Elizabeth Bellinger 56, underwent sex reassignment in 1981 and married Michael Bellinger the same year. The registrar who married the couple did not ask for any evidence of her gender and the couple have lived since then as husband and wife.

After 22 years of marriage Bellinger sought to have her birth records corrected to show her actual sex, only to find the UK does not permit the records to be altered. By not recognizing the right of the transgendered [sic] to have their [records corrected], the couple's marriage was invalidated.

Five Law Lords, the highest form of appeal in the UK, rejected her appeal, even though a new Gender Recognition Bill comes into force in April. The Bellingers' lawyers filed papers with the European Court asking it to grant her full recognition as a married woman.

"We're arguing under Articles Eight and 13 of the Human Rights Act which protects the right to family life and the right not to be discriminated against," said Louise Christian, the couple's lawyer. If the court decides to hear the case it could come before the justices in two years.

## Maltese TSs Win Landmark Ruling

**by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff**

(Valletta Malta) A judge has ruled that the government of Malta has filed to provide for the needs of transsexuals constituting a breach of an individual's fundamental human rights.

The case involved a transsexual woman who the government refused to recognize as female. The woman, whose name was not made public, took the Attorney General and the Director of Public Registry to court.

She claimed that the refusal of the Director of Public Registry to amend her birth certificate so as to recognize her change in sex and the failure of the state to provide for the necessities of life for transsexuals was in violation of her fundamental human right to privacy.

Mr. Justice Noel Cuschieri agreed pointing to earlier judgments by the Constitutional Court which had ruled that the state had not only to abstain from interference in an individual's right to privacy but had also, in certain instances, to provide measures designed to secure respect for the private life of the individual.

Cuschieri also chastised the government for not passing legislation to protect the rights of transsexuals.

He ordered the Director of Public Registry to amend the woman's birth certificate to show her change of name and corrected sex. The government was also ordered to pay all court costs.

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# More T-News!

## Transgender Officer Sues Oklahoma City Police Department

**The Advocate**

A transgender police officer has filed a sexual harassment lawsuit against the Oklahoma City Police Department and has been placed on paid leave while she and the department try to work out their differences.

Paula Schonauer's lawsuit, filed December 20 in Oklahoma County district court, does not discuss specific incidents of harassment. Her attorney, Doug Friesen, declined to go into details Tuesday, while efforts continue to resolve the dispute and return her to the police force. She also filed a wrongful termination lawsuit in September, even though she was not fired.

Friesen said both lawsuits were filed to prevent her claims from being negated by statute of limitation issues and as a precaution in case no agreement can be reached between Schonauer and the department. "I am certainly hopeful this can be worked out," Friesen said. "It has always been her goal to continue to serve as a police officer working with the public."

Schonauer was taken off patrol and given an interim clerical role before she was placed on leave about two months ago. Her skills and abilities are being evaluated to determine what her future role should be with the department, Friesen said.

Police spokesman Capt. Jeffrey Becker said Tuesday he would have to check into the matter before commenting on Schonauer's lawsuit and status with the department.

Schonauer, 38, a 6-foot-3, 200-pound Gulf War veteran, decided in September 2001 to become a woman and change names from Paul to Paula. Police officials said at the time that as long as Schonauer could continue to perform well on the job, the officer would be treated the same as anyone else in the department.

Friesen said Schonauer has been successful in improving community relations programs between the police department and Asians, Hispanics, and gays and lesbians. "One of the areas being looked at is establishing a position that would allow her to continue and expand those programs," he said. Schonauer joined the police department in April 1992 after serving in the U.S. Army.

## TS Prison Guard Returns to Work

**Queery.com**
**Jim Thorpe, PA**

(AP) A Carbon County Prison guard who had a sex change operation is now back at work, and her labor union has worked out an agreement with the county in which she is to be treated the same as any other female guard.

Nancy Stevens, 49, said her co-workers and the inmates have accepted her as she is. "People see me out here and get over their homophobia," Stevens said. "They realize they won't dissolve if I touch them."

Stevens returned to work Dec. 1 after recovering from gender reassignment surgery in September. Stevens had worked at the prison since 1988, using the name Charles Tertel until getting a court order for a name change on April 3, 2003.

She was on paid leave until May 7, 2003, when she began using all her vacation days before reaching an agreement with the county to return to work a month later.

Stevens may guard female inmates alone, use the women's bathroom and locker room and perform strip searches of female inmates under the agreement worked out between Carbon County commissioners and Teamsters Local 773. The commissioners voted unanimously on Thursday to accept the agreement.

Stevens will be listed as a female corrections officer because the state accepts Stevens as female. That was based on the state Health Department's issuing a new birth certificate identifying her as female, which surprised Commissioner Wayne Nothstein. "How you can go back and change a birth certificate I have no idea," Nothstein said.

Richard McGarvey, a spokesman for the state Health Department said new birth certificates for sex changes are rare. He said they are issued when there is written verification from a doctor that the sex-change surgery worked, along with a court order. Fewer than five new birth certificates to change genders are issued each year, McGarvey said.

New birth certificates for other reasons, such as to correct misspellings, are much more common, McGarvey said.

## New Year Honors For Trans Campaigners

**Rainbow Network**

Two campaigners for transsexual equality have been rewarded for their work in the New Year's Honors list.

**Christine Burns** received an MBE and Dr. Stephen Whittle and OBE for promoting the rights of transsexual people in the UK and for their help in the getting the Gender Recognition Act successfully through Parliament.

Burns has said that the award should be shared by all of those who have worked hard to gain acceptance.

"I want to keep stressing above all that we look on these awards as a recognition to be shared by the whole trans community... indeed the whole LGBT world," she told Gay.com UK.

"These awards say that caring for trans people is important enough for the establishment to reward, and that speaks volumes about how far we've all come."

However, she added that she is still "honored" to be chosen.

"I would be lying if I pretended that such an honor wasn't very special to each of us too though. I was raised by society to feel ashamed of being different; of being transsexual."

## Police Hunt Killer Of TS Boxing Coach

**by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff**

(London) A part-time boxing coach who was undergoing sex reassignment has been murdered. Penny Port, 40, was on a waiting list to undergo reassignment surgery. She was found stabbed in her Sheffield home and later died in hospital. Two men, aged 20 and 18, were arrested at the scene and were interviewed by officers. They were later released.

Port was born biologically male and had grappled for several years with his sexuality finally coming to terms with transgenderism. As Neil, Port helped train Sheffield world title contender Clinton Woods. Port had also worked as a bus driver and as a laborer.

"Every one knew Neil as a rough, tough sort of a bloke but underneath [s]he was a gentle giant," said Woods. "I saw [her] a few hours before [s]he died." Woods said.

"[S]he told me [she] had lived a lie for 20 years. It was the hardest thing [s]he has ever done to admit [s]he wanted to be a woman but once he had done [s]he was a happier person for it."

Police say they have few clues to go on.


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# Takin' Care of Biz...

## TGSF Financial Report

*As of January 20, 2005*

**Assets**

| | |
|---|---|
| Cash | 2334.26 |
| Decorations | 1000.00 |
| Beverages | 200.00 |
| **Total** | **3534.26** |

**Liabilities and Equity**

| | |
|---|---|
| Accounts Payable | |
| **Total** | **0.00** |

### *Statement of TGSF Income*

**Revenues**

| | |
|---|---|
| Memberships | 265.00 |
| Donations | 375.00 |
| Advertising | 450.00 |
| Cotillion Ticket Sales | 2175.00 |
| **Total** | **3265.00** |

**Expenses**

| | |
|---|---|
| Channel | 250.19 |
| Phone | 49.50 |
| Cowell Theatre Payment (Security Deposit) | 500.00 |
| Cotilllion Programs | 651.65 |
| Insurance payment (2nd half) | 562.50 |
| Insurance for Cotillion | 299.86 |
| Taragon Dinner | 260.00 |
| Vendor Buyout at Cowell | 75.00 |
| Judge's Brunch and Interview | 82.94 |
| Sunday Brunch | 850.00 |
| **Total** | **3581.64** |

**Net Income (Loss) ..... (316.64)**

## 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.

## TGSF Donations

*Our Friends Who Give*
**as of January 20, 2005**

***Jennifer Kennedy ..... $325.00****
***Roxy Carmichael-Hart ..... $325.00****
***Cotillion Silent Auction ..... $630.00***
***Ayme Kantz ..... $10.00***

****Piano for Cotillion***

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## Contact TGSF!

### *2004-05 Executive Committee*

**President**
Roxy Carmichael-Hart ..... [redacted]

**Vice President**
Laura Marlowe ..... [redacted]

**Secretary**
OPEN

**Treasurer**
Pamela Gray ..... [redacted]
Or ..... [redacted]

**Education**
Dawnne Woodie ..... [redacted]
Lisa Rae Dummer ..... [redacted]

**Outreach**
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Kara Flynn ..... [redacted]

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**Ms. TGSF 2005**
Jennifer Siobhan Kennedy ..... [redacted]

**TGSF Outreach Ambassador**
Kelly Anne Marsh ..... [redacted]

**TGSF.Org Webmistress**
OPEN

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

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

*No Ordinary Drag Queen*

## Female Illusionist To Preside At 'Mascara Masquerade'

**By Yusef Najafi**
**Washington Blade.com**

FOR THE FIRST time in a while, Rayceen Pendar A'vis, the 55-year-old "gender-bender" who made a name for herself fighting for the rights of gays in Washington, D.C., is in love. "He is so wonderful," she says of her 6-month-old romance with a man who came along when she wasn't looking. "It's like he's the cream in my coffee."

Pendar A'vis's actual name is Raymond Chandler. But in black gay social circles most everyone knows this native Washingtonian as Rayceen.

You are as likely to see her in a church pew as you are to see her on stage at D.C. Black Pride celebrations, or speaking out at rallies for transgender rights. She is glamorous and outspoken, gracious and humble. But mostly what makes Rayceen stand out is her steely willingness not to march to the beat of anyone else's drum.

"People respect her, they trust her, and she's hilarious," says Tony Nelson, who has known Rayceen for 20 years and is working on a new show with her at Lulu's Club Mardi Gras called "Mascara Masquerade." "She's probably one of the funniest people you've ever met. "In one breath she may be cracking a joke," he says, "and in another she might be praying."

Chandler says "Rayceen" is the name he uses when traveling — his full stage name. But it also is a fairly popular moniker on the streets of D.C. "You can say 'him' or 'her,' it doesn't matter," he tells a reporter. "I'm a father first, and a mother always. I don't get upset [about] what people call me. It doesn't matter. I'm proud to be gay."

RAYCEEN is the master of ceremonies at "Mascara Masquerade," a relatively new weekly female illusion show at Club Lulu's, a straight club in Northwest D.C., at 22nd and M streets.

"We have a cast of girls, of well-rounded entertainers, from all over that take Broadway standards, disco standards, R&B, and pop," Rayceen says. "Some of them give the illusion of the person they are projecting; some take it to another form. They can shake their groove thing, and they can be full-figured girls, and we still have a good time."

The purpose is to elevate the art of illusion, she says, by including female illusionists as well as actual women in "Mascara Masquerade." Unlike drag queens, Rayceen says female illusionists take their art to an entirely different level. "They take you beyond what it can be and give you the glamour," she says.

"It's really funny to watch people's expressions when they are not able to pick out who's who," Rayceen says. "We don't tell them, we just say, 'You need to figure it out for yourself.' It's really nice that we blend all that together."

Mascara Masquerade is the brainchild of Rayceen, show promoter Michael "Bubbles" Turnquest, show director Tony "And I Thank You" Nelson, and entertainer Monty Bloomingdale, who Nelson describes as one of the most exciting performers in Washington D.C.

With Mascara Masquerade, Nelson also said organizers wanted to attract a crowd that might not necessarily attend a show like this. "We don't want to over-sexualize our show," he says. "We want people to feel comfortable, even some gay people who might not feel comfortable in that type of environment."

RAYCEEN HAS FIVE children — three boys and two girls, who range in age from 25 to 35 — and two grandchildren. She works at Bubbles Hair Salon in Northwest, D.C., as a nail technician, and often hosts fashion shows, around the nation and internationally.

She grew up in Washington, D.C., and remembers what it was like being gay here almost 40 years ago. "To come out in a big city was a wonderful experience. But there was a time in the '60s when people didn't understand the lifestyle," she says. "We had to fight for equal rights. We had to stand up and be gay in a time when the world was not ready for it."

It was in those early days that Rayceen joined the House of Pendar A'vis, founded by the late A'vis Pendar. Her house was one of the early underground social clubs (there were four) geared toward providing a positive outlet where gay men could express their true selves.

Traditionally, the houses served as a place of expression for costume balls and other related social functions. And long before Madonna was vogue-ing, Rayceen says divas were doing it at the House of Pendar A'vis.

"Sometimes life is not fair. The doors may not open always for you. But if there is an area or place where you can go and be a queen or king for a day, you could feel so good about yourself," Rayceen says. "It offers people an opportunity to shine, when so much of life is bringing you down."

The House of Pendar A'vis still operates today, though there is less focus on the balls. "We have meetings. We pay dues. We have functions. We do a fund-raiser," she says. "We are a force to be reckoned with, and always still serving."

Of course, the AIDS epidemic that exploded in the early '80s changed the nation, and Rayceen. She and others worked to help those hit hardest. "It wiped out so many of the colorful people," she says. "It took so much from us, but I'm so glad they were able to bless us with their presence because those people made it a wonderful and exciting time."

"I have been given a gift from God to enlighten, motivate, inspire, make people laugh — make people heal," Rayceen says. "That's my journey."


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## He's The King Of Sex Change Ops

**The Straits Times**

This respected Thai doctor has changed 3,000 men to women, but other doctors used to mock him for 'cutting off organs.'

HE was dying of cancer in Switzerland. Yet he traveled to Thailand last year, for an operation that had nothing to do with the illness. The patient, who was in his early 50s, was not expected to live beyond a year. He went to Dr Preecha Tiewtranon for a sex change.

Dr Preecha said: 'He really wanted to be a woman. He sent me letters and called me personally. He said he would have the will to fight cancer if he was a woman. 'During the operation, I could feel cancerous lumps in his body, but I managed to do it successfully.'

The patient went home and succumbed to cancer eight months later. Dr Preecha said it was one of his most memorable cases. 'Right up to the end, he sent me cards telling me how happy he was. It's cases like these that keeps me going.'

And many seek him out, from those with children to one all of 73 years old. All of which explains why he is known as the king of sex change operations in Thailand. But Dr Preecha, 61, who has changed 3,000 males to females, prefers the term gender reassignment surgery (GRS). He has also done 150 cases of female-to-male GRS, and thousands of aesthetic operations on transsexuals.

### *Correcting Botched Jobs*

He started pioneering work in sex change operations in 1978, because he had to correct operations botched by unqualified surgeons, he told The New Paper on Sunday in a phone interview. 'They were general surgeons trying to do delicate surgery with no training whatsoever.'

Dr Preecha had specialized in plastic surgery for more than 10 years before going into GRS. He is certified to do plastic and reconstructive surgery in the US and Australia as well as in Thailand. He has now trained many GRS surgeons in Thailand, at the famous Chulalongkorn Medical School. BBC World Service recently reported that Thailand has become a centre of global excellence in transgender surgery. He is often invited to conduct operations or advise doctors in countries such as China, the US and Japan.

And earlier this month, he carried out an operation watched live by 35 of the world's leading GRS doctors. They watched on widescreen monitors as surgeons removed a 27-year-old tour guide's testicles and created a vaginal canal lined with the outer skin of the penis.

The delicate operation, called penile skin inversion or vaginal plasty, took three hours. While the procedure has been called safe by doctors, there is a risk of puncturing the rectum and bladder, which can be fatal.

The 35 doctors had been invited to Bangkok by the Preecha Aesthetic Institute (PAI), on the seventh floor of the 107-year-old Bangkok Nursing Home (BNH) Hospital, for a sex reassignment workshop. Dr Preecha said BNH Hospital also excels in fields like cardiology and gastroenterology. But he is in the news often because of interest in his work.

### *Apple Contouring*

Besides doing sex-change operations three to five times a week, Dr Preecha also does Adam's apple contouring, breast augmentation, liposuction and other procedures listed on the PAI website. He averages about five operations a day, working from 9am to 7pm or longer.

He told Reuters that about 80 per cent of his clients are foreigners. Most are from the US, where rising insurance costs and the threat of lawsuits have pushed medical costs up. However, there are concerns about Thailand's limited regulations on cosmetic surgery.

While countries like the US require patients seeking a sex change to have a six-month psychiatric evaluation, Thai patients need to see a psychiatrist only once. The psychiatrist evaluates if the patient suffers from any form of gender identity disorder and prepares him or her on what to expect after GRS, which is irreversible.

At PAI, which opened in BNH Hospital three years ago, patients are referred for sex-change after they are seen by the hospital's own psychiatrists. PAI has 17 GRS doctors, including Dr Preecha.

He has operated on acquaintances and relatives, but not on any close friend or family member. But he would have no qualms about doing GRS on them, if needed. 'Yes, definitely, if they pass the psychiatric examination. Even if it's my own son, sure,' he said. He has three sons and a daughter, aged 28 to 32. None of them is a doctor.

Dr Preecha declined to reveal how much he earns. He would say only that he gets a monthly salary of 200,000 baht ($8,380), in addition to dividends as a BNH Hospital shareholder. 'My family and friends say my work is hard but I enjoy making patients happy. They've always supported me, without question,' said Dr Preecha who is married to a housewife.

However, other doctors were not supportive when he started on GRS. 'They didn't understand why I did this kind of work. They thought I was just cutting off organs and that my patients were mad.'

Has anyone ever asked him if he wanted to change sex? Laughing, Dr Preecha said: 'No, but you can ask. I still love to be a man.'

Does he feel like he is playing God? 'No, this is just my medical profession. It's my duty to cure diseases, whether of the body or of the mind, as much as possible in all possible ways. I'm not trying to be a hero or anything like that to get in the news. My aim is to make suffering patients happy,' he said. And what does he do in his spare time? His hobby is Latin ballroom dancing. He has even come to Suntec City to watch his teacher compete.


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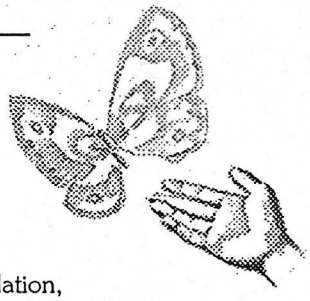
# Cotillion 2005 Photos!

# Remember Gwen Araujo!

## Gwen Amber Rose Araujo (1985 - 2002)

...A transgender teenager from Newark, CA was murdered at a party by a group of men upon discovery of her transgender status. Twenty months after Gwen Araujo's death the jury deadlocked on whether her attackers were guilty of first or second-degree murder. According to Alameda County District Attorney's Office, none of the jurors were willing to settle for the lesser offense of manslaughter — despite efforts by defense attorneys in the case to argue that Gwen's killers were somehow justified because she did not disclose her transgender identity to them. The prosecutor already has stated that he will re-try the three defendants, Michael Magidson, Jose Merel, and Jason Cazares, for murder.

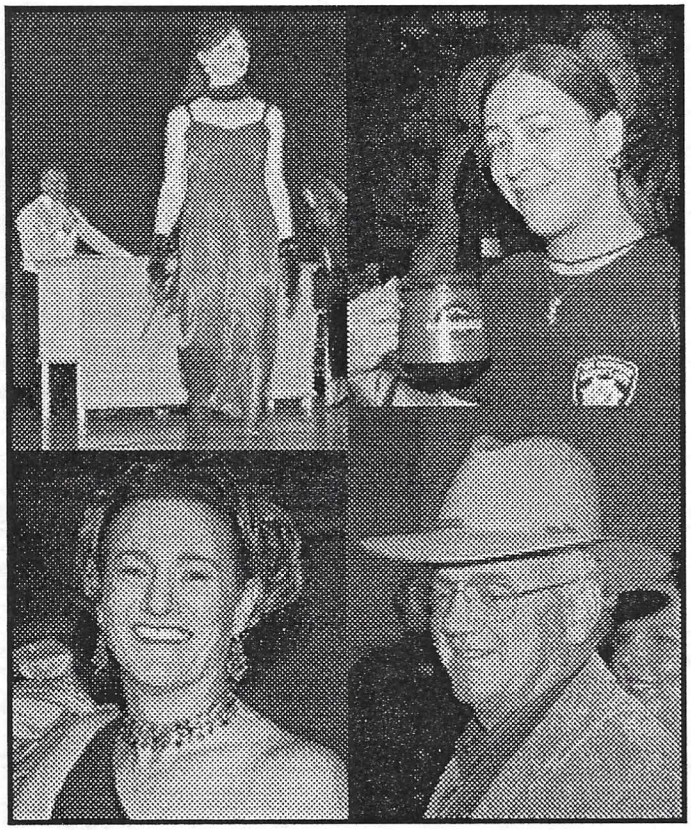
### Make Your Money Count!



To contribute to Gwen's family directly: **Gwen Araujo Memorial Fund**, Bank Of America, Any BofA branch location, Acct# 10598-05854

To support transgender education work: **Gwen Araujo Transgender Education Fund** c/o Horizons Foundation, 870 Market St. Suite, 728 San Francisco, CA 94102 (415) 398 - 2333 / www.horizonsfoundation.org

Thank you!



*Even More Cotillion 2005 Photos!*

### Public Restrooms Pose Problems...

*Continued from Page 16*

Human resources professionals, transgender rights advocates, lawyers and victims of discrimination noted in the film that communication, understanding and updated policies can create safer restroom spaces for everyone.

After the screening, Darby Hickey mentioned a 15-year-old transgender boy she knows who is at risk of being put in a detention center for skipping school. "Why is he skipping?" Hickey asked. "He's afraid to change for gym in the locker room."

Suzanne Hitchman said restrooms at her workplace, Mocha Hut, 4706 14th St., NW, are now equally open to all genders. "We were working on articulating our values as a business, and the bathroom issue came up," she said. "In our case, transforming the bathrooms to be all-inclusive was as simple as buying a new sign for the door and [it] only cost $2."

For other types of businesses and workplaces, accommodating everyone can be more complicated. And there is not much written to help businesses understand how to deal with gender identity issues, gender rights advocates say.

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project, named after an activist in New York City who fought on behalf of transgender people as far back as the Stonewall uprising in 1969, sells the film for a sliding-scale fee. The law project also offers a companion guide.

FIFTEEN STATES AND the District of Columbia prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, but only five include protection against discrimination based on gender identity, according to the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

Last week, the state of Illinois added gender identity to its Human Rights Code. Task Force officials said Illinois joins California, Minnesota, New Mexico and Rhode Island and more than 60 counties and cities that have similar laws in place.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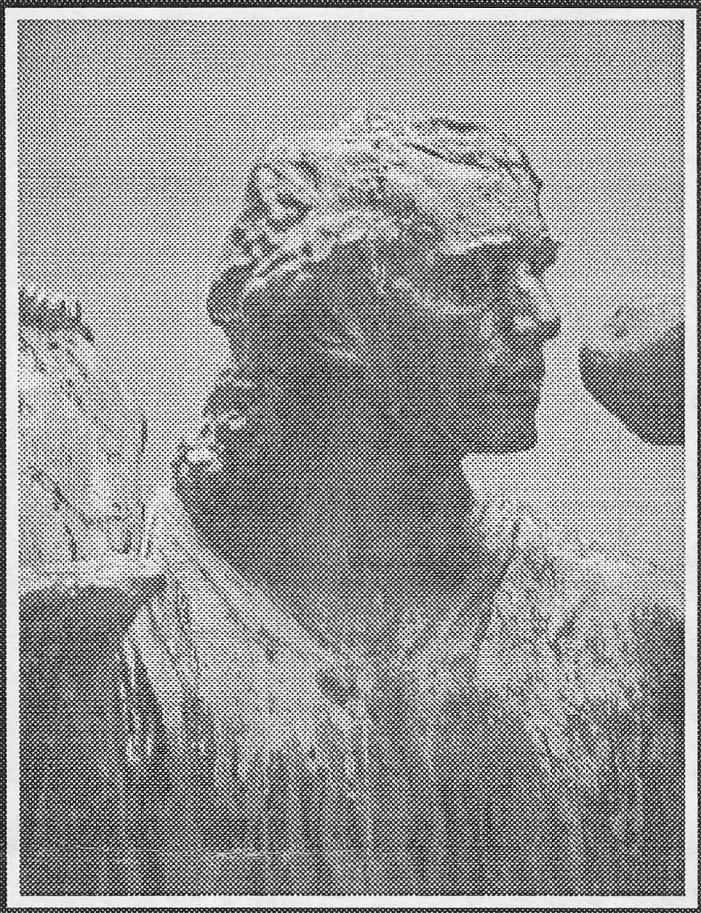
# TG Voices in 55 Words or Less



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http://www.ren.org

Entries must be recorded on tape or reproductible CD and accompanied by a written text. Please download rules from
TGVoices.org

Deadline June 1, 2005

TG Voices in 55 Words or less – 2005 is a charitable project of Transgendered Voices, Incorporated, a Wyoming not-for-profit corporation