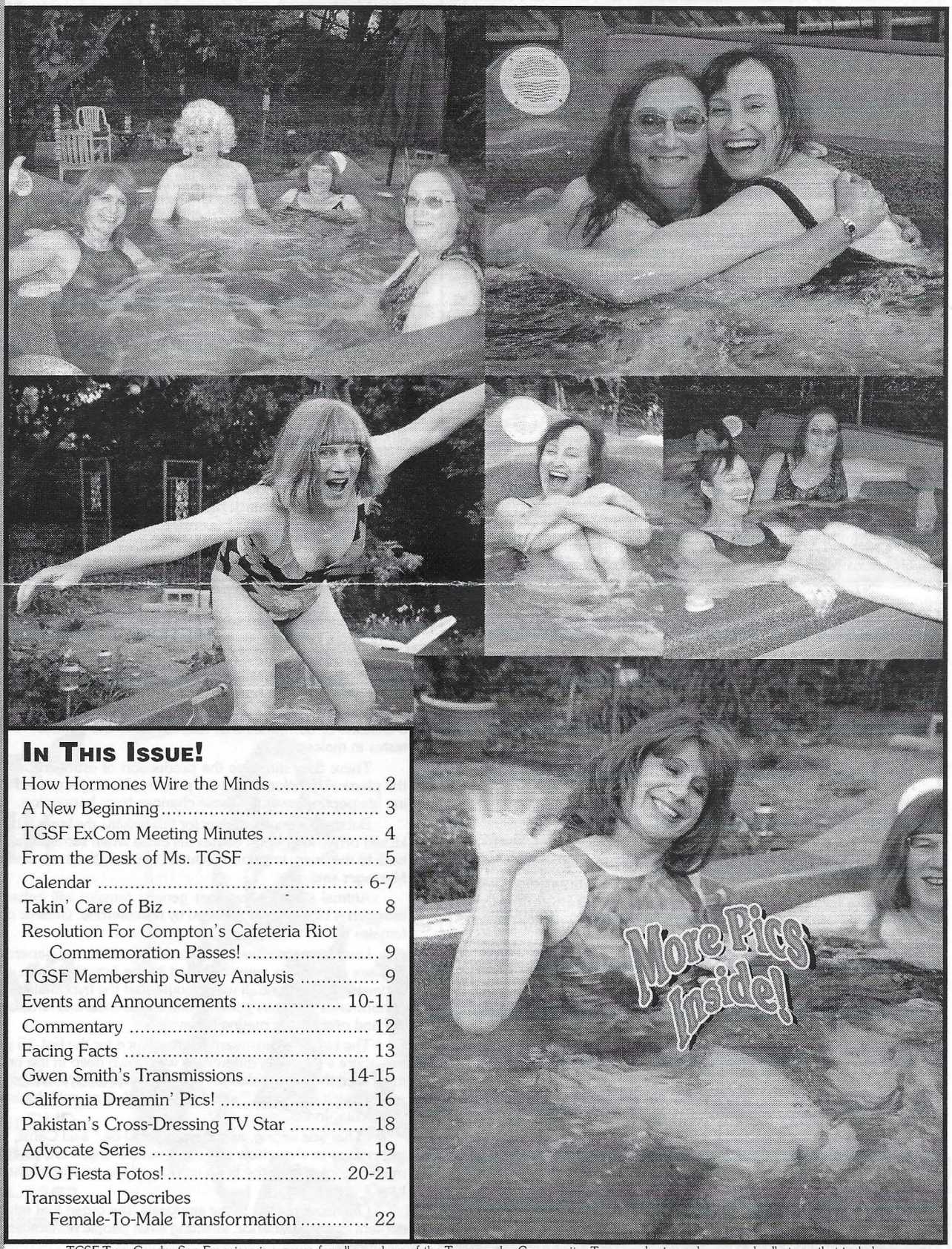
June 2006 — A Quarter Century of Service! — Volume 25, Issue 6

The Swimsuit Issue!



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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.

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(Fiscal Year: May 1 - April 30)

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Vice President ..... Jennifer Kennedy
Secretary ..... Lisa Rae Dummer
Treasurer ..... OPEN
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Outreach ..... Becky Benton
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Fine Print

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New Evidence Shows How Hormones Wire The Minds Of Men And Women To See The World Differently

By Ronald Kotulak, Science Reporter
Chicago Tribune

Scientists are still a long way from figuring out what women and men really want, but they are getting a lot closer to understanding what makes their brains so different. That women and men think differently has little to do with whether they are handed dolls or trucks to play with as infants. After all, when infant monkeys are given a choice of human toys, females prefer dolls and males go after cars and trucks.

The differences, researchers are beginning to discover, appear to have a lot more to do with how powerful hormones wire the female and male brain during early development and later in life.

Among the newest findings: A previously unknown hormone appears to launch puberty's sexual and mental transformation; growth hormone is made in the brain's memory center at rates up to twice as high in females as in males; and the brain's hot button for emotions, the amygdala, is wired to different parts of the brain in women and men.

Scientists hope the findings may help explain such mysteries as why females are often more verbal, more socially empathetic, more nurturing and more susceptible to depression, while males tend to be more aggressive, more outdoorsy, more focused on things than people and more vulnerable to alcohol and drug addiction.

"Males and females look different, we act different, so of course our brains are different," said Rutgers University psychologist Tracey Shors, who is studying the effects of growth hormone on the brain. "Sex hormones along with stress and growth hormones change the brain's anatomy, and in that way you change behavior, your ability to think and learn."

Sex differences begin with the X and Y sex chromosomes a person is born with. But scientists now believe that whether the brain and nervous system are wired as female or male depends a lot on the early influence of estrogen, the so-called female hormone, or testosterone, the male hormone.

The brain's sexual identity is first established when those hormones are briefly released before and shortly after birth, which may influence a child's preference for dolls or trucks.

"There's a peak of testosterone in males at birth that's very important for future sexual behavior," said Dr. Sophie Messager of Paradigm Therapeutics in Cambridge, England. "If you block that, the male rats behave like females for the rest of their life.

"The sex hormones then lie dormant until they get turned on again in puberty to make the body ready for reproduction. That is where a recently discovered hormone called kisspeptin comes in. Created in the brain, it unleashes a cascade of hormones that race down to the gonads—ovaries in females and testes in males.

There they stimulate the production of estrogen or testosterone, starting the physical transformations of puberty. Messager proved in animals that blocking kisspeptin prevented those changes from happening.

But there is another target for this activity: the brain. The hormonal downrush kicked off by kisspeptin comes full circle when estrogen and testosterone travel back to the brain, imprinting neural circuits with female and male characteristics, Messager said.

Animal studies show that genetic females will behave like males if their estrogen is blocked and replaced by testosterone. Genetic males, in turn, act like females if their testosterone is knocked out.

Until kisspeptin was discovered, scientists had generally accepted the idea that sex differences were centered in the hypothalamus, a small organ on the underside of the brain. It was thought that the hypothalamus originated the flow of hormones that start puberty, determine male and female physical characteristics and orchestrate mating behavior."

The bias of mainstream neuroscience for the last 25 years has been, "OK, sure there's some sex differences way down deep in the brain in this little structure called the hypothalamus, but otherwise the brains of men and women were pretty much the same," said Larry Cahill, a neurobiologist at the University of California, Irvine.

"That was wrong, as wrong as could be," said Cahill, who is using imaging technology to show how male and female brains are wired for emotions. "Sex matters a lot in how the brain works and we neuroscientists have to change our tune."

One example lies in the amygdala, the organ that interprets the emotional content of an experience, affecting what people remember. Located deep in the

Continued on Page 22

A New Beginning

Allison D. Laureano

So it's a ho hum day for me as I put pen to paper this Mother's Day. My mom is stuck in the Philippines because of a typhoon with no word as to when she can get off of one of the small islands to get to the airport in Manila. So I'll miss taking her out for Mother's Day dinner. And for those of you that know me, that's kinda tough because my family is very important to me. Besides, she's the one in my family that has truly embraced me as her daughter when I started my life over nearly ten years ago.

It's also ho hum because one of my very favorite vices, a television show called *The West Wing*, has just aired its last episode ever. One of the most engaging shows in intelligent writing and insightful performances has been shelved after occupying 7 years of my life. It ends, though, at a new beginning, as President-Elect Matthew Santos (played by hunky Jimmy Smits) takes his oath of office to take the place of outgoing President Josiah Bartlet (played brilliantly by the debonair Martin Sheen). The episode title of this finale was "Tomorrow", signifying a look to the future – the potential that faces these political players as they take on new challenges, either as part of a new, reinvigorated Presidency leading a revitalized nation, or as an outgoing administration that accomplished much in its short time and is faced with moving back into mainstream society.

So what's my point in this? Simply put, it's about new beginnings. As I had support from my Mom when I began a new part of my life, so did President Santos have the support of the myriad of West Wingers to begin a new era in a fictionalized America. Just as there has been a transition to new leadership on the West Wing, there has been a transition with Transgender San Francisco. Don't get me wrong, I'm not equating running a country with the plethora of real world global challenges to managing a community based non-profit, but the concept of change and adaptation is core to both circumstances.

As my first statement in print as President of TGSF, I would like to first thank Roxy Carmichael Hart for her years of dedication to this organization. Through her leadership, this organization was able to resolve a few thousand dollars of debt and move to a state of financial stability and solvency in just three short years. Though there were problems and difficulties along the way, she has shown grace and generosity both in her time and in her personal donations to this organization. I would also like to thank all of the officers who I served with on the board for the past two years – those who continue to serve now, and those who have chosen to step aside and allow fresh faces and perspectives to infuse our organizational leadership. They were the ones that kept this long-standing group on the forefront of community visibility, support and activism.

However, it's this idea of fresh perspectives that I want to focus on today. We are at a new beginning, not just because we have new leadership, but also because we have new revitalized and reinvigorated philosophies. Your newly elected Ex-Com is filled with energetic people who have listened to you the membership as to what you want to see happen with this organization. We are committed to providing new and exciting education events that will have real benefit to the members. Topics will range from the practical such as self-defense, dealing with law enforcement, transition legal processes to the more sublime such as wig and hair care, makeup application, fashion consulting and dating. We want to make sure that all facets of our organization benefit by our seminars, be they CD, TS, GQ, MTF, FTM, WXYZ.

We are also committed to community service. Each and every Ex-Com member has expressed the desire to make sure we give back to not just our members, but to the community that supported us through the years, and the community in which we live. I want to see the day when, as this organization has in the past, we are able not only to raise money to do our events and our outreach such as Pride, the Cotillion and the Really Big Shew, but also to raise money for other charities. We have had a long tradition of working with the Imperial Court System and other community organizations or working by ourselves to fundraise for worthwhile community help entities like Project Open Hand and the AIDS Project. I envision TGSF to be a strong leadership organization to promoting a positive face for our community by demonstrating the willingness to be a guide for our members and a drive to provide genuine help to our global community.

I have campaigned on the platform of revitalization and change. I have talked openly and honestly about my desire for this organization to step up off the sidelines and take the lead in our community. I have lobbied that our leadership make that commitment to provide for the membership that which we say in our mission statement – an organization dedicated to serving the educational, social, and recreational needs of the transgender community; to be dedicated to educating the general public about transgender and promoting a positive image of transgender persons among the general public. We know there will be challenges. We know that there will be criticism. We also know that there will be opportunities for <u>everyone</u> and that there will be a feeling of family. As you know, family is important to me. As my transgender family, I only ask that you join us in this new beginning to make TGSF a far better organization then when we found it.

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May 3, 2006

TGSF ExCom Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 5:45

Attending – In person -, Dawnne Woodie, Allison Laureano, Lisa Dummer, Katra Briel, Becky Benton ; By phone - Jennifer Anderson, Roxy Carmichael-Hart

Absent – Tommi Watson, Jennifer Kennedy, Bonnie Bryen

Guests: Elvin Simpson

The Minutes of the March 4, 2006 meeting were approved

President's Report – Allison Laureano

TGSF has been suspended from operation by the state of California for failure to file certain informational statements. Alli has been in contact with the state and has filed the required forms. A notice of reviver should be sent to us by the state shortly. We have also failed to file tax returns for the years 1998, 2000, 2003 – 2005. There is still a risk that we may be suspended by the Franchise Tax Board. We will take steps to file these returns as soon as possible. The Trans March has been taken over by a for-profit partnership. A motion was made and approved that TGSF not provide any financial support to the march. All members are urged to participate in the march as part of the transgender community.

Treasurer's Report – Roxy Carmichael-Hart

A copy of the report was sent to the ExCom

Secretary's Report – Lisa Dummer

The next profile will be Becky. Alli is working on the database with Lisa. All articles for the Channel that are submitted by members of the ExCom should be submitted to Lisa. Other members may submit them to Lisa or directly to the editor.

Education – Dawnne Woodie, Jennifer Anderson

Dawnne and Jennifer will meet to work on new programs for the coming year. We will look into the possibility of hosting some events in the South Bay at the Billy de Frank Center. One proposed educational seminar is a self-defense class to be taught by a local karate school. The MAC event is scheduled for May 21st. There have been a few sign-ups and we hope to get a few more before the date. There needs to be greater participation by the ExCom. Jennifer has been working on a compilation of the results of the survey and should have those ready for the next issue of the Channel.

Outreach – Becky Benton

The Hotline will be answered by the Outreach committee. Jennifer Anderson will work with Becky and Bonnie to transfer it over. Outreach will take care of updating the calendar on the web on a regular basis. Becky will handle a media development program to cover all of the forms of communication by TGSF. This will include a complete review of the website, the Channel and all handouts.

Social – Katra Briel

DVG will be having a Cinco de Mayo potluck at Ayme's house. All members of TGSF are invited. There will be an unofficial get together and picnic at Olompali State Park on May 7th to celebrate its historical day. The Farewell to the Blue Muse dinner will take place at the Blue Muse on Tuesday, May 9th. It's time to say goodbye to an old and well-loved friend of TGSF. The mid-month will be held on may 11th and the End of Month on May 25th. Both events will start at 7:00 and will be held at the Cathedral Hill Hotel. The Memorial Day BBQ will be from 4:00 to 9:00 on May 27th. It will be held in the parking lot at Carla's. There are no events scheduled for June because of all the Pride activities. We will look to holding a beach party or BBQ in July, potentially July 11th. It was suggested that the beach in Pacifica might be a good spot. A Venue Sub-committee, consisting of Katra, Becky and Bonnie has been established to search for alternative venues for events. A fashion show is in the works for the fall. It may involve Romantasy Corsets and the Academy of Arts fashion design group.

Old Business

Certain charges were made after the last election. Alli will call a special closed meeting of the ExCom to discuss the issues raised.

New Business

The ExCom binders were distributed to all members in attendance. The others may pick them up from Alli. The binders contain copies of the By-Laws, standing rules and job description for each office.

Next meeting – The next meeting will be Friday, June 2, 2006. It will be held at the LGBT Center and will commence at either 6:30 or 7:00. The time will be determined prior to the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

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.

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From the Desk of Ms. TGSF

Farewell My Friend

By Jennifer Anderson

(l-r), Missy Shake-Zulah, Ms. TGSF 2006 Jennifer Anderson, Amethyst Moonwater, and Mr. TGSF 2006 Sydney Mason at the Pagan Alliance Festival 5-6-06

In my other article I mentioned a recent event called Pagan Alliance. Attendance at this event for myself, Sydney (Mr. TGSF) and Roxy was arranged by Roxy. Members of the Pagan community have been strong supporters of TGSF events, and as was Roxy's style, I believe this was her way of saying thank you.

We had the opportunity to socialize with many familiar friends, had several good outreach conversations (I'm betting we pick up a couple of members), and even raised a little money for TGSF. All in all it was a success but this is not why I'm reporting it now. As it turns out, this will be the last event I will get to do with Roxy in an official TGSF capacity. Unfortunately, Roxy resigned from the board the following day.

It saddens me deeply that Roxy is gone. She has been a vital force in TGSF and the TG community for almost as long as I have been around. But more than that she has been a dear friend and an unfailing source of support and encouragement to me. I would go so far as to say that without Roxy's coaching, prodding (with love) and encouragement, I never would have become a Ms. TGSF contestant, let alone a titleholder. I owe her a lot!

I know she had her reasons for leaving and I have to respect them. I also know that her shoes will not be easily filled. Please join me in expressing profound gratitude for all her contributions to our community. If you see her, please tell her thank you. And, bless her and wish her well with the next phase of her journey.

Bless you Roxy!

transpirit @mccsf

Potluck Gathering
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My Reign So Far

By Jennifer Anderson

Well, I'm one third of the way through my year as your Ms. TGSF. Does it look like I expected? No, not even close. Would I change it? No.

I've been incredibly busy as Ms. TGSF this past month. I think I have been out and about more in the last month that the whole of last year. First off, there have been the education panels. Being Ms. TGSF gave me the final push I needed to do something I had always wanted to do; I wanted to speak on gender panels in schools (and other public venues) and provide what I wish had been available so many years before, honest answers (or any answers for that matter) to questions about LGBT issues. I would have liked to know that I was not alone. I would have liked to know that there was love and support available to me for the asking. Hopefully, as a result of this work, some of the next generation that has this need now knows it's available. Thank you to Marcia Meyer from Triangle Speakers and Rhonda Mitchell from the Billy DeFrank Center for making this possible.

The questions are what I enjoy most. I love to hear from people who are really grappling with these issues. I hear questions about coming out to parents and loved ones. I hear questions from spouses that are trying to make sense of TG issues in their relationships, and learn how to make them work. I hear questions from people struggling with their own sex and gender issues. And I believe that the answers they receive from me and my fellow panelists provide them with the information, support and caring they need to move forward and have happier lives.

Then there is the traveling. I wish I got frequent flyer miles for all of the traveling between events. In the last month I've been as far north as Walnut Creek and as far south as Watsonville. Among the events (often with my Mr. TGSF – thanks for sharing him Faye!) I got to do was an outreach booth at Pagan Alliance in Berkeley (thanks Roxy/Missy) and I was granted an audience at the DVG Fiesta with the famous (or notorious, depending on who you talk with) Didi Mau. She graciously posed for the swimsuit edition of the Channel. She certainly lived up to her reputation. I'm looking forward to seeing if her photo makes it past the censors! Thank you to Ayme Kantz and DVG for putting this great event together!

Oh, and then there was a little thing called Cal Dreamin' in San Jose. Just going to listen to Joanie Sheldon talk about our history was worth the price of admission. The events were informative and well attended, the energy level was fantastic and for the most part they treated me like royalty, except when Carla dispatched me (in my tiara, ballroom corset and floor length formal skirt) to retrieve a hotel luggage cart from the lobby! Thank goodness the photographers were on break! Kudos to Carla and the Cal Dreamin' board for putting this together.

I could go on and on but Alli would kill me if my article made the postage rate for Channel mailing go up so I'll close for now. Next month I can tell you about the TGSF MAC event, the TGSF BBQ, the Ms. TG South Bay event, my budding modeling career for Romantasy Custom Corsetry, the beginning of PRIDE season and . . .

Thank you so much for making me your Ms. TGSF 2006. I love my job!

TGSF Events in June

Friday / June 2

TGSF ExCom Meeting

Will be held at the LGBT Center and will commence at either 6:30 or 7:00. The time will be determined prior to the meeting.

Saturday / June 3

Carla's Monthly Dinner

Carla's Monthly Dinner in June will be at the House of Gengi on Saturday the 4th. Meet at 5:45 at Carla's to carpool, or be at the Genji by 6:30. If you'd like to join Carla's girls at the Genji, please RSVP to Carla at carla@carlas.com or [redacted]

Sunday / June 4

Santa Cruz Pride

Join TGSF as it marches in the Santa Cruz Pride Parade. TGSF will also be sponsoring an Outreach Booth in the celebration area. For more information, contact Jennifer Kennedy at Jennifer.kennedy@tgsf.org or Jennifer Anderson at jennifer.anderson@tgsf.org

Wednesday / June 7 / Begins 7:30pm

Mid Peninsula Support Group

Meets from 7:30 to 9:30 at the Full Circle Bookstore on the El Camino in Belmont. For information, contact Laura Patterson at laura@laurasoft.com

Sunday / June 11

San Jose Pride

For more information about TGSF participation, contact Jennifer Kennedy at Jennifer.kennedy@tgsf.org or Jennifer Anderson at jennifer.anderson@tgsf.org

Thursday / June 15 / Begins 7:00pm

TGSF Mid-Month

Another fun Mid-month is being planned by Katra Briel. It will be held at the Cathedral Hill Hotel in San Francisco on Van Ness at Geary, beginning at 7:00. For more information, please contact Katra at katra.briel@tgsf.org

Thursday / June 22 / Begins 12:00 noon

Compton's Cafeteria Riot Commemoration

The plaque will be placed at the corner of Turk and Taylor in San Francisco. This is a major if relatively unknown part of transgender and LGB history. Join the community as it honors its heroes of the past.

Friday, June 23

Trans March

Join the transgender community as it shows its unity in a march from Dolores Park to Civic Center. TGSF will have a large contingent participating in the march. See notice on Page 11 for all the details.

Saturday & Sunday / June 24-25

San Francisco Pride Celebration

TGSF will sponsor an Outreach booth on both days and will enter a float in the parade on Sunday. Come and march with your friends and family and show your pride in yourself and your community.

Thursday / June 29 / Begins 7:00pm

TGSF End of Month Social

The End of Month will be held on Thursday, May 25th. This will be the first meeting under the newly constituted ExCom. It will be held at the Cathedral Hill Hotel, beginning at 7:00.

June's Birthdays

6/01	Diane Shepard
6/01	Micki Finn
6/02	Nancy Cupps
6/05	Rachel Miller
6/07	Danielle A. DeLeo
6/07	Deadre Thompson
6/09	JubiLLee Jee
6/17	Lynnea Stuart
6/20	Janice Allen
6/21	Anne Louise Mortenson
6/22	Roxy Carmichael-Hart
6/22	Donna Spencer
6/23	JoAnne Handa
6/23	Charley Birimisa
6/27	Brenda Lin
6/28	Rose Ann Cain
6/28	Teri Lee
6/28	Stephanie Ann Blythe

Happy Birthday To All!

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Bay Area Calendar – June 2006

Other Bay Area Groups

Diablo Valley Girls (DVG)
Meets 1st & 3rd Monday every month. 8pm 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 Thursday of every month, 7pm at Rainbow Community Center, 3024 Willow Pass Road in Concord 925-937-8432.

FTM International
Support group for Female-to-Male CDs &TSs; Holds open Informational Meetings and closed Support Meetings. Write FTMI, 160 14th Street, SF, CA 94103; 415-553-5987, or email: info@ftmi.org

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]

Mid-Peninsula TG Group (MPTG)
TGSF-sponsored support group; 7pm, First Wednesday of each month at Full Circle Books in Belmont, CA. Contact Laura Patterson at Laura@laurasoft.com.

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 8pm 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 8pm the 2nd and 4th Saturday 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 Diversity Center (SCDC)
1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7:30pm. All gender-different persons are invited to attend. Primarily a support group for those who are trans-questioning or in transition (MTF & FTM), but all are invited to come and share personal experiences in a safe, caring, and moderated environment. 1117 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95061 • (831) 425-5422

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 TG support group meets at the Billy De Frank Community Ctr in San Jose on the 2nd and 4th Friday of every month from 7-9pm. For more information, call 408-293-2429.

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

T.R.A.N.S
MTF support group meets every Wednesday afternoon 2pm at 1145 Bush Street in San Francisco.

TransSpirit Ministry (TSM)
Gathering @ Metropolitan Community Church of SF, 150 Eureka, SF. Second Friday each month. Potluck dinner, social, and discussion time. For information, contact Dawnne Woodie [redacted]

TransVis-HWD
TransVision Social TG Women meets 7pm, 4th Friday every month. Light refreshments and a wonderful atmosphere. Contact Tiffany at (510) 713-6690, ext. 9.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:00 PM DVG RCC	2 **6:30 PM TGSF: ExCom Meeting** 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	3 **Carla's Monthly Dinner**
4 **Santa Cruz Pride**	5 7:00 PM PISSR General Meeting 8:00 PM DVG	6 7:30 PM SCDC	7 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social **7:30 PM MPTG**	8	9 7:00 PM SVGA **7:00 PM TSM** 8:00 PM PacCtr	10 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA
11 **San Jose Pride**	12	13	14 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	15 **7:00 PM TGSF Mid-Month Social** TG Legal Clinic	16 8:00 PM PacCtr 8:00 PM RGA	17
18	19 8:00 PM DVG	20 7:30 PM SCDC	21 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	22 **12:00 PM Compton's Cafe Ceremony**	23 **6:00 PM TRANZ MARCH!** 7:00 PM SVGA 7:00 PM TransVis-HWD 8:00 PM PacCtr	24 8:00 PM FWW 8:00 PM SGA **San Francisco Pride**
25 **San Francisco Pride**	26	27 7:30 PM SCOUT	28 2:00 PM T.R.A.N.S 7:00 PM I Love It Social	29 **7:00 PM TGSF EOM**	30 8:00 PM PacCtr	

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.

Takin' Care of Biz...

TGSF 2006-07 Election Results

Ballots Distributed	115
Ballots Received	58
Voter Turnout	50.4%

President

Allison Laureano	50	86.2%
Abstain	8	13.8%

Treasurer

Roxy Carmichael-Hart*	29	50.0%
Jessica Connor	25	43.1%
Abstain	4	6.9%

Education

Dawnne Woodie	27	46.6%
Rachael Janelle	26	44.8%
Abstain	5	8.6%

Outreach

Becky Benton	49	84.5%
Abstain	9	15.5%

Social

Katra Briel	53	91.4%
Abstain	5	8.6%

** Resigned*

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.

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for the period May 15 - June 15, 2006

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Bless You and Thank You for Caring!

Contact TGSF!

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Vice President
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Lisa Rae Dummer ..... [redacted]
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Submissions can be made online directly. Cancelling mistakes or for other problems, please contact the Webmistress.

Resolution For Compton's Cafeteria Riot Commemoration Has Passed!

By Cecilia Chung
Commemoration Committee

Hi All:

I tried to stay cool yesterday when the Board of Supervisor passed the resolution but I can't contain my excitement any longer! The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria is now officially recognized by the city of San Francisco as a historical event and we have their endorsement for the commemoration!

I also want to thank Robert Haaland for making this happen, Allison Laureano, Billie-Jean Kanios, Jimmer Cassiol and Marty Rawlins-Fein for coming to the Board meeting yesterday. Of course, without the support of Good Vibrations it would not have happened as smoothly as it did. Pasted below is the language of the resolution:

Resolution recognizing the 1966 Gene Compton's Cafeteria Riot as a significant event in the history of San Francisco and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Civil Rights Movement.

WHEREAS, In 1966 at the Gene Compton's Cafeteria in the Tenderloin transgender people rose up in anger against years of harassment at the hands of the San Francisco police department; and

WHEREAS, The ensuing riot, brought to light in Victor Silverman and Susan Stryker's documentary Screaming Queens, marked the first known instance of collective, militant, queer resistance to the social oppression of transgender people in United States history, three years before the riots at New York City's Stonewall Inn; and

WHEREAS, To this very day, when transgender people face housing, employment and many other forms of discrimination, the Compton's Cafeteria Riot underscores the social cost of the continued oppression and marginalization of transgender people;

WHEREAS, In the summer of 2006, San Franciscans will participate in a series of community-organized events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of this milestone event; and

WHEREAS, The goals of these commemorations are to celebrate transgender history and recognize community leaders and allies, inspire and mobilize a new generation of LGBT community activists, and bring awareness of transgender challenges and accomplishments to a broader audience; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors commemorates the Gene Compton's Cafeteria Riot on its 40th anniversary; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That San Francisco Board of Supervisors recognizes the event and site as significant in the history of the LGBT civil rights movement; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That San Francisco Board of Supervisors supports the Department of Public Works installing a plaque to commemorate the event at an appropriate area at the site.

TGSF Membership Survey Results

By Jennifer Anderson

[Secretary's Preface: We surveyed the members because we wanted to know what they thought and how we could improve TGSF. There was no requirement that we do so, just our sense of duty to the members. It will still take a while to fully compile the results. The following is only an initial summary.]

Once again, on behalf of the TGSF ExCom I would like to thank all of the members who completed our membership survey. Virtually every one who voted also submitted a completed survey. The main thing that this tells us is that our members care very much about what happens in their organization.

We learned from the survey that the primary reasons that members join and stay with us are 1) The Channel (the TGSF newsletter) and 2) our social events. You were fairly evenly divided about whether we had the right amount of events or too few events either in the SF area or the South Bay area. A lot of you thought more SF events would be appropriate and significant numbers of you said that you would like to see events held in the East Bay and the Mid-Peninsula areas.

You sent a very strong message that you would like to see more TGSF educational events. As education co-chair I know that this is already a high priority of the new ExCom and I hope to have news for you after PRIDE season (June) is over. A few of you would like to see more social events and political events. The clear winner on current events you like was the Cotillion with Halloween a distant second.

You are reasonably happy with The Channel as it exists, with 2/3 of you either satisfied or very satisfied. Several of you sent along suggestions for improvement however, which will be forwarded to our Channel editor for further consideration.

The majority of you use our website as a resource at least occasionally, but few of you use the hotline. Improving the quality and usefulness of the website is also a current priority of ours. The vast majority of you are either happy or very happy with their memberships, find them a good value and would recommend TGSF membership to others.

Once again, thank you for your participation and comments. Your feedback will be presented at the next ExCom meeting for further consideration. If you have any questions about the survey results, or if you would like to provide additional comments, please feel free to contact me directly at: Jennifer.Anderson@tgsf.org or you can submit comments about a specific function (e.g. education) to any member of that committee. Contact info is contained in the Channel and on our website.

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Contact the Editor at: [redacted]

Events and Announcements!

New Santa Cruz TG Support Group

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

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

Students, staff, and faculty are all welcome.

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

Questions?

Email **Nic Winter winter@chemistry.ucsc.edu**

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 **roxyhart72903@sbcglobal.net** Thank you!

New Trans Advisory Hotline of America

1-877-427-3230

This will supply anyone in the U.S. with sources of: Referrals for Medical; Gender Therapists; Transgender groups and organizations; Peer support

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

FTM Get-Together and Saturday Brunch

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

trans gender san francisco

tgsf

Mid-Peninsula Support Group

WEDNESDAY, June 7, 2006

Full Circle Books

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

7:30 – 9:30 P.M.

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

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.

TG Health Services Available in Santa Cruz

Beginning in October of this year under a California Endowment Grant, The Diversity Center of Santa Cruz and Planned Parenthood Mar Monte Westside Health Center are jointly working to provide therapy referrals, health care and hormone therapy services to the Santa Cruz transgender community.

They also offer a support group the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month between the hours of 7:30 and 9:30pm at the Diversity Center of Santa Cruz office located at 1117 Soquel Avenue.

For more information about this exciting program, please contact **LuLu Manus** by e-mail **lmanus@diversitycenter.org or (831) 425-5422.**

TransVision Social — Hayward

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

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

Events and Announcements!

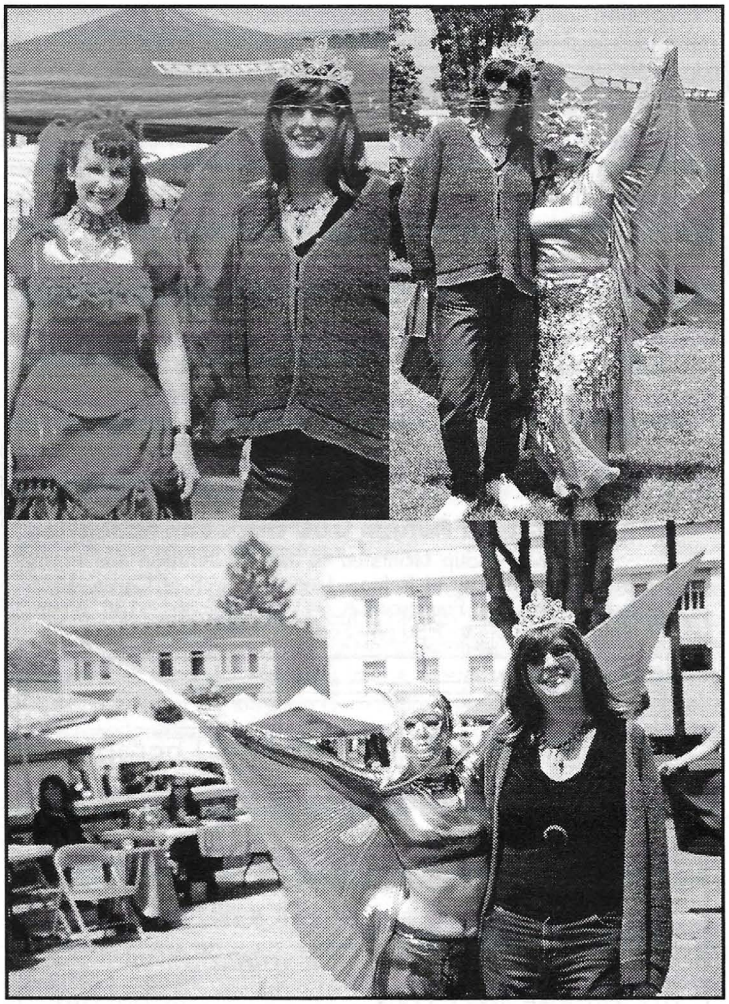
June 9th!

Free Showing of *Transamerica*

Bring your Jujubees and Junior Mints. We'll supply the popcorn and sodas. The Welcoming Congregation Committee at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley is showing the Academy Award nominated film "Transamerica." The date is Friday, June 9, 2006 at 7:00pm. The film will be shown in the Safir Room. Price of admission is your prejudices and preconceptions; free for everyone else.

The UU Church of Berkeley is located at 1 Lawson Rd in Kensington. Directions can be found at: http://www.uucb.org/directions.html. To avoid disturbing other activities taking place at UUCB that evening, watch for signs and arrows directing you to the Safir Room.

Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at [redacted] or [redacted] for further information.



Ms. TGSF 2006 Visits the Pagan Alliance!

Trans March 2006!

Friday June 23rd, the Friday before Pride
3:00pm - 7:00pm Speakers and Performers
7:00pm March
Dolores Park, Dolores and 19th Street.

Calling all Transfolks, Friends, Allies and Admirers!

We are calling for this march to demonstrate that we are a significant and growing portion of the LGBTIQ community; to increase our visibility and presence in the TGIQLB community and the overall community at large; to encourage more trans and gender-variant people to come out; to build connections among ftm, mtf, bayot, crossdressers, sadhin, hijra, transvestites, bantut, drag queens, drag kings, mahu, transsexuals, bakla, travesti, genderqueers, kathoey, two spirit, intersex and those with other labels for themselves and no labels for themselves, those who see gender as having more than two options, and those who live between the existing options; to support one another as a community, through all of our struggles; to speak out against violence, hate, transphobia, and the oppression of any and all of us under the existing social structure; and to be fabulous and powerful in the company of others that are fabulous and powerful. Dress up, show up, bring signs, speak out, and be what happens!

For more info or to volunteer, please contact info@transmarch.org.

The Trans March is an independent, DIY, community event. Please enhance, translate and pass this on to any groups, lists, or individuals who might be interested.

LGBT Community Cookbook

Got an original recipe or family favorite?

Never been published?

Here's your chance to get your original recipe published! You can also include a short 200-word bio about yourself. And you can even help name the book!

Submit your recipes and title suggestions to:

TGCommCB@hotmail.com

Deadline for this edition is August 30th!

Commentary

Final Confessions

By Missy Shake-Zulah

The Last One

Thank you all for your support in my election as Treasurer. I very much appreciate it. However, as most of you know, shortly after the election I resigned my position. I don't want to get into a lot of detail but suffice to say, it was the best decision for me and for TGSF. I made some comments that were taken the wrong way and I apologized to the individual involved. However, I felt that because of this, and because I wasn't a real good fit for the current ExCom, all of our interests would be better served if I stepped down. And so I resigned effective May 6, 2006, right after the Pagan Festival.

I sent my notice of resignation to several individuals who were very helpful to me and who were very supportive during my three years as President. Most of them are icons in our community and whose contributions dwarf anything I did. I was overwhelmed by their response. All thanked me for my service to the community and for my involvement and dedication. They knew that my efforts were sincere and from my heart. Everything I did was for our community, not for my own ego or to pad my resume. Knowing that I helped in some way is all the reward I need. All of the comments and the thanks for help means far more to me than any award I could receive. I never came into this to receive awards – only to help.

The comments I received touched my heart in more ways than you can imagine. Some even begged me to reconsider and to stay because the community needed me. Some said that whatever the problem was, that I would get through it.

Flashback to three years ago. When Rachael Janelle resigned from the presidency under very difficult circumstances, she received dozens of e-mails from people begging her to reconsider, that whatever it was, she would get through it. Her response was "think of me as a butterfly with a broken wing. I need to heal and fly away."

And so I shall.

Dear Ms. Ayme,

Your editorial about the cotillion money losses revived thoughts of a long held personal preference to separate the cotillion from TGSF.

Years ago, even when the cotillion made money, I felt that its very success undermined the fundamental purpose of the club to be a place where trans people could investigate, discuss and express their full feminine (or masculine) identities in safety and with the support of a community of peers; a place in which to grow, to be educated and to educate; with a library and facilities for outreach to the general public and disadvantaged trans communities.

In the early years, when the majority of us lived in hiding and self-doubt, the cotillion launched us, if briefly, out of our fears. In time, however, it morphed into a monster that sapped the club's energy and resources, leaving more prosaic but important functions (the library, outreach, education) to whither. It turned a profit—one year, if I remember correctly, well over a thousand dollars—but at what price? The vice president's time, much of the ExCom's, as well as dozens of members, for months was increasingly and exclusively dedicated to—what? A variety show not as well produced as most of the gay community's drag fests. And when it was over we had to re-gear for the Gay Day Parade.

And so it continues, year after year: Cotillion and parade, cotillion and parade, with all the attendant endless, futile infighting and drama—at a financial loss—as others with far fewer resources make significant history.

Isn't it time to for the cotillion to grow up and go its own way; set up its own governing board; raise its own funds; put on its own show? I believed it a decade ago when I was an active member, and today, as a former member—seeing a club atrophying year by year like a parent drained of life by its adult, dependent child—I wonder if the need is not even more urgent.

Jane Bolig

Significant Other Support East Bay

Questions or concerns about your partner's crossdressing? Please call Julie at **(925) 937-8432**, or e-mail **julie39@comcast.net**, or write to: Julie Freeman, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885.

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.

East Bay Transgender AA

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

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Facing Facts

Edward Guthmann
SF Chronicle Staff Writer

Claire Roberts had tried plastic surgery: two nose jobs, plus a surgical procedure in which her jawbone was shaved down to create a softer contour.

Claire Roberts, before and after facial feminization surgery. She had work done on her forehead, nose, chin, jaw and Adam's apple. Photo by Ron Wurzer, special to the Chronicle

But nothing really worked. A transsexual who decided late in life to transition to female gender, Roberts went to San Francisco plastic surgeon Douglas Ousterhout last fall and requested a new face. She wanted to "pass," which in her case meant altering a Governator jaw, a large nose and a low, protruding brow line that "made me feel about as feminine as one of the females in 'Planet of the Apes.'

"I felt like I could not shift over to a full-time gender position until my face — my identity — was correct," explains Roberts. The 59-year-old Seattle musician and retired business executive is 6 feet tall and has a 25-year-old son. He found out about Ousterhout's innovative facial feminization surgery online and decided to take the leap. The results, five months later, are dramatic: instead of the receding hairline, lantern jaw and (actor) Geoffrey Rush profile, Roberts is a perfectly plausible female.

Ousterhout, who practices at the California Pacific Medical Center's Davies campus on Castro Street, is widely considered the country's foremost facial feminization surgeon. This is because of the cranial and maxillofacial techniques he developed to change the shape of the skull. Unlike most plastic surgeons with their standard menu of tummy tucks, eyelid lifts and rhinoplasties, Ousterhout, 70, brings skills he acquired at the Center for Craniofacial Anomalies at the UCSF Medical Center, where for 25 years he was head surgeon and worked on children born with severe skull deformities. In 1998, when HMOs reduced reimbursements for skull surgery ("I wasn't going to be able to afford my practice"), he switched to female feminization surgery full time.

"Most plastic surgeons aren't bone doctors," Ousterhout says, "and never spend time really analyzing the difference between the female and male skull." None, he claims, delivers the radical results he's achieved with 918 procedures beginning in 1978.

Surgeons who perform the work are rare. Ousterhout declined to estimate the current number, but Chicago plastic surgeon Mark L. Zukowski, who performs 80 to 100 facial feminizations per year, guesses there are "at most 12 (doctors) in the world, with three or four top people." Beverly Hills surgeon Gary Alter, whose practice also includes sexual reassignment and labiaplasty, is one of the more prominent specialists and does about 50 facial feminization operations per year.

For $22,000 to $40,000 — roughly twice the cost of sexual reassignment surgery — Ousterhout's patients undergo as much as 10 1/2 hours of surgery. They remain in the hospital two days after surgery, then transfer to the Cocoon House, a bed-and-breakfast facility run by two nurses in Noe Valley, for eight days of convalescence.

Eighty-five to 90 percent of Ousterhout's patients are transgender. Ninety-five percent come from outside the Bay Area. "I have one patient who wants the surgery so badly," he says. "She's in a coal-mining town somewhere in Kentucky and she says, 'I don't dare dress as a female where anybody can see me. Literally, I'll be killed.' And she's probably right."

Most of Ousterhout's patients, like Stacy Windsor of British Columbia, grew up thinking they were accidents of nature. "I figured out that I was supposed to be a girl when I was 5, when I was in kindergarten," she says. "For some reason there'd been this terrible mistake."

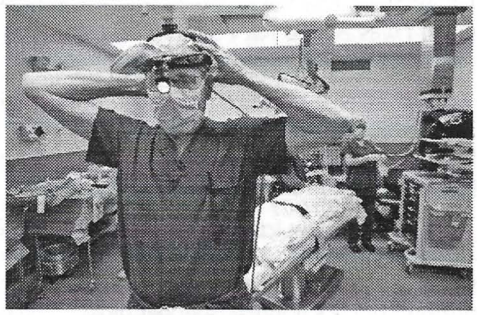
At 24, Windsor (not her real name) is one of Ousterhout's youngest surgical patients. Six feet two and lanky, a computer programmer who started taking female hormones and dressing as a woman at 19, Windsor came to San Francisco after researching Ousterhout on the Internet and reading testimonials.

Her mother, Karen, has flown in from southern Ontario to be at her child's side throughout the surgery and recovery. "She's my baby," Karen says. Not supporting her would be unthinkable, she adds, especially when "one of three transsexuals ends her life before the age of 30."

"It's pretty rare, sadly," Windsor says of her parents' support. "I had read all these horror stories on the Internet saying, 'If you're still living with your parents, be packed and ready to go when you come out to them.' And of course they were both totally fine with it."

Windsor, who looks like Hilary Swank in "Boys Don't Cry" — only much more feminine — is speaking in a private room at Ousterhout's office, its walls covered in plaques and diplomas from Ousterhout's long career. She's nervous about being exposed, especially at work, where everyone assumes she's a biological female. She asks not to be photographed for this story, or identified by her real name.

The procedure, she hopes, will help her not only to pass but also to feel more "integrated" in her female identity. "I'm having the jaw tapered," she says. "And I'm going to have the chin reduced and brought forward."



Dr. Douglas Ousterhout at California Pacific Medical Center. Chronicle photo by Kim Komenich

The male skull, Ousterhout explains, has more hooding over the eyes, whereas females have a more "open, convex orbit." During facial feminization surgery, Ousterhout pulls the face back from the forehead and removes part of the forehead bone, leaving a more feminine contour. The chin, which in men is wider and 20 percent longer than the female mandible, is reduced to female size and shape through a process called a sliding genioplasty. "It's like taking out the salami between two pieces of bread," he says.

"I also don't like the width of my nose," Windsor adds. In fact, it's as masculine and unavoidable as Adrien Brody's. The surgery will also lift her upper lip closer to her nose, allowing for a more feminine smile. It's a subtle difference, Ousterhout says, but men have a vertically longer upper lip than women. It's not noticeable when they smile, but when a man's lips are parted a few millimeters, the upper teeth are hidden. Ousterhout shortens the upper lip by making an incision immediately beneath the sill of the nose.

Continued on Page 17

Gwen Smith: Transmissions

Transmissions

Sugar And Spice, Everything Nice

by Gwendolyn Ann Smith
Bay Area Reporter

One of those questions that non-transgender people seem to love to ask transgender people is this: Do you have any regrets?

It may seem like an innocent enough question, just a bit of idle curiosity. Of course, what they are fishing for – and may not even realize – is some sort of moral superiority. Something that they can hang their own metaphorical hat on, and say, "Oh, that poor person, they went though all that, but they really regret all they missed out on beforehand."

It's all about being sympathetic, yet smug about one's own choices in life.

In the way that they mean it, no, I don't have regrets. This isn't something where regrets really apply in the way some may want. It's not like I'm going to get nostalgic about my days as a male, and all the things over which I don't feel any loss.

I do have one regret, though it's not one that can leave the aforementioned folks feeling smug. It is not at all what they'd be looking for. It's nothing I had – nothing I could ever have had. I just wish I did.

I regret that I never had a proper girlhood.

I had a rough childhood, overall. In many ways, I view my own childhood as a time of victimization, fear, and discomfort. It's a time in my life that, to be honest, I'd rather forget about entirely. It was a childhood where other students beat me nearly every day at my middle school and the only response from those in a position of power was to tell me that I was the one with the problem. I was also sexually abused when I was 8, and felt I had no options open to me at that time. Not exactly an idyllic childhood.

Yet all that ugliness happened during a boyhood, for lack of an appropriate term. I suspect – no, I know – my experiences would have been quite a bit different if the doctors had been there for the birth of a baby girl back in the summer of 1967.

Like me, few transgender people have the opportunity to really claim their childhood in their preferred gender. I know that many male to female transfolks didn't get many opportunities to play with the neighborhood's non-transgender girls. Likewise, I suspect it is the rare female to male who got the opportunity to mix it up with the other boys without being viewed, at best, through the imperfect lens of "tomboy."

I did manage to share experiences with some of my non-transgender women friends. These are times I cherish, like being able to be a part of the local Girl Scout troop as a youngster, or having a favorite doll. Those times are few and far between, though, and when my history is known, requiring explanations and caveats – it's simply not as easy as it comes to others.

I wonder what I missed. What things will I never know, and never understand because I was never a young girl? In how many ways would I be different from the person I am today?

Granted, I'd like to think that the experiences I might have missed out on don't matter. That the decade or so of experiences that I should have spent in my preferred gender – during the years when young people are said to be the most impressionable – can be written off.

Yet there are so many variables are in play. So much would have been different in my life that I can't even begin to point to what would have changed, or how. I seem unable to even speculate on that – there is simply no possible frame of reference. I only suspect that I missed out on a lot: I know that there are things I will never know, experiences I'll never fully understand.

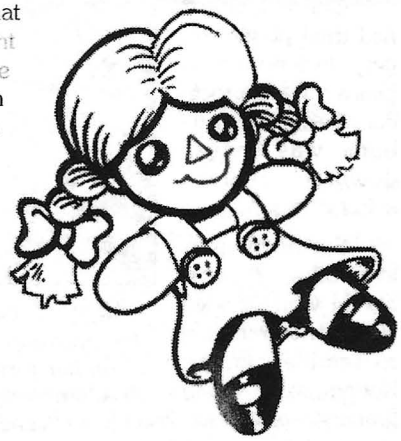


Illustration: Christine Smith

I do know that there are blind spots in my history – if asked by other women – for which I have no answer. For example, I recently had to ask some of my non-transgender female friends about their experiences in gym at school. I was curious just what their experiences were, given that my school carefully segregated gym glass based on gender. Hence, to me, that was all about flag football, baseball, and discomfort in the locker room.

Only the latter seemed to be a universal experience.

This is but one example, of course. Think about your own past, and the experiences you had growing up. How many of those would have been different based strictly on birth gender?

Don't just consider the big, obvious stuff like the aforementioned issue of physical education classes. Think of the more subtle things. Would your parents have had different pet names for you as a kid? Would you have gotten to "shave" with your dad, wielding a bladeless razor? Would mom have braided your hair? In how many ways might family, friends, and anyone else you with whom you came in contact have treated you differently? You very well might be a totally different person than who you are today or, at best, you might be much the same, but with some very different experiences and history behind it all. For myself, I'm sure things would have been quite different.

Regrets? I don't regret the things of my male past: I simply regret that it could not have been a female one from the get-go.

Gwen Smith did indeed sell her share of thin mints and do-si-dos as a kid. She's online at www.gwensmith.com

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Gwen Smith: Transmissions

Transmissions

Digital Trans

by Gwendolyn Ann Smith
Bay Area Reporter

As I type this, I'm riding on the back of a dragon. It's okay, though, she's a friend of mine.

No, this column is not itself about mythical, scaly critters, though it may as well be. What I really want to discuss is the virtual world, and how those of us who are trans – or whatever – have something to gain from it all.

Let me go back a few years. When I was first trying to find exactly where my mind was about gender, I was a member of America Online. I initially had a gender-neutral login name, but switched it out for a handle that echoed the name at the top of this column. With this I was able to, for the first time, associate with other people as a woman, without the baggage of a transgender self.

While I was hardly the most closeted – I've always been a believer in disclosure – this did allow me to make a first impression as a woman. I learned that, as a transgender person, a faceless medium can be the first time one can be taken at face value.

This is not a trifling matter. Many first impressions are based solely on how one looks. People make judgments based on any number of personal characteristics the first moment they lay eyes on you. This is, of course, true for transpeople as well, for whom the issue of gender is often treated as a guessing game by those we happen across. This makes for some very uncomfortable social situations for everyone.

Cyberspace can strip a lot of that away. Instead, first impressions come from one's choice of login names. Someone with "carnut523" as a login is giving a pretty clear indication that they might be a fan of automobiles, and a person with "Ralph713" for a handle is sending a gendered message based on their choice of name. The same can be said for those services that allow for the selection of a gender option: one click of a radio button is a very easy way to change gender.

In many ways, this medium allowed me to socially interact in my preferred gender, and allowed me to learn how to socially interact as such. It gave me the basic social skills that I needed outside of the digital world. Moreover, it can help you to discover if such really is the right step for you even before taking things outside of cyberspace.

Of course, things have changed since I first came out all those years ago. The simplicity of text-based chat has given way to systems with fully developed, three-dimensional avatars representing you within the virtual world.

In many of these systems – typically massively multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPGs) – one can create a character that not only provides the name, but a face and body to go along. A being of digital flesh and blood to which you give life.

I am most familiar with one of these worlds – Second Life, a free-form MMORPG that allows for any number of virtual settings – though I'm sure my experiences are applicable to many others. In this particular system, one has a virtual free reign over who or what they can choose to be, down to the length of one's eyelashes or the depth of the cleft of one's chin.

As I explained to a friend of mine, while reclining on cushions in a marble-columned tower alongside a Mediterranean shore made up of nothing more than pixels on my computer monitor, these sort of worlds are the next evolution in this digital frontier.

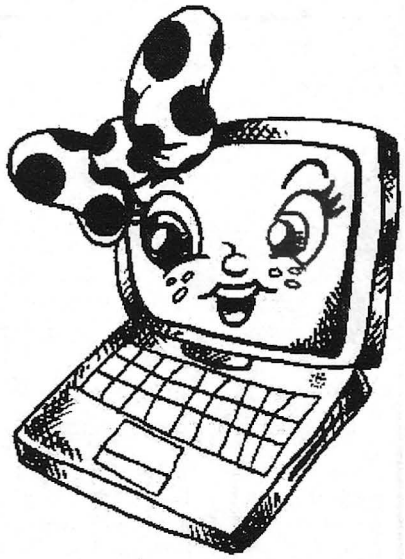

Illustration: Christine Smith

Not only are you free to simply take a different gender, you can take more than one. Or none. Or something else entirely. You can be a human, or any real or imaginary beast or being you can envision. You can be a member of any profession, social strata, or historical era. You can even be any age you desire. All options are on the table.

Moreover, the concept of one's real identity is largely hidden by the game. You embody your character, and the person you are behind the keyboard need not be present. You simply are who or what you say you are.

Among my dearest friends in that world are a teenaged bat, a mouse, a goth, a 4-year-old, and the aforementioned dragon. Clearly, we're talking far beyond the simple matter of a different gender presentation: we're talking about whole new being.

From there, at least within Second Life, you take your new self out and interact as such. Because it is a visual medium, people can see a face to go with the name, and interact with you based, as I mentioned above, on the appearance you put forth. If you are a woman, you'll be seen as one. If you are a man, you'll be seen as one. If you play a giant purple robotic orangutan, people will indeed treat you as such. That is, however one interacts with giant purple robotic orangutans.

Imagine the possibilities. You can be whatever you desire, and you can relate to other real people – who are being whatever they wish to be – within your being of choice. As a confirmed addict, I will tell you that its an incredible way to explore parts of yourself that real world impracticalities may prevent, and have fun doing so.

At the least, you may find out new things about your own gender identity in the process.

Gwen Smith has long called herself a child of the Internet: it is clearly still true. She's online at www.gwensmith.com

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Facing Facts...

Continued from Page 13

Last of all, the most obvious factor and biggest giveaway for transsexuals is the thyroid cartilage, or Adam's apple. While many surgeons make a small transverse incision in the front of the neck, immediately above the cartilage prominence, Ousterhout approaches it through an incision just behind the chin to leave less obvious scarring.

Eight days after her surgery, a few hours after her sutures and bandages are removed, Windsor welcomes me to the Cocoon House, where she's been napping and blunting the post-op edge with a series of gradually less potent pain pills. Her face is a bit pumpkin-like with orange and purple bruises and swelling around her nose, chin and jaw. Her voice is a tad weary.

"It's a horribly painful operation to recover from," Stacy says. "I was under anesthesia 13 hours. Transplants don't take 13 hours!" When the bandages were removed and she saw her new face, "I popped a Valium. It's such a huge change from how I looked before." For the next six weeks, Stacy has to take saline nasal spray six times a day. She can't wear glasses, a bicycle helmet or any kind of protective headgear for six months. Six days after our last visit, she sends an e-mail from British Columbia:

"My scalp incision shed a lot of hair around the edges, making me sensitive about people noticing it. And there's new stubble there, which will be a complete pain in the butt to style in about a month. I can't pluck my eyebrows because of risk of infection. ... I basically look like Stalin, or Bert from 'Sesame Street.'

"It's all stuff that's going to be just fine in the long term," she adds. "It's just gross now."

Stacy sees the facial surgery as being more about identity than vanity. She was homeless and on drugs two years ago, and says the expensive procedure — $35,000 in her case — was possible only because a family friend volunteered to front the cash. "Even if I'd found work in a field where I did well financially, it would've taken 10 years to save that much money."

"Ten really difficult years," her mother adds.

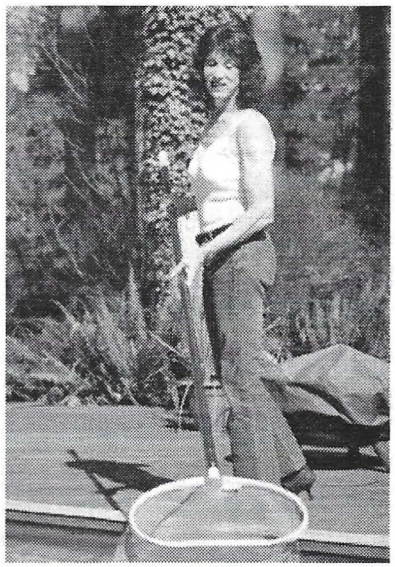
"I have a new opportunity here with the new face," Stacy says. "For the majority of Dr. O's patients, it's the difference between a very successful life and a sad and lonely, little life."

Not everyone agrees that FFS is desirable for transitioning transsexuals. San Francisco entertainer Veronica Klaus had genital reassignment surgery and breast augmentation but decided against facial surgery. "While I think it can be an important step in realizing one's potential, it's more important that one's self-esteem come first from the inside."

Lannie Rose, a San Jose author and transgender person, recommends facial feminization surgery only "if you have particularly masculine features and are having a difficult time passing in most circumstances." In her book, "How to Change Your Sex," Rose warns, "Although FFS is startlingly effective in feminizing the face, it only creates confusion if you wind up with a feminine-looking face on top of a linebacker's body; or very feminine features on a face that's still too damn large."

She's got a point: Think of Roberta Muldoon, the professional football player-turned-lady played by John Lithgow in "The World According to Garp." Or Roy "Ruth" Applewood, a Midwestern husband and dad, played by the bearish Tom Wilkinson, who shocks his family by coming out as transgender in the cable drama "Normal."

In fact, Ousterhout says, the size of the face is modified through FFS: "By reducing the forehead length through scalp advancement to a female position, and by reducing the vertical height of the chin in the sliding genioplasty, the face is made smaller in all regards."

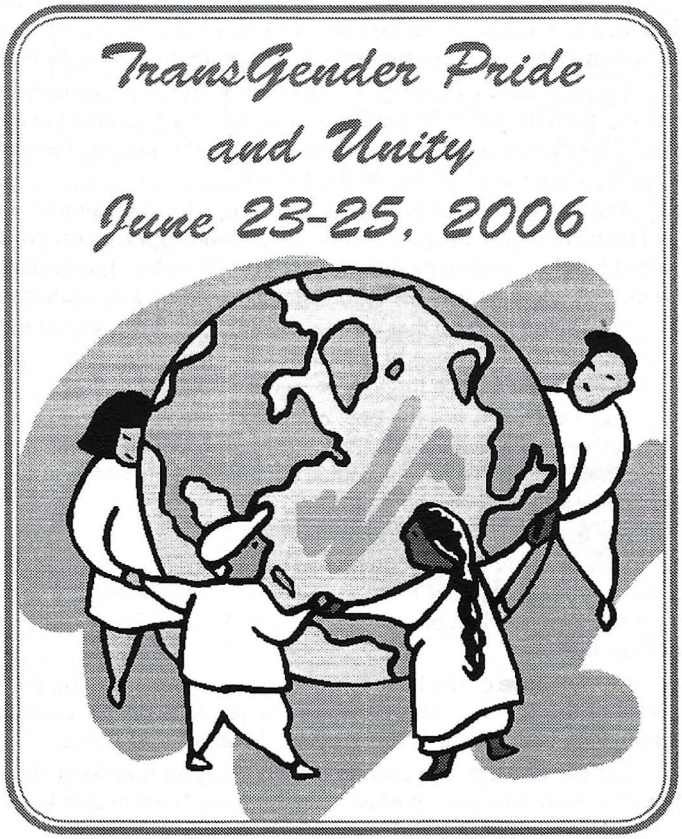


Patient Claire Roberts at home in Duvall, Wash. Photo by Ron Wurzer, special to the Chronicle

For patients like Roberts, who go through life thinking of themselves as women despite a body that claims otherwise and then gradually find the courage to make the transition, Ousterhout's makeovers are life-changers. "The best way to describe this procedure and its impact on my life is that for the first time in 59 years my outside looks something like my inside."

Before FFS, Roberts says, "I thought I was ugly. I finally figured out that I didn't regard myself as ugly, but rather 'wrong.' The image in the picture was not me. Now it is, and that fact is so profound for me that I am still giddy from it!"

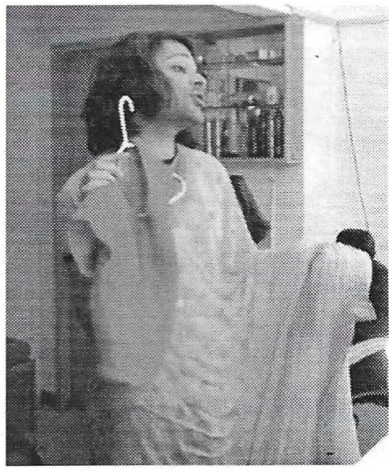
When the work was finished and she looked in the mirror, Roberts adds, "I said, 'Oh my God, I look like my mother!' While most women make this statement with chagrin, I made it with real joy. Actually, it's quite an overstatement since my mother was truly beautiful — but I can now see much of her is in me, which touches me deeply."



Pakistan's Late-Night, Cross-Dressing TV Star

Declan Walsh, SF Chronicle Foreign Service

Karachi, Pakistan — By day, Ali Salim's chin is covered with stubble. He wears scruffy jeans and feeds his taste for cigarettes. But at night he puts on a sequined sari and high heels and transforms himself into Nawazish Ali — catty chat-show queen and South Asia's first cross-dressing television host.



Ali Salim undergoes the transformation into Begum Nawazish Ali, Pakistan's late-night talk show hostess in a Karachi studio. Photo by Declan Walsh, special to the Chronicle

"She's every woman's inspiration and every man's fancy," said 27-year-old actor Salim, his nails painted gold and his eyebrows plucked after filming the latest episode of "Late Night with Begum Nawazish Ali," a risque show at the leading edge of Pakistan's unlikely television boom.

His creation — a snobby, gossipy middle-aged woman who flirts with her guests and flashes her dead husband's jewels — has captivated a young audience eager for satirization of Pakistan's staid politicians and unafraid of sexual ambivalence.

The show is perhaps the most notable example of a television explosion triggered four years ago when Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf ordered deregulation of the airwaves. It is also pushing at the boundaries of what is considered acceptable in this conservative country.

Every Saturday night, politicians, show-business types and even Islamic leaders crowd onto Begum (Mrs.) Ali's velveteen couch for conversation that veers from sympathetic to smutty to downright bitchy.

On one recent evening, Ali sneered at the lipstick worn by an actress, then turned to Aitzaz Ehsan, a well-know Supreme Court lawyer. "Would you mind if I call you 'Easy'?" she purred, batting her eyelids. "It's so much easier on the tongue."

Another guest was Naimatullah Khan, a former Karachi mayor and member of the Jamaat-e-Islami party. Khan appeared on the show seated beside a leading model, although he, like other guests, claimed he did not know he was going to be interviewed by a cross-dresser.

"I'm trying to show that we can all connect," Salim said at the Aaj television studios in Karachi, Pakistan's bustling largest city. "At the end of the day it's like a threesome — it's an awesome time."

Salim's show is not the only one that is revolutionizing television viewing — and exerting growing influence — in this Islamic society. More than 40 stations have sprouted up, and the larger ones now wield powerful clout in news and politics.

For example, a recent report on Geo TV, the largest private station, about two teenage boys who had been unjustly imprisoned caused the country's chief justice to intervene to get them released. "I've never seen so much freedom of expression," said Azhar Abbas, head of news at Geo TV.

Conservative clerics have taken to the airwaves, debating the finer points of the Quran. "You even see the religious people coming on screen with better haircuts and trimmed beards," said Abbas.

But the concept of a man in drag hosting an hour-long show on Saturday night has really pushed some buttons. "I am in shock," wrote one blogger on a local Web site shortly after the launch of "Late Night" eight months ago.

Fans say the show is a breath of fresh air but admit the pun-driven humor sometimes wears thin. "The fact it exists is worthy of celebration, but what it does is not that hot," said Ali Dayan Hasan, a human rights activist.

Salim says the show gives a light, frivolous face to Pakistan — in contrast to the images of poverty, fanaticism and abuse of women he says Western media tend to focus on.

"Every time I turn on BBC or Fox News, there are bombs going off in Pakistan. It's so pathetic. But we are a people with a rich culture and a rich tradition. And we are people who just want to have fun," he said.

There is also a sharp political sensibility behind the saucy humor. Begum Nawazish Ali pokes fun at Musharraf, President Bush and Pakistan's religious right. "That's why we wanted to do it in character — because she can get away with things a real person cannot," he said.

The son of an army colonel, Salim started off with impersonations of Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister now living in exile in Dubai.

"She represented hope, that the sun would rise in this part of the world. Even today I respect her. So the Begum is pro-Benazir," he said, adding with a Nawazish-like titter, "although I do find the general (Musharraf) very handsome."

Celebrities, politicians and national figures such as Mukhtaran Bibi, a gang-rape victim turned human rights activist, have flocked to the show. Imran Khan, the playboy cricket star turned conservative politician, has been a notable exception.

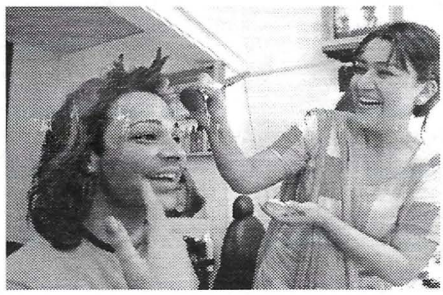


Photo2: With a taste for sequined saris and satire, Begum Nawazish Ali, the creation of Ali Salim, dresses. Photo by Declan Walsh, special to the Chronicle

"Anyone with too many skeletons won't come onto the show," said Salim with a grin.

His character frequently has been compared with Dame Edna Everage, the cross-dressing creation of Australian comedian Barry Humphries. Salim says he is honored by the comparison, though he has seen only stills of Dame Edna on the Internet. "From what I know, we are not the same. Her show is loud and brash; mine is more soft and sober. It's not about a guy in drag, it's about the woman in me."

As a child, Salim says, he fantasized about growing up to be a woman. Yet he spurns any association with hijras, Pakistan's "third sex" of cross-dressing men, eunuchs and hermaphrodites.

"This whole conversation about sexuality is so passe, darling. There is no similarity or comparison with hijra. They are deprived men with no sexual identity, not seen as a man or a woman," he said.

Salim says he has neither a boyfriend nor a girlfriend, although he joked that the director's wife "worries I will steal him off her."

The show has received no hate mail, he said. But that doesn't mean it suffers from the biggest television crime — being dull.

"That's why people relate to the show. She does things others will never do," Salim said. "But my only agenda is love. Live life to the fullest, and live it to the best."

The Surgery You Never Wanted

Born somewhere between male and female, intersex people face unique gender identity issues, especially if "normalizing" surgeries were imposed on them at a young age. Part 3 of The Advocate's ongoing transgender series

By Joanne Herman
Advocate.com

The woman giving the presentation at the front of the room is as curvy as can be. So imagine my surprise when she reveals that she has XY chromosomes and has not had surgery to create those curves! And yet, she did have surgery at birth to remove her undescended testes, long before she was capable of authorizing the surgery. What in the world is going on here?

Welcome to the world of intersex people. The Intersex Society of North America (www.isna.org) describes an intersex condition as being "born with an anatomy that someone decided is not standard male or female." Many intersex people have "normalizing" surgeries imposed on them when they are too young to grant permission, and then spend the rest of their lives struggling to heal from those surgeries.

In that struggle they often encounter issues based upon their gender identity and gender expression, and those struggles sometimes result in intersex people being included under the transgender umbrella. Whether or not that is appropriate, their situation is certainly worth a few words. (And if you ever see "LGBTI," this is the I.)

There are many different types of intersex conditions. These conditions can result in women without ovaries, clitorises, and/or inner labia, and men without testes. They include people whose genitals are ambiguous, and people with chromosomes that are neither XX nor XY. And they include any baby with testicles whose penis is too short, and any baby without testicles whose clitoris is too large.

Feminist biologist Anne Fausto-Sterling has estimated that 1 or 2 in 1,000 have surgery to "normalize" genital appearance long before the children understand what is going on. Parents authorize the surgeries, desperate to avoid the "shame" of a child who does not conform to the gender binary, and the medical profession is only too happy to comply. Parents are then instructed to socialize the child as the gender that the child was made into, which, as you might guess, is disproportionately female. Parents are told to never tell the child about the surgery. Call it "Spin Control, Home Edition."

This flawed treatment protocol is based largely on work done at Johns Hopkins University in the 1950s and 1960s that purported to show nurture was more important than nature in raising a child. We have since learned that people have a very strong perception of the gender they are—their "gender identity"—regardless of their upbringing. And a high-profile case that initially served as support for the Hopkins work—of a boy raised as a girl after a botched circumcision—later took a dramatic turn to make it convincing evidence to the contrary.

The story of David Reimer is documented in John Colapinto's recent biography As Nature Made Him. All the while that David was being referred to as a success story by psychologist John Money at Johns Hopkins, David was clearly uncomfortable living as a girl and was refusing the recommended subsequent surgery to create a vagina. When David learned the truth about his botched circumcision at age 14, he quickly transitioned to live as a boy.

A 2004 study, conducted by another scientist at Johns Hopkins and published in The New England Journal of Medicine, offered more proof to the contrary. The study followed 16 cases of children who were genetically and hormonally male but were born with a very small or absent penis. Of the 16, 14 were given female hormones and raised as girls. Years later, researchers found all 16 to be behaving as boys no matter how they were raised, with eight of them now declaring themselves male.

What causes intersexuality? It's often just the normal course of nature—there's much more gender-and sex diversity in the human species than we were taught in school. But there is also evidence showing that exposure to certain chemicals while in utero can alter physical and genetic sex. Deborah Rudacille explores this possibility at length in her excellent book The Riddle of Gender. In one example she cites the surprising tendency of the sons of moms who took the synthetic estrogen supplement DES during pregnancy to have intersex conditions.

Intersex people who ultimately learn (and most do) that they underwent "normalizing" surgeries are left to feel as if they are anything but normal as a result. They feel rejected as the people they were at birth. They are also hindered in developing intimate relationships because the surgeries usually damage sexual sensation. And should the gender imposed on them in their early years turn out to be the wrong one, they often feel no choice but to undergo a gender transition to undo a choice that their parents and the medical community made for them.

Yes, intersex people show us a compelling example of how a strict, unwavering adherence to the gender binary can cause far more damage than good.

Herman is the first transgender member of the boards of the Point Foundation, a scholarship lifeline for LGBT college students, and of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, the New England LGBT rights and legal organization that brought same-sex marriage to Massachusetts. She is also a member of the advisory board of the National Center for Transgender Equality. Find more information about these organizations at www.thepointfoundation.org, www.glad.org, and www.nctequality.org.

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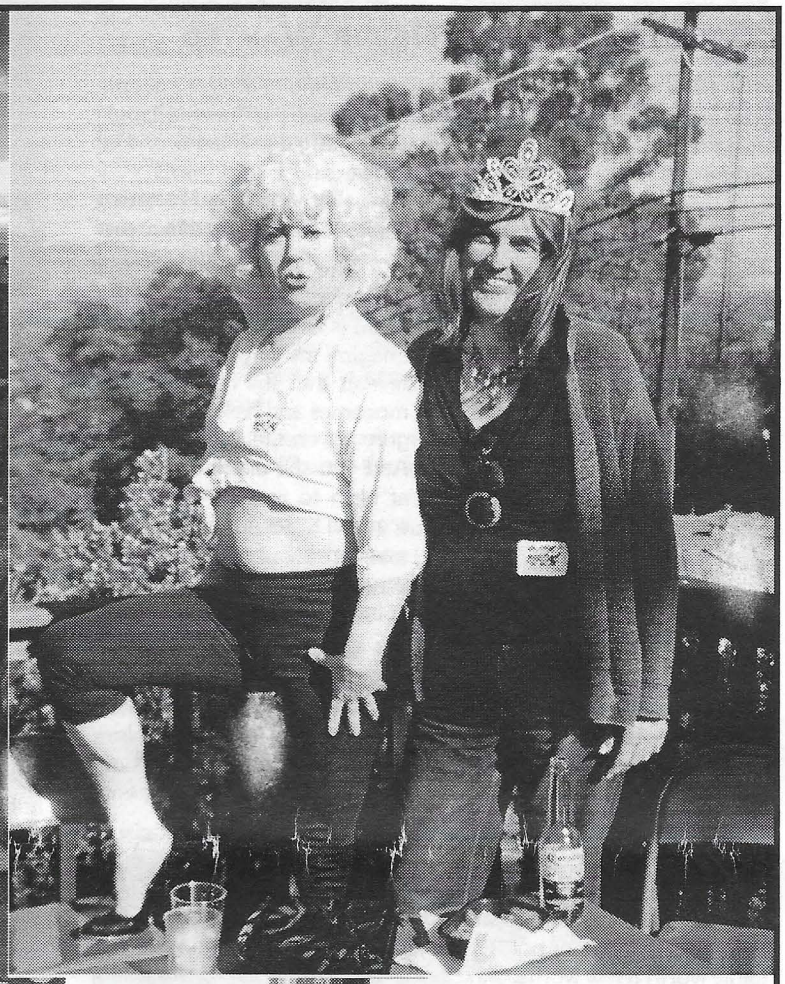

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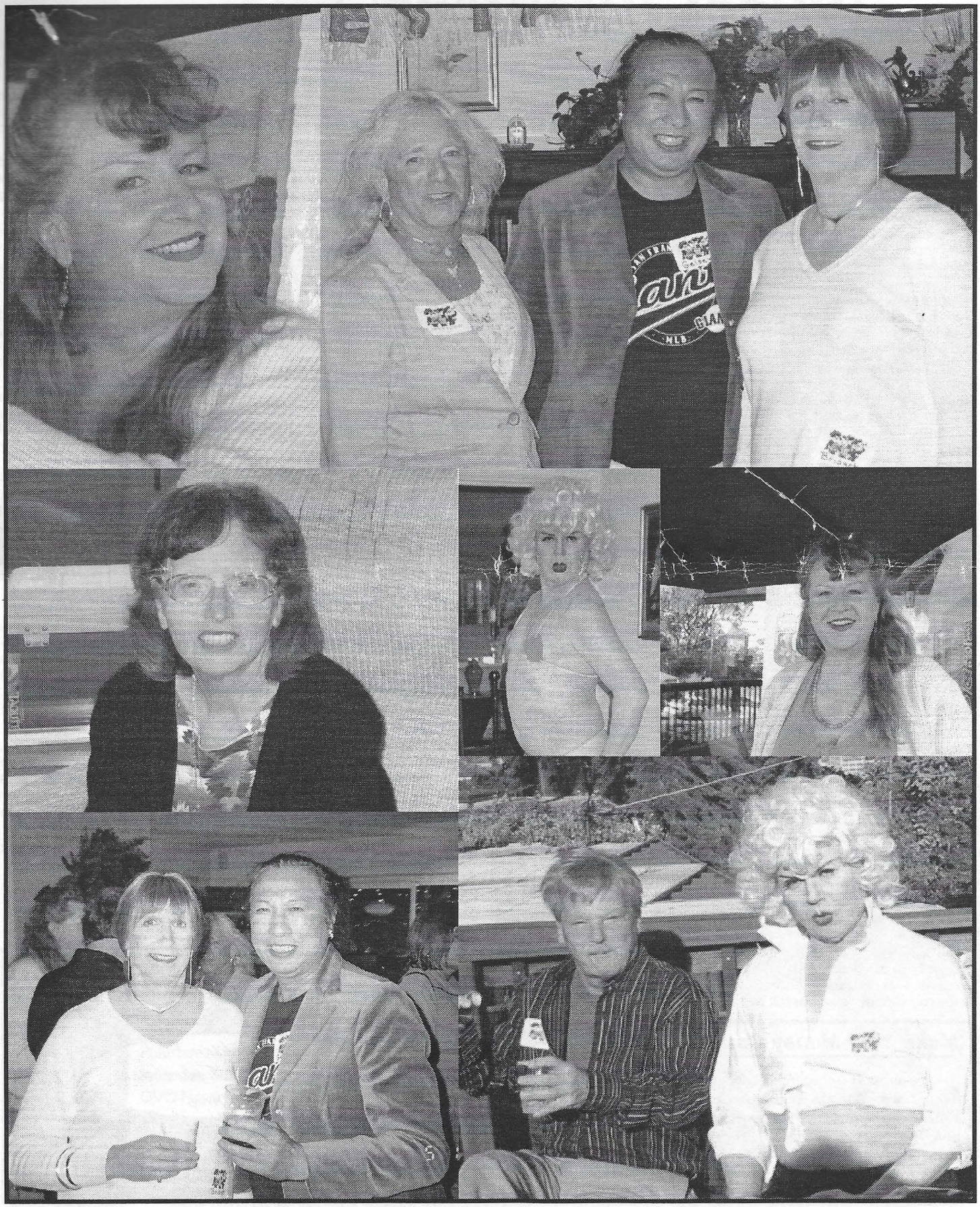

Transsexual Describes Female-To-Male Transformation

By Faye Flam
Seattle Times

What makes a man a man? How much of our sex differences are cultural, how much hard-wired biology? Who better to ask than Max Wolf Valerio — a 49-year-old man who was once a woman?

You're probably asking yourself the same questions everyone asked me when I said I was writing about a female-to-male transsexual: Did doctors attach a penis, and does it work? We'll get to that, but, as Valerio discovered, maleness is not nearly as phallocentric as Freud would have us believe.

Masculinity, Valerio says, is hormonal and injectable. Testosterone alone was enough to take him most of the way through his one-way journey to manhood, which he chronicles in "The Testosterone Files," to be released this month by Seal Press.

Born as a girl named Anita, she thought she was a boy and only reluctantly accepted being a very tomboyish girl. She grew into a tall and exotic redhead — part Hispanic, part Blackfoot Indian — who favored black hair dye and motorcycle jackets.

Now, as Max, he says, no one ever thinks he's anything but a guy. When he goes to transsexual meetings, people either don't know why he's there or assume he's trying to become a woman. He wrote the book, he says, to offer his perspective on the nature of masculinity and femininity, culture and biology, and the war between the sexes.

Valerio had always been attracted exclusively to women. But living in San Francisco, she realized over time that she was different from other lesbians. "I thought all lesbians really wanted to be men," Valerio says. She didn't like to be touched sexually because she needed to fantasize that she was a man. And unlike her lesbian friends, she was turned on by traditionally feminine women who wore high heels, makeup and short skirts.

Still, friends thought she was crazy to consider a sex change. Few had heard of female-to-male transsexuals in the early 1980s. She was good-looking, they insisted. Why risk ending up looking like Julie Andrews in a fake mustache?

But at 32, she started injecting testosterone directly into her thigh. In the next few months of injections, her jawline and waist filled out, a beard grew, and her muscles hardened and bulked up. She developed a ravenous appetite, and her voice changed to a natural male one.

Living as a man, he eventually had his breasts removed. Seventeen years later, at 49, he still has had no surgery on his genitals. The hormones enlarged Valerio's clitoris so much that it grew to the size of his thumb when erect. He says it looks much like a penis now, and he uses it to have intercourse with his girlfriend.

Testosterone does make the clitoris grow, and using it for sex this way is "increasingly typical" for newly male transsexuals, says Marci Bowers, a Colorado surgeon and expert on sex change. A few opt for surgery that constructs a penis from a tissue graft, she says, but it's an expensive procedure. Others have a simpler operation called a metoidioplasty, which extends the clitoris and makes it more penislike.

But for Valerio, the real surprise was the way testosterone transformed his brain. "If I looked at an object, it seemed more defined, more three-dimensional," he says. Words came with more effort, and emotions became harder to articulate. His sex drive soared.

When Valerio was still Anita, she and her lesbian friends thought men's leering, lustful behavior was nothing but posturing. Now, he's felt male lust for himself.

Scientists have studied transsexuals seeking clues to male-female brain differences. Ruben and Raquel Gur of the University of Pennsylvania worked with a female-to-male transsexual, also named Max, and found that as the testosterone kicked in, he improved on spatial-skills tests but got worse in verbal fluency.

Their findings back up larger studies from Europe, offering tantalizing hints to our inborn differences. Valerio's transformation also points to where we are the same — in our creative drives, intellectual curiosity and humanity. Despite all the changes, he says, "I'm still basically the same person."

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How Hormones Wire The Minds...

Continued from Page 2

brain on both sides, the amygdala amplifies memories that are pleasant or frightening. It tells the hippocampus, where memories are put together to be stored, which memories need to be most tightly locked in place. It will never let you forget what you were doing when you won the lottery or where you were on Sept. 11.

Cahill and his colleagues found that the amygdala works differently in men and women, which may help explain why women are more likely to develop mood disorders such as depression and men are more prone to alcoholism and drug abuse.

In one experiment, Cahill showed that when men and women watched the same emotional movie, the right side of the amygdala was more active in men, and the left amygdala was more active in women. "They're using very different brain processes to create enhanced memories," he said.

The right amygdala is more in tune to the outside environment, communicating with the visual cortex, which controls vision, and the striatum, which coordinates motor actions. These processes are thought to be key to spatial orientation—knowing how to negotiate your surroundings, as in hunting.

The left amygdala is concentrated more on the inner environment of the body, connecting with the insular cortex, which produces emotionally relevant content from sensory experiences, and the hypothalamus' regulation of the body's metabolic and autonomic activities. Scientists speculate that this is important for the female capacity for nurturing.

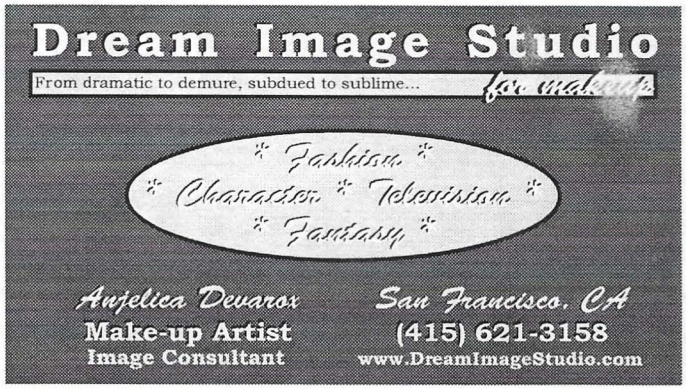
A second study by Cahill involved the beta blocker propranolol, a drug used to treat high blood pressure that also has been found to greatly reduce the activity of the amygdala. Because it subdues emotional arousal propranolol is being studied as a way to reduce the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder.

In Cahill's experiment, normal subjects were given propranolol before seeing an emotionally disturbing movie about a boy run over by a car. Cahill found that women on the drug were able to remember the central idea of the story, such as that the boy was with his mother, but fewer of the details. Men, on the other hand, remembered more details, like the soccer ball the boy was holding, but less of the essence of the story. "The drug impaired memory for the details of the emotional story in women but not men, and it impaired memory for the gist of the story in men but not women," Cahill said.

One possible explanation for why women tend to be less aggressive than men is that they may be better able to filter out overly arousing feelings. The front part of the brain, which controls emotions, is bigger in women than in men when compared with the size of the amygdala, where experiences get their emotional charge.

That difference may be why women are less prone than men to fly off the handle, Cahill said.

Scientists also have made new discoveries about growth hormone, whose chief job was thought to be to build the body. But researchers have found the hormone is produced not only in the pituitary gland but also in the brain, in the hippocampus.

That suggests the hormone plays a previously unsuspected role in learning and emotions.

Said Shors: "Sex hormones, like estrogen, have a tremendous effect on the growth and architecture of the brain."