

# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 9, Issue 1

Houston, Texas

January, 2001

*TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.*

## GAY / LESBIAN CHAMBER ELECTS SARAH ROOK AS VICE PRESIDENT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

A bit of local transgender history occurred last month, and it almost went unnoticed. In December, the Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (GHGLCC) held their annual elections, and quietly voted in TATS member Sara Rook as their Vice President. This marks the first instance of a GLBT organization electing a transgender into their number two position.

It was just one short year ago that the Chamber voted in its first transgender board member, Phyllis Frye. Sara joined the board later, during the course of this past year.

"I was very surprised when I was nominated in the first place," proclaimed a very proud Sara. "There were 2 of us nominated for [vice president] so I figured I wouldn't get it being the new kid on the block." However, it was her hard work over the year that put her over the top. "I found out I got the second most votes" ever for any board nominee in the Chamber!

Former Chamber boardmember, Phyllis Frye applauded the election, saying "its placing a TG in such a slot speaks volumes for the Chamber's commitment to diversity and inclusion." The most adamant and vocal stalwart of the Chamber's 'non-inclusion days', Ms. Frye also added that the local transgender community's



"growing number of quality out folks to be considered for leadership slots is a plus."

Yet, this was not merely a token position for a transgender. After the election a still stunned Sara had to ask the inevitable: was I elected to this merely because I was transgendered? "I was elected," gushed a proud Sara, "because of my achievements as a human being and not because I was a TG person."

Indeed, Ms. Rook has been quietly very

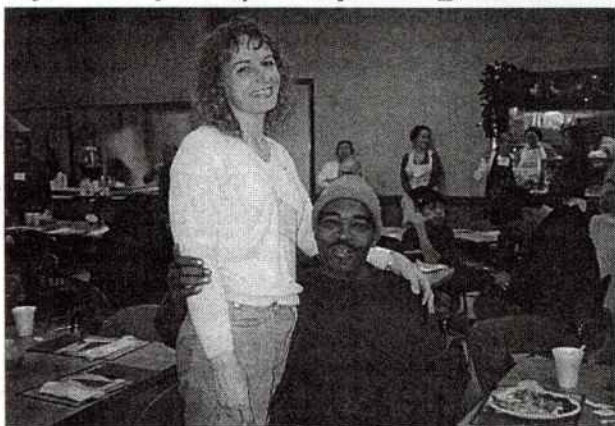


Historic election: Sara Rook (at left) is elected the first transgender as Vice President of the Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Above, Sara (C) with friends, staffing the Shell booth at the Chamber's annual Empower event this past September.

active in Houston over the past year. For the past three years, Sara has been a member of Sea Shell – a gay and lesbian employee organization within Shell Oil. Transitioning in "red-neck-a-plenty" environs was not easy for her. But she has steadily worked through the system with the good-ol-boy co-workers, and also with the Sea Shell in order to seek transgender inclusion in the

(Continued on Page 4)

## Home For The Holidays...Wherever That May Be



By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Christmas evokes different things in us all: happiness or depression, receiving presents or giving of oneself, entertaining guests or enjoying quiet moments at home. True to that, for TATS members it's no different. We spent the holiday month in a variety of ways. But as the title of the article stated, wherever we were

(Continued on Page 5)

Vanessa (L) gets a hug for Christmas at Salvation Army's Family Center dinner.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| January 13  | Feelings Meeting at:<br>Sarah Jane Connell's House @ 3 PM |
| January 27  | Social Meeting at:<br>Transgender Community Ctr. @ 7 PM   |
| February 10 | Feelings Meeting at:<br>Transgender Community Ctr. @ 3 PM |
| February 24 | Social Meeting at:<br>Transgender Community Ctr. @ 7 PM   |

T. A. T. S.  
P. O. Box 142  
Bellaire, Texas 77401



## **TATS Officers**

[ vacant ]  
President

**Melanie Black**  
Vice President

**Sarah Jane Connell**  
Secretary / Treasurer

**Vanessa Edwards Foster**  
Newsletter Editor

## **TATS Board Members**

**Monica Roberts**

**Vikki Lynn Skelton**

**Alicia Beckman**



## **HOW TO REACH US:**

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (281) 437-2975 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.genderweb.org/~tats/>

Articles in this newsletter may be reprinted by other non-profit TG groups provided a copy is sent to TATS, Inc. within 2 months, and proper credit is given the author. Opinions contained in this newsletter are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of TATS.

## **EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**S**o this was Christmas ... and what have we done? Another year over ... and a new one just begun.... It's a fitting (if paraphrased) quote – wrapping up the end of the year and the end of the millennium. It's also fitting to close the month with a lyric from the artist whose lyric opened last month's editorial: John Lennon, who was killed twenty years ago on December 8. It's tough enough to think of John Lennon being gone, but it's really hard to believe that it's been two full decades since his murder. A generation of high school graduates last year grew up knowing of John Lennon as nothing more than a vague historical figure ... someone who died before they were even born.

Truth be told, the anniversary of Lennon's death was one of the big factors in a personal bout of depression this past month. It was tough. Some of that might arguably be attributed to feeling my age – the end of the Era of Youth! The funny thing is, it didn't seem to make much sense to allow that to bother me. Why get this torn up about it twenty years later? If someone had asked, I probably couldn't have really explained it credibly. I'd have likely appeared to be a blithering fool.

Even by explaining this now, I don't know that many of you will understand. People referred to the death of JFK as 'the end of camelot,' or 'the end of the innocence.' I was only six when he was assassinated – too young to grasp why there was the level of grief exhibited. I couldn't relate.

At about that same time, the Beatles released their first hit; thus beginning their sweeping dominance of the American music scene. Music, I could relate to. Music, I remembered. And I loved the Beatles, even at that age!

For a lot of the older generation (older compared to us children of the 60's – who are now the older generation ourselves), the Beatles signaled the end of the innocence of "Rock & Roll." The Beatles were the first band with long hair and defiant styles, the first band who openly dabbled in taboo drugs and psychedelia, the first band to start out pop, then go counterculture. They were also the first band to explore mysticism, transcendentalism and non-mainstream eastern religions. It was John Lennon who glibly commented about the Beatles being more popular than Jesus.

This one comment released numerous evangelical protests that burned thousands of Beatles albums in ritualistic bonfires around the nation.



Most people took the quote to be what it was – a flip comment from a heady young rock star. But the evangelicals took it to be something else: a full assault on Christianity. Thus, the battle engaged.

While the Beatles at that particular time may not have seemed all that innocent, as a child growing up, that music to me was innocence. Certainly, relative to today's versions of misogynistic, racist and homophobic rap and shock rock, the Beatles seem quaint and almost pristine by comparison. Songs with lyrics speaking to the almost-obligatory (for that era) love, hope, peace, self-empowerment, and even beyond that to examining social issues with a genuine conscience (e.g. aging concerns in "When I'm 64", loneliness in "Eleanor Rigby", antisocial behavior in "Nowhere Man"), had bonafide qualities that spoke to my generation and to me. As blunt or as coarse as they may have appeared to some, the Beatles – especially John Lennon – sought to cut through the bullshit to something more pure: the truth.

So the night that John Lennon was shot was the end of an era for my generation. Now, even mere citizens were not safe. Suddenly, innocence was gone. When Steve Ray Vaughan died, I shed tears; but when John Lennon died, I shed none. For weeks I was in a morose state of shock ... numb.

So why is this grief triggered now – this twenty-year delayed reaction? Though I'm no psychoanalyst, and don't pretend to be, the only conclusion I can come to is it's another end of an era. True, the year 200 occurred a year ago, and I even reported on feeling antilimactic – I didn't really see what all the hubbub was about. As opposed to the more apocalyptic among us, I went to a club downtown with my friends, Marissa Carter and her mate Bonnie Hirschman. Just a typical New Year's Eve on the town, nothing remarkable.

But this New Year's is the true beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This was the true changing of the eras. At least it feels so for me.

This past month we witnessed the culmination of the strangest presidential election results we've ever seen in this country. The campaigns were not pretty, and the aftermath was even less so. First it was too close to call, then one side shut the election count down and declared victory under cloudy circumstance, then the other side filed suit after suit to challenge the results and recount the votes, then the

*(Continued on Page 4)*

### **Annual Subscription Rate:**

**\$18. per year**

### **Our Advertising Rates Are:**

Business card sized ad (1 1/4 inch x 3 1/2 inch)

**\$42. per year**

Quarter-page ad (4 3/8 inch x 3 1/2 inch)

**\$106. per year**

### **A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...**

*for submitting articles*

**Katrina C. Rose, Albert Lea MN**

**Vikki Lynn Skelton**

**Lilly Roddy**

*for submitting photos*

**Dalton DeHart**



## LOCAL ORGANIZATION BECOMES NTAC'S 1<sup>ST</sup> GROUP LIFETIME MEMBER

### *GCTC Issues Challenge To Other Organizations*

NTAC PRESS RELEASE — The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) announced that the Houston-based Gulf Coast Transgender Community (GCTC) has become the first transgender organization to become a lifetime member of the fledgling civil rights group. During a brief ceremony at their annual Christmas Party on December 2, GCTC president Jackie Thorne presented a check to two of the founding members of NTAC, Vanessa Edwards Foster and Jessica Redman.

GCTC contributed the initial seed money to NTAC when, as one of her last acts, then-president Foster (now of NTAC) committed \$200 to the group at last year's Christmas event. This marks a milestone for the young transgender and intersexed advocacy group. Following on the heels of GenderPAC's announcement of taking the heretofore transgender rights group to a gender expression group, the announcement couldn't have come at a better time.

"We've really been gotten quite a bit of interest lately," said NTAC board member Foster, "especially since Riki Wilchins' announcement that GenderPAC is backing away from 'transgender'. NTAC is now the only national organization focusing on transgender and intersex rights since the announcement by GPAC last week that it was dropping its focus on transgender rights in favor of a broadened focus on supporting all people who suffer gender discrimination." Foster added, "we've now had feelers from around the



GCTC president Jackie Thorne (L) presents a check to NTAC founding members Jessica Redman (C) and boardmember Vanessa Edwards Foster at GCTC's annual Christmas Party.

nation wondering who is to fill the void."

"That void," stated Foster, "will be filled by NTAC."

"The Gulf Coast Transgender Community is proud to, again, take the lead in contributing to new transgender organizations," stated GCTC's president, Jackie Thorne. "GCTC contributed the first \$250 that created the International Conference for Transgender Law & Employment Practices (ICTLEP), the initial \$500 for the Texas Associa-

tion for Transsexual Support (TATS) and the initial \$250 for the Texas Political Action Coalition of Transgenders (TPACT)."

"It's part of GCTC's proud legacy," continued Ms. Thorne, "to think and contribute to what, in the long run, will benefit the entire transgender community — not just our own group. Our tradition is to hop on before the bandwagon gets started!"

"On behalf of our group, I issue a challenge to all other transgender groups around the nation to become lifetime members of NTAC. If more in our community were to think globally, instead of in our own self-interests," Thorne finished, "think of how great our community could become."

NTAC praises the attitude of our transgender organizations around the country who, like GCTC, take the initiative to support those who fight for the rights of all gender-gifted individuals. As always, NTAC welcomes any support by either gender groups, or individuals, who wish to contribute their time or resources to the betterment of the national transgender and intersexed community.

*The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition is the nation's preeminent organization working for the civil rights of all transgendered and intersexed people in every aspect of society. To inquire how you or your organization can help, or for information on how to become a member, visit our website at <http://www.ntac.org>*

## NATIONAL TRANSGENDER LOBBY DAYS ANNOUNCED

By Vanessa Edwards Foster, NTAC Media

**I**t's lobbying time again! The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) is pleased to announce preliminary plans for the group's first-ever organized lobbying effort in Washington DC. The premier transgender community initiative on Congress will occur the week of May 14, with a plenary training and strategy session on Sunday, May 13.

NTAC, the newest national transgender civil rights organization, is sending out a call to the nation's transgender and intersex community, all supportive family and friends, and helping professionals to unite for a show of strength on Capitol Hill. Founded in 1999, NTAC is currently the only national group with special focus given to education about, and advocacy for, all gender variant citizens.

Many may ask why attempt lobbying a Congress that is numerically stacked against us? While there is no shot at favorable legislation this session, there is still much education to be done with our legislators. NTAC realizes that only by educating our legislators regarding our needs, can we affect

change for our community — and our community has ample need.

Some talk around the nation has centered around a "mandate for morality" this congressional session, and what that means to our community. If indeed there is such a mandate, the last thing any of the target minority communities should do is to disappear or become complacent. This only lends the impression that we, as a community, have become disgusted and "given up the fight." Anyone who would have such a mandate in mind will take



our inaction at this time as momentum for their movement.

Our community can make a statement by being proactive. Our needs must be heard, our experiences must be told. Help us as we begin laying the foundation for our future equality. We can do this! Please join NTAC, and other transgender and intersex groups and individuals from around the nation, on the week of May 14 in our nation's capital. For more information see the NTAC web site: [www.ntac.org/lobby.html](http://www.ntac.org/lobby.html)

## TGAIN TEXAS LOBBY DAYS FEB. 19-20

HOUSTON — The Texas T Community is gearing up for its second foray to Austin for TGAIN's Transgender Lobby Days. A lobbying primer will take place on Monday, Feb. 19 at the Cheshire Cat Resal Shop. The Cheshire Cat, owned by Central Texas TransGender Society's Devin Smith, is located at 612 W. 34<sup>th</sup> St.

For those wishing to make it up for the event an stay overnight, accommodations will have to be made by the individuals in the various hotels around Austin. Melanie Romero has generously donated use of her couch in South Austin, for anyone looking for cheap lodging. She can be reached at [Texanne@earthlink.net](mailto:Texanne@earthlink.net)

Tuesday, Feb. 20, will be the big day — hitting the Capitol en masse! Prime focus this year will be pushing for the name / gender marker bill to be proposed to committee, as well as TG inclusion in the renewal push for the James Byrd Hate Crimes Bill. For more info, contact [TGAIN@egroups.com](mailto:TGAIN@egroups.com)



# WINN-DIXIE CROSSDRESSER FILES SEX DISCRIMINATION SUIT

## NTAC, Coalition of Groups, Call For Boycott Of 'Image' Conscious Retailer

### NTAC PRESS RELEASE

**I**magine your place of employment notifies you that you're being fired. When you ask their reason, the reply is, "we didn't like what you wore at home the other night." Far-fetched? Not in the eyes of Peter Oiler. And not in the eyes of Winn-Dixie, Inc. — the sixth largest supermarket chain in the nation.

Peter Oiler, a 21-year employee with Winn-Dixie's suburban New Orleans distribution center, was fired for being a crossdresser.

The retailer claims that having Oiler, a truck driver with a good employment record on the job, was "bad for Winn-Dixie's image," said Eric Ferrero, ACLU spokesperson on the case. It wasn't because of his violating company regulations, wearing female attire at work, or behaving effeminately in the workplace. It was simply because he was honest with his supervisor; honest about wearing women's attire away from the workplace.

Two years ago, rumors that Oiler was gay circulated around the workplace, and Oiler approached management to have the rumors stopped. During a review this past year, the supervisor inquired as to why that bothered him so much. Peter Oiler matter-of-factly answered: "Because I'm not gay. I'm transgendered." After the supervisor contacted the corporate office, he asked Oiler for his resignation; mentioning it "was bad for the corporate image." Oiler refused to resign, and two months later, he was fired.

Thus the 45-year old, married, heterosexual male finds himself the center of a federal lawsuit brought against the retailer. Last month, Peter Oiler

filed a federal lawsuit claiming sex discrimination. The basis for the complaint is that female employees of Winn-Dixie wore men's clothes off duty without consequence. But the company fired him "because he failed to conform to the corporation's stereotyped notions of how a man ought to look and act."

"I never expected Winn-Dixie to approve of my personal life or to punish me for it," said Oiler. "I just never thought it had any bearing on how I do my

"Job performance is not an issue in this case," stated Courtney Sharp, a transgender activist from New Orleans. "The immediate issue is that Winn-Dixie claims that Oiler's crossdressing outside of the workplace, on his own time, was harmful to their corporate image. The broader, more encompassing issue is that Winn-Dixie dismissed an employee because he failed to meet stereotyped expectations of masculinity. Many men and women may fail to meet Winn-Dixie's gender expectations and may be affected by this type of discrimination."

The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition



**Peter & Shirley Oiler in front of Winn-Dixie**

(NTAC) has thrown its full support behind the efforts to have Peter Oiler reinstated. NTAC sees an individual's freedom to express themselves in their personal lives as a basic human right. Transgenders face an inordinate amount of discrimination when transitioning in the workplace. To be terminated from one's employment because one engages in behavior when it is completely unrelated to one's job is simply outrageous.

NTAC joins with a coalition of other progressive organizations in calling for Winn-Dixie, Inc. to immediately reconsider their actions. The corporation's behavior goes far beyond an employer's normal sphere of influence to the point of dictating how an individual should live their personal life away from the workplace. NTAC is calling for a boycott of all Winn-Dixie Stores in the nation; and has plans for protests in some strategic Winn-Dixie locations. Additionally, NTAC encourages everyone to take a proactive stance by writing Winn-Dixie's corporate offices and expressing your displeasure over this patently unfair termination.

Updates on Winn-Dixie demonstrations being planned, as well as Winn-Dixie's contact information, are available at [www.ShameOnWinnDixie.com](http://www.ShameOnWinnDixie.com)

## SARA ROOK ELECTED VP....

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Sea Shell group itself, and also inclusion in the corporation's employment policies.

In addition to her work with her company, she's also been working diligently with the Chamber on it's Empower event, an open convention of out-and-proud companies, and diversity-welcoming and supportive straight-owned companies and corporations. In fact, because of her work on Empower on behalf of Sea Shell, she was awarded a corporate award from the company's diversity center last year.

Sara also received an award from the Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (HATCH) for her volunteer work as a facilitator with the group. HATCH honored Sea Shell with the award because of the work of both Ms. Rook and another member of Sea Shell's steering committee.

It's a far cry from just two short years ago at the Chamber. Back then, transgenders decried being left out of the mission statement. The discussions on the Chamber's lack of inclusion in its mission statement was only the last of the three controversies between the TG community and the major gay and lesbian groups in 1999. However,

it was also the most hotly debated, due to its timing.

Following closely on the heels of the Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus and then the local PFLAG inclusion overtures, the Chamber's issue was the most intensely debated, especially on HAN-Net (the Houston Activists' Network). The negotiations were intense, and tensions were high.

At about the time of the scheduled inclusion vote, Sara became one of the representatives to the Chamber through her employer, Shell Oil. From there, it was just a matter of participating — and Sara has!

The progress of both factions of the community has been phenomenal since that time. Phyllis Frye said it best: "Sara Rook being elected Vice President of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce is indicative of the growing maturity of both the transgender community and of the Chamber."

"To me it doesn't seem like much," said an ever-modest Sara, "but others say I have made big difference where ever I go." Indeed she has! Our congratulations go out to a history-maker, Sara Rook... 'Way to go!'

## EDITOR'S RANT....

*(Continued from Page 2)*

first side tried to seal the ballots permanently so no one would ever see the true voting numbers. Then it all went to the Supreme Courts where it was decided on a partisan vote who the president was to be.

Even still, there is talk of scandal surrounding the election and the subsequent actions of those involved. For the most part, those outside of the U.S. seem to be howling about it the most. They imply that the patina of American democracy has now been tarnished by this election. Strangely enough, we've heard very little about the elections from our own media, other than life going on. Whether that may be considered good or bad, this author gets the sense that there was something going on behind the scenes that we're not being allowed to see. If not, there would never be talk of sealing ballots or election results in a free society. That brings up immediate warning flags.

Mixed in with this news, is talk of an economic downturn — even though there's been no economic slowdown for years. Talk of shadowy organizations with membership that includes some of the highest-ranking political leaders in our country, involved in

*(Continued on Page 16)*





## HOME FOR HOLIDAYS....

*(Continued from Page 5)*

it was home!

For many of us, this meant hosting Christmas get-togethers, such as Desirée Walton and Jessica Redman had. Both hosted dinner parties during the holiday season.

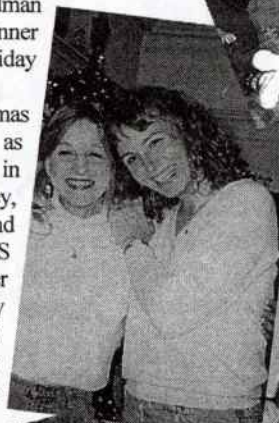
For some, the Christmas season meant travel: as longtime TATS member in exile, Daniell McCleney, came home to visit, and even took in a TATS meeting. Even another long-timer, Wendy Thurman dropped in to visit all the way from her current home in the Netherlands.

For Desirée and yours truly, it meant reaching out to others in the spirit of giving. Desirée spent her Christmas serving at the Salvation Army's Men's Shelter. Meanwhile, I went back to visit some longtime friends met over the years at the Salvation Army's Family Center – my favorite hangout for the holidays! This year, I even managed a special responsibility: for the first time, I got to be an 'elf'! In regular lingo, that meant I had the enviable task of handing out presents to the kids, as well as floating around doing a number of other different jobs!



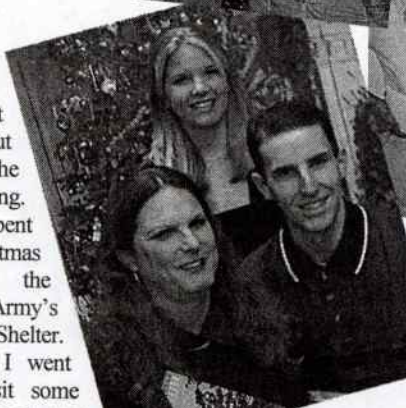
Above, Desirée at home with her kids on Christmas night, watching the kids open their gifts, and at left with Vanessa (R), enjoying the holidays

Below, old school TATS members, Wendy Thurman (L-R) Daniell McCleney, Arwen Schiesler and Vanessa Edwards Foster pose for a photo reminiscent of TATS 1996!



At left, TATS' Sara Rook, at home with her at home with her kids in a Christmas photo.

Below, 'DaniBubbles' tries to hang baubles on her nephew 'Biscuit' while trimming the tree at Vanessa's



Visiting Vanessa's ... Daniell McCleney (L-R) and Scott Sprague enjoy a laugh or two with Jessica Redman & Vanessa Edwards Foster

Out of all of the Christmas diversions, perhaps my favorite – and Desirée will attest as well – was working the Salvation Army. If you're alone for the holidays (and

ing to others. Since we all know what it's like to be down, it makes sense to give back to others who are still down. When we do so, it makes a better person of us ... and a better community of us all!

Here's hoping y'all had a Happy Holiday season, and wishes for a bright and successful New Year... from TATS!

Above row, at Salvation Army, Vanessa Edwards Foster plays Santa's Elf for the kids (L), counsels a homeless and pregnant unwed teen (C) and hang out in the kitchen with Judge Mike Peters (R), who bears tongs instead of a gavel on the holidays at the Family Center.

(Below) Stuffed and near-paralyzed, Jessica Redman (L) and Desirée Walton lay on the floor on either side of the coffee table after a wonderful meal at Jessica's Christmas Party.



we've probably all had our share of those!), it's a wonderful way to cure loneliness! In fact, for either Christmas or Thanksgiving – whether you're alone, or even if you're not – the best feeling you can get is giv-





# 2000'S TOP STORIES FROM THE NATION & AROUND THE WORLD

## Littleton Case Taken To Supreme Court, Supreme Court Refuses To Hear Case

WASHINGTON DC— Attorneys Phyllis Frye and Alyson Meiselman take on the Littleton Case to both Texas and U.S. Supreme Courts, backed by funding from the Texas Human Rights Foundation. Both the state and federal courts refused to hear the case, upholding the lower courts' rulings.

### TS Runs For U.S. Congress

Long time transgender activist, Karen Kerin ran for as Vermont's GOP candidate in this past federal election. Her candidacy was unsuccessful as incumbent



Bernie Sanders, one of the few independents, and only socialist, in Congress recaptured his seat.

### FIRST TRANSEXUAL NATIONAL DELEGATE:

MINNEAPOLIS, MN — Pioneer transgender activist, Jane Fee, became the first transsexual elected as a national delegate. Fee, a democrat elected to an at-large seat in Minnesota's state convention, found the most difficult part was getting the media not to focus on "what was between my legs."



On her experience and what she hoped to accomplish at the convention, she wanted to show "our interests... are just like every other delegate and we have just as much right to be heard. By hiding our identity, we're hurting ourselves because it indicates shame."

### Trans Youth Make News:

#### Authorities Remove T-Child

COLUMBUS, OH — Franklin County Children's Services in Ohio removed a child from its parents when they tried to enroll the male-born child in school as female. The child, who identifies herself as Aurora and insisted on being a girl from the age of 3, is still in court-ordered foster care, though the parents can visit.

#### Judge Rules TG Teen Can Dress as Female at School

BROCKTON, MA — A judge ruled a transgendered teen expelled from junior high may return to school as a female. The landmark ruling was based on the premise of freedom of expression.

### DC Settles in Wrongful Death Involving TG

The District of Columbia settled its lawsuit with the surviving members of Tyra Hunter's family.

### IOWA COURT STRIKES DOWN GOVERNOR'S NON-DISCRIMINATION ORDER

This Midwest state became only the second to sign a non-discrimination bill with "gender identity" included. That has now been rescinded due to a court challenge that the governor's executive order overstepped his authority.

### DeKalb, Illinois Enacts TG Non-Discrimination

After being one of the shameful non-inclusives last year, DeKalb city council rectified its shunning of the TG community to vote in transgender non-discrimination.

### Other TG-Inclusive Ordinances in 2000:

- Boulder, Colorado
- Madison, Wisconsin
- Portland, Oregon
- Multnomah County, Oregon
- Atlanta, Georgia
- Decatur, Georgia (city employees)
- Leon County, Florida (fair housing)

### NASA PHYSICIAN COULD BE FIRST TS IN SPACE!

PHILADELPHIA, PA — 31-year old Christine McGinn recently outed herself when her therapy group was approached by MSNBC for a documentary on transsexuals. The physician has served twice as part of the medical team that would go into space should an emergency arise.



### First Nationwide Day Of Remembrance

Vigils took place in cities across the nation as the Day of Remembrance, brainchild of Gwen Smith, went nationwide.

### Amanda Milan



### TRANS SEX-WORKER'S THROAT SLIT, CABBIES WATCHING APPLAUD KILLING "GENDER TRASH"

NEW YORK, NY — Amanda Milan was killed after arguing with a man harassing her and her friends. The killer ran up behind her and slashed her throat as she was climbing into a cab. Cab drivers watching stood and cheered as she bled to death.

Milan's death inspired a vigil that drew an estimated 300 people from the entire GLBT community. Both her murderer and the accomplice who provided the knife await trial.

## The Faces of TG Murder

### Alina Marie Barragan

SAN JOSE, CA — The 19-year-old transgendered woman was a volunteer at the Billy DeFrank GLBT Center. Alina was strangled to death in San Jose, California.

### Christine Chappel

LOWESTOFT, Suffolk, UK — Her body was found washed up on the shore. She was weighted down with chain, three weights, and two padlocks. Christine's ex-wife has been arrested and charged



with murder for hire.

### Tyra Henderson

WASHINGTON DC — Tyra was bludgeoned to death. Reports say the sex-worker also had her breasts slashed and her penis cut off.

### Stephanie Yazum

SCHNECTADY, NY — A quiet Tri-Ess member who lived on disability, Stephanie was attacked, and her throat slashed in her apartment.

David Bronson, a man she'd met in a bar, confessed to the killing.



### Julia Aguilar Carrizales

HOUSTON, TX. — Julia was strangled and stabbed on July 21 in a South Houston home, her body later dumped in Webster, Texas. Her alleged killer, Kelvin Antonio Navarro reportedly fled to Mexico.

### Déjà Johnson

MIAMI, FL — Déjà was one of two sex-workers killed in Miami this year (Keith E. Jackson, being the other one.)



### Ana Melisa Cortez

NASHVILLE TN — Cortez was a native of Guatemala, who quietly went about her life as Ana. She was found stabbed to death in her home, after being dead more than a week.

### Unnamed Intersex Infant

DALLAS, TX — Police arrested the mother of a 3-day old infant who was suffocated and thrown from a













CAUCUS HATE CRIMES DEBATE

ntac board & lobby day



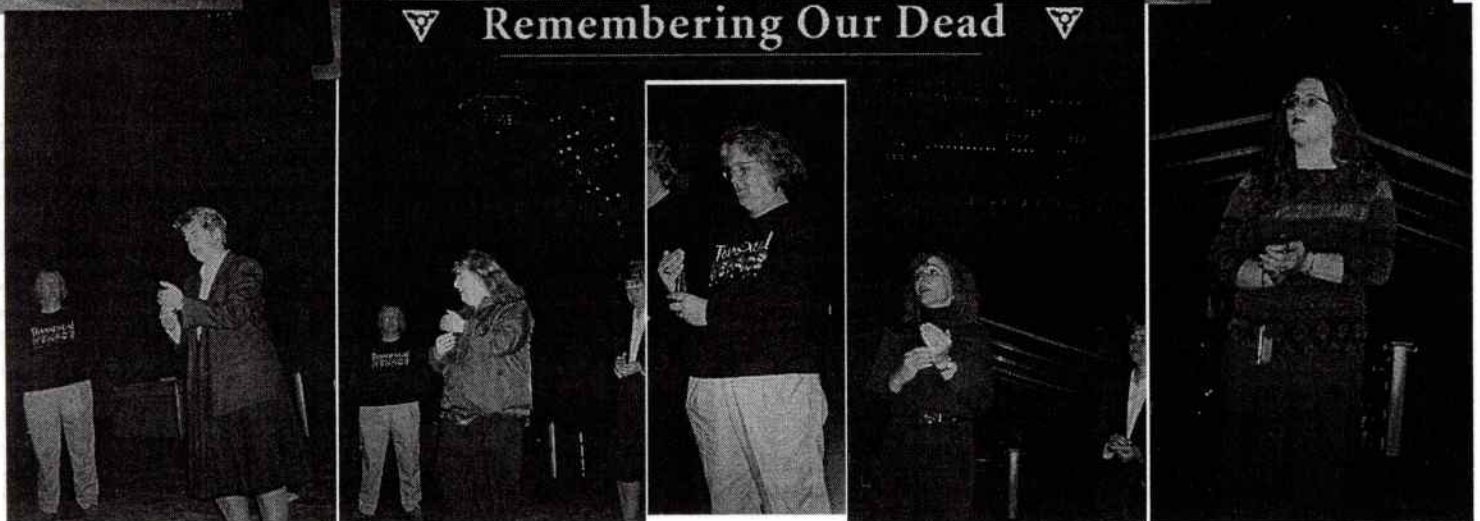








## Remembering Our Dead





# LOS ANGELES ENACTS TRANSGENDER PROTECTIONS ... 21 YEARS AGO

By Vanessa Edwards Foster, NTAC Media

Odd as it may sound, Los Angeles is one of the two-dozen odd cities that covers non-discrimination of transgenders; and apparently few people were aware. In an article to the Houston-based Texas Triangle, attorney and columnist Katrina C. Rose, a member of the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) detailed her recent find.

The ordinance, enacted in 1979, was taken almost verbatim from the Minneapolis city ordinance enacted four years prior. The Los Angeles Municipal Code, Section 49.72 (a) (1), reads:

"It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to fail or refuse to hire, or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment on the basis (in whole or in part) of such individual's sexual orientation."

In the details of the ordinance, the definition of sexual orientation states: "As used in this ordinance, the term 'sexual orientation' shall mean an individual having or manifesting an emotional or physical attachment to another consenting adult person or persons, or having or manifesting a preference for such attachment, or having or projecting a self-image not associated with one's biological maleness or one's biological femaleness."

None of the major GLBT civil rights organizations seemed to even know that any gender non-discrimination currently existed in Los Angeles. HRC's WorkNet Employer Database lists Los Angeles as prohibiting discrimination in private employment and notes that the city's ordinance was enacted in 1979. However, it also adds that L.A. has "No law covering gender identity."

"I can't adequately describe how shocked I was to see that last clause of the definition," said Ms. Rose, author of the column. "It seems as though whoever drafted the Los Angeles ordinance

in 1979 used the Minneapolis ordinance as a model." Transgender people were included in the Minneapolis Civil Rights Ordinance in December, 1975.

From her home in Minnesota, attorney Rose discovered the tidbit over the internet during the course of legal research around the time of another case in that state involving a transgender. Her find is quite a gift for the folks living some 1,500 miles away in L.A. And so, for the transgendered residents of Los Angeles ... a truly Merry Christmas from Katrina C. Rose and NTAC.

*(The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition is the nation's preeminent transgender civil rights organization. NTAC works for the advancement of understanding and the attainment of civil rights for all transgendered and intersexed people in every aspect of society. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.ntac.org>)*

## An Xmas Present for the Transgendered People of Los Angeles

By Katrina C. Rose

As many of you know by now, just before Thanksgiving the Minnesota Court of Appeals issued an opinion in a case brought under the transgender language of the Minnesota Human Rights Act – an opinion which eviscerates whatever semi-legitimacy there may have ever been to Barney Frank's transphobia-laden 'Penis Panic.'

That was something to be thankful for. However, I'd been hoping for more.

The Minnesota appellate opinion was direct and to the point – only addressing precisely what needed to be addressed to decide the case.

The transgendered woman who brought the case is a transplant to Minnesota from Texas and possesses a name-and-gender change order from a Texas district court – not entirely unlike a certain author whose words you happen to be perusing at the moment.

Her gender change order was called into question by the trial court in her employment discrimination case. I'd hoped to be able to announce to all of you that the appellate opinion in her suit was the first judicial repudiation of Littleton v. Prange. And, yes, I was hoping that the repudiation would come with numerous citations to my Law & Sexuality article on the case (which, yes, would be some nice egoboo for me.)

But – it didn't happen. Minnesota's employment anti-discrimination statute is clear enough for the court to have said that whatever was on her driver's license – M or F – didn't matter.

We are well into December, now. As I write this, a blizzard is howling outside my window. I'm not much on Xmas, but I'd like to give something to my readers. Unfortunately for those of you not in Los Angeles, California, I can only extend to you holiday thanx for reading my column.

But, for those of you in SoCal, I have this: "As used in this ordinance, the term 'sexual orientation' shall mean an individual having or manifesting an emotional or physical attachment to another consenting adult person or persons, or having or manifesting a preference for such attachment, or having or projecting a self-image not associated with one's biological maleness or one's biological femaleness."

A recitation of part of the Minnesota Human Rights Act? What kind of present is that, Kat?

Close but no cigar. Its not from the MHRA.

The Minneapolis city ordinance then? Nope.

Okay – what then? Would you believe: the Los Angeles anti-discrimination ordinance?

Actually, Kat, I wouldn't believe it. I haven't heard anything recently about L.A. considering revising its ordinance to include transgendered people. And you wouldn't – because it already happened.

HRC's WorkNet Employer Database lists Los Angeles as prohibiting discrimination in private employment and notes that the city's ordinance was enacted in 1979. However, it also adds that L.A. has "No law covering gender identity."

However, what I quoted above is the definition of "sexual orientation" that is used in the following, Section 49.72 (a) (1) of the L.A. Municipal Code:

"It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to fail or refuse to hire, or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment on the basis (in whole or in part) of such individual's sexual orientation"

Really. I'm not making this up. An interesting aspect of both the MHRA and the Goins v. West Group decision is that neither actually contains the word 'transgender.' In preparation for writing a

law review article on the case, I ran a search in a case law database for a unique phrase which does appear in them – 'biological maleness.' Only one non-Minnesota case contains that phrase. That 1984 California Court of Appeals decision, Rolon v. Kulwitzky, involved the Los Angeles anti-discrimination ordinance and, though the discrimination at issue was against lesbians, contained the entirety of its definition of "sexual orientation."

I can't adequately describe how shocked I was to see that last clause of the definition – language recognized as covering transgendered people which first became part of enacted law in the Minneapolis Civil Rights Ordinance in December, 1975. That coverage has its origins in the battle earlier that year to include transgendered people in a Minnesota state gay rights bill. The bill's backers, including early HRC-oid Steve Endean, were adamantly opposed to including transgendered people in it. Arne Carlson, a Republican state representative who went on to become Governor (the governor who signed the TG-inclusive MHRA in 1993), introduced a transgender-inclusive amendment which, though unsuccessful, was the model for a successful amendment to the Minneapolis ordinance later that year.

It seems as though whoever drafted the Los Angeles ordinance in 1979 used the Minneapolis ordinance as a model – which just accentuates the tragedy of how transgendered people were excluded from New York City's ordinance when it was passed in 1986 because its drafters used the narrow language of Wisconsin's state statute. The pro-exclusion forces said that they couldn't include transgendered people. The reality, however, is more clear than ever: They simply didn't want to.

Another tragedy is how the TG language of the Los Angeles ordinance could have gone unnoticed for 21 years. Obviously I'm not talking about some

*(Continued on Page 16)*



## Another Understanding, Another Approach! Part 2: The Real Battleground!

By Vikki Lynn Skelton

In Part 1 of this 3 part series, I wrote about how we are basically our own worst enemy in that we tend to cause division amongst ourselves through personal attacks and in having a "My way is better than your way" attitude. I also talked about how we need to (1) Come together as a community and develop an overall consensus on a common purpose(s), (2) Allow each other, as individuals and as TG groups, to accomplish the purpose(s) as we see fit as long as we are not hindering the efforts of others in accomplishing the purpose(s), (3) Work on dividing and conquering the "opposition," and (4) Encourage each other, help each other, and offer suggestions that may help others accomplish the purpose(s) in their own way.

Part 2 is about what I see as the true nature of our fight and my opinion on how to approach it. If you have any comments on this article feel free to e-mail me at [2\\_u@theglobe.com](mailto:2_u@theglobe.com).

### It's Spiritual, Not Political!

We need to realize that we are fighting a war on a spiritual plane, the battlegrounds of the heart and minds, of beliefs and emotions. It is not as much a political battle as it is a spiritual battle. This is also really not a fight as to whether T'ism is a viable lifestyle or not or whether we should be included in anti-discrimination policies or not. Instead, it is really a fight at a much deeper level. It is a fight on a spiritual plane, if you will, within the belief system of people. That is why it has been so hard to get us included into ENDA and in getting T'ism more accepted by many in the political and religious arenas. It is only when you get a person to change their beliefs on T'ism that you will be able to make progress and you can't do it by attacking them or by "forcing" them kicking and screaming into a changed belief on the matter.

### That's My Belief and I Will Not Change It!

When you "attack" a person's belief system head on, especially when they are amongst their peers, you will tend to instill and ingrain that belief, whether right or wrong, even more-so into their very being. Because you are working on a person's belief system, you are working on the emotional level and therefore, the use of logic will more than likely not be as effective at first as you think in changing a person's mind or rather their belief system.

In order to increase your chances in changing one's belief about a particular subject, you have to win them over emotionally first without attacking their belief system. Once they are open emotionally, then they are open to changing their belief system. How do we do this? By coming to truly understand what they believe and why they believe what they believe. In other words, "Know your enemy." Once this is done, you then must find common ground on which you both can agree and unite. You must find commonality between the two of you whereby you can bring down the defenses and show that you are more alike than first thought. This will then help develop a relationship

whereby trust is built and doors of listening will be opened. This may take time and may never take place in many cases. However, you are simply seeking out those cases where it is allowed to take place. Once trust is established, you can then find a way to get them to question their beliefs on a particular topic and then offer an alternative idea on the matter. You must be very careful to not attack their belief on the issue or make them feel as if they are being attacked in any way. Otherwise, you will see walls of defense pop back up very quickly and the ground you gained will be lost.

Once the trust factor has been developed between the two of you, they will more than likely be open to your ideas. They may also begin to question some of their beliefs on the issue at hand. At that point, you will have the opportunity to turn their emotions on the issue from being against you to being in favor for you. How can you do this? By subtly hitting them where it "hurts." You may have to show them how it can hurt them financially and or politically by being against it or help them financially and or politically by being for it. You may need to give them a very good personal reason for accepting the idea that makes sense to them. No matter how you approach the emotional aspect of the issue, you must make sure they do not feel attacked in any way. Once they have come to the "other side" then it is very important to re-enforce their changed belief in a positive manner and not attack their peers in any way in front of them.

Once they become open to change both emotionally and belief wise, they are may become open to logical reasoning concerning the issue at hand, may begin to consider the info provided, and then consider whether or not to change their beliefs on the matter. It first has to hit home in their core beliefs and understanding without disrupting the rest of their belief system. This is the hardest battle to fight and is more effectively fought one-on-one, person-by-person, rather than against a whole group of people at once. People are more willing to listen and change their beliefs concerning an issue when they are approached individually outside of the safety of their peers more than when they are surrounded by their peers. Therefore, we can divide and conquer a group of individuals a lot easier by approaching the individual members on an individual basis rather than in a group atmosphere.

### Last Words

We are actually fighting a war fought on the battlegrounds of the hearts and minds, the beliefs and emotions, of those we talk with. Therefore, we must make sure our strategy includes ways of reaching those we talk with on the deeper levels where change needs to really take place and thus possibly cause change upon the surface in the political, religious, and economic arenas. At the same time, we must be careful not to overwhelm them with information. It might be a good idea to feed them in piece meals.

Part 3 is the last of this series and focuses on ENDA.

## TG Scholarship Fund Announced

### IFGE PRESS RELEASE

BOSTON, Mass. — The International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) has announced that it will be awarding numerous scholarships to transgender identified students in the helping and caring professions through it's collaborative Transgender Scholarship and Education Legacy Fund (TSELF) in the United States and Canada. Each scholarship will provide supplemental funding for post-secondary students who have a demonstrated ability in affecting change in the transgender communities through their commitment to working and being educated in the helping and caring professions. These include, but are not limited to, Social Services, Health Care, Religious Instruction (all denominations), Teaching and the Law. We seek to reflect a broad range of interests, including social services, HIV/AIDS education, law, teaching & education, religious instruction (all denominations), medical and health care as well as the sciences.

Today a whole generation of out and proud transpeople have the power to create dramatic change in the world. We want to honor that power with the support that education focused scholarships can provide. It's important to acknowledge the achievements of our communities. Some of the most powerful forces for the transgender communities are transgender-identified individuals being nurtured and supported by this community. By providing grants to transgender students, TSELF recognizes these students' past achievements and provides much needed support for their future pursuits. Through these awards, we forge links between professionals and emerging leaders. In doing so, TSELF helps to facilitate the growth and advancement of not only these individuals — but of our communities as well. TSELF is committed to the concept that transpeople should be encouraged to help other trans-people. Transpeople helping ourSELVES — TSELF!

A special component of TSELF is the aspect of visibility. All awardees must be "Out and Proud," both as members of the trans-communities, but also within the educational systems and professions that they are seeking scholarship assistance for. The Transgender Scholarship and Education Legacy Fund is seeking trans-individuals, living full-time in a gender or sex role that differs from the one assigned to them at birth, who wish to serve as role models for other transgender identified people. As out trans-people in the helping and caring professions, these special individuals will be perceptibly challenging many of the societal prejudices that trans-folk encounter within educational and professional institutions.

Awards will be processed and announced twice yearly. Applications for the Spring Awards must be postmarked by February 1st. Scholarship awards will be made at the next IFGE convention (3/21 - 3/25/01). Applications for the Fall Awards must be postmarked by August 1st. Scholarship awards will be made at the next Southern Comfort Conference (date varies). Supporting materials should arrive within one week of each deadline. Applicants will be notified of their award status during the month, directly following the application deadline. Applications are available online at: <http://www.tself.org>

The Transgender Scholarship and Education Legacy Fund (TSELF) is dedicated to enhancing the visibility, strength and vitality of the transgender communities.

Contact TSELF chairperson, Julie Johnson ([julie@tself.org](mailto:julie@tself.org)) or Project Director, Carrie Davis ([carrie@tself.org](mailto:carrie@tself.org)) for more details about TSELF.



# ASTRO FORECAST FOR JANUARY 2001

By Lilly Roddy

**ARIES** – You focus this month

on your future security and your career. You are ready to start the year off with a running start. Practicality will be your watch word and you will appear to be in a no nonsense mood to others. You want to be recognized for what you do at work. By mid month, you are more social and ready to spend you time with friends. You will still be in a career mood, so business associations, networking and breakfast meetings would be very good for you. Even though the holidays have come to an end, you are still ready to be with your friends.



**TAURUS** – Relationships are front and center for you as the New Year begins. There are plenty of fireworks there. You relationship is calling for adventure and excitement. You can achieve this by changing those routines or engaging in verbal combat. The choice is yours. If you don't have a romantic partner, you will find yourself out trying to make that happen. Your career continues to be unsettled as the month begins. And you will have a couple of false starts or feel that you are taking 2 steps forward and 1 step back.



**GEMINI** – You are back into your busy phase. I hope you enjoyed your brief rest during the holidays. Oh, you didn't get one, well.....you had better plan well over the next 2 months. You will continue to be busy and maybe even a couple of notches busier. You are in a good place and good things are happening to you. You feel that you have to make the best of this time just in case things slow down. This is a good time to market yourself or your work. Your charisma is very strong. Relationships need some tending to. You or your partner will feel that a sense of distance has developed between you. Take some time to get reacquainted.



**CANCER** – Relationships are in the spotlight for you this month. You are really wanting to have some stability and a strong sense that your relationship is moving in the direction that you want it to. This can be a great month to get away and plan for the future. You will want some sense of assurance that your partner is as committed as you to your alliance. This will effect business partnerships as well as romantic. Your creativity and your sexual energies flow this month. You can channel this into your relationship or into your work or both. And you are stimulated to try different approaches to both.



**LEO** – Time to get the work place in order for the new year. You really want to use your time pro-

ductively this month and you don't want to feel that you are wasting your time. Coworkers could expect you to take the lead and show them the way. You are expected to take more of the "boss" role here. It is a good way for you to shine. Home may be a bit uncomfortable this month as small irritations really get under you skin. It would be a bad time to visit your parents or to be too close to your own children. They will be very demanding and you may feel that you are not able to be yourself unless your are serving them.



**VIRGO** – Your creative skills are on the upswing this month. You are able to find solutions to problems more easily, market yourself and your products better or just get along with your own children easier. Your communications skills are also more improved as well. You seem to be able to get your message across in a very direct way. Relationships also get easier after the 3rd. Although you may want to take a break from your partner right around mid month. Either you or your partner could be very jealous or possessive during that time. If you are not involved with someone, this very same energy will make you attractive to others and could easily draw someone to you. If you choose, you could use this in business as well.



**LIBRA** – Home and family themes continue as the new year begins. You are really wanting to have a solid foundation to work with this. The eclipse phase this year will add extra stimulation to the idea of creating a strong sense of security in the home and in the career arena. You will find yourself focusing on this even when you are not trying. You will probably have to take a stronger role in your own family. And you might even find yourself taking care of your own parents, a role switch. Even with this, it will be extra easy to spend month this month. You are in an impulsive buy mode. And watch those investments. Stick to a conservative mode. This is not the time to take a risk.



**SCORPIO** – Your energy levels and desire for fun and adventure are very strong for the next 2 months. January is a good month for you to take some risk and invest your courage. You will not want to wait or let others go first. This is definitely a "me first" month. This could be a great time for exercise programs, diet and health regimes or visiting the doctor for a checkup. You are more physically conscious and aware of your body. You are also more likely to be the initiator in the bedroom. If you don't find a socially acceptable outlet for this energy, then you are going to be cranky, irritable and argumentative. And that is ok as long as it is happening to you and not to me. You sleep patterns could be erratic as well. Look for some bat-



tles to engage in.

**SAGITTARIUS** – Money and personal resources take the spotlight this month. You are very aware of where you money is this month. This would be a good time to get your bills paid and your financial information together and organized. You will assess how much you make and how much you charge your clients. And you will not want to be ignored by others. If you are not acknowledged by others for what you do and who you are, you are not going to be a happy camper. Sights, even unintentioned, will effect you. You will want to be careful of whom you allow to judge you. You could take what the guy at the gas station to heart and he may not be a good judge at all.



**CAPRICORN** – Yes, this is your birthday month. This is the time when the sun makes it's yearly cycle through your sign. This is the end of last year's cycle and the beginning of the new year's cycle. The first part of the month is a great time for review of what you accomplished and what you wanted to accomplish. The later half of the month is good for putting your new aims and endeavors into play. You will be more conscious of finishing things that you start this month. Normally, you are a person who judges herself by what you do. And this month, you are even more conscious of that.



**AQUARIUS** – You are in a rest and retreat mode this month. Even though it is the new year and all, you are not ready to embrace this yearly renewal time. You are more sensitive than usual and everything seems to bother you more. Your psychic receptors are turned up to maximum. You may want to avoid those large crowds and crowded restaurants. Those places will seem to just drain your energies. You can focus your interest on your work and you may work best when you are alone. You will want to come first in your own life and you will not find it easy to share space, time, or creative considerations with others. You pull out of this somewhat by the end of the month, but you are still very introspective.



**PISCES** – Friendship and business and community associations are very important to you this month. You are playing an important role in other people's lives and you are going to be appreciated for this part of you this month. Normally, you just get in there and help people. You don't give it a second thought and you don't necessarily seek other's gratitude for what you do. But this month, that acknowledgment will come your way and it may surprise you. Don't be afraid to accept the leadership role they are offering you. You may feel that you could be overwhelmed by the responsibility. But as the year progresses, your boundaries get stronger and you will become a better delegator.



Visit Lilly Roddy at: <http://www.cybersim.com/hermes>





## TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• The 9th Annual Unity Banquet tickets are on sale. This year's banquet, set for March 24th, 2001 West-chase Hilton Hotel - 7 p.m. until ? will feature comedian, Nancy Ford, as this year's emcee. Tickets are \$35, and can be purchased by credit card - a first for the Unity Banquet - by calling Melanie Rudd at 281-347-6878 or Email: melpeg@pmpub.com. For TATS members, tickets can be purchased by contacting Melanie Black at: thanatos@cityscope.net or Sarah Jane Connell at: skankard@bcs.com

• Did y'all notice... ? TATS' own Lilly Roddy, astrologer to the stars, made the cover of OutSmart this month! Not a bad picture of her at that. Speaking personally, her article in the local mag - a preview of the year to come for each sign - was quite on target! It's written in the stars... You go, Lilly!

• PORTLAND, Ore. — On December 21 county commissioners unanimously enacted a resolution to a countywide policy that would make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Board chairwoman Beverly Stein compared the struggle for transgender rights to that fought for women's rights in the 1960s and '70s. "People back then used to question why women wanted to bother being treated as equals," Stein said. "I think that when people look back on this 25 years from now, there won't be any question as to whether this should've been done or not."

• ATLANTA, Ga. — Atlanta City Council, Dec. 4, enacted a transgender-inclusive non-discrimination ordinance. The new law states victims of sexual orientation discrimination or gender identity may file a lawsuit in the Municipal Court of Atlanta. But critics say the law won't pass constitutional muster.

Councilman Lee Morris was the only vote against the ordinance. Morris, the sole lawyer on the City Council, says he agrees with the intent of the law. But he says the Municipal Court is not the right venue for such complaints. Morris says that the city's charter does not allow it the power to create a cause of action between private parties, and the Municipal Court there is limited to imposing a \$1,000 fine. "I believe in the principle behind the ordinance," stated Councilmember Morris.

• Iowa Transsexuals Can Be Discriminated Against ... Again! A judge in Polk County, Iowa, ruled that Gov. Tom Vilsack overstepped his authority when he issued an executive order last year forbidding discrimination against gays, lesbians, and transsexuals in state government. Judge Glenn Pille wrote: "By adding the addi-

tional classification contained his executive order...this court concludes that he has infringed upon the legislative authority by creating law."

Republican legislators have staged legal challenges to Democrat Vilsack's executive order ever it was issued in September 1999. "It is our responsibility to write laws," stated senate majority leader Stewart Iverson, a Republican. "The governor did not have the authority to write laws."

• Here's an interesting fact: In the 25 years before Bush became Governor of Texas, there were only 3 known Trans people murdered in Texas, all in San Antonio. Two were in 1991 and one in 1993. During the five years he was Governor, there have been five known murders - three in Houston in just the last two years. Now he's in the White House. The times, they are a changin' ... and it don't sound good.

• WALLINGFORD, Conn. — Despite accusations of bigotry and intolerance from parents and students, the school board voted for early retirement of a transsexual teacher. Without comment, the eight-board members present accepted 39 year-old Scott Hendricks' early retirement request, which many people have said was forced because the high school agricultural teacher is undergoing a sex change. About eight people, including parents, students, told the board members they were wrong in going ahead with the retirement request.

• ASHBURN, Ga. — The Georgia Bureau of Investigation is looking into an attack on a gay man in this small rural town. Robert Martin, 32, remains in critical condition after being beaten with a blunt object and left lying outside an abandoned school. Martin, who lives with his mother and disabled brother, and often wears dresses and women's wigs, was not in women's clothing when he was found.

Residents say Martin is widely accepted by townspeople but that he often teased by teens. has been harassed for being gay. "Everybody in Ashburn knew him. He was accepted. It wasn't a big deal." Resident Erma Thompson said. "He was gay, but that don't give them the right to do what they did," she said.

• Quote of the month: "I worry that if Hitler or Pol Pot made a good dance record, people would probably buy



that as well. Where do you draw the line?" — Singer Boy

George on "homophobic" rapper Eminem, speaking to London's *The Pink Paper*.

• A Freedom Of Marriage Act.... The Board of Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association met in Washington, D.C. and approved the new policy position statement: Same Sex Unions: "The American Psychiatric Association supports the legal recognition of same sex unions and their associated legal rights, benefits and responsibilities."

• TRENTON, NJ — A transsexual corrections officer has filed a lawsuit against New Jersey's department of corrections and nine coworkers. Donna Memmer, 36, an M2F with 15 years of working as a corrections officer, charges that she was harassed after informing her supervisors and coworkers at Trenton State Prison that she was going to undergo a sex change. She said she received different job assignments and benefits from what the other workers had, that coworkers put glue in her car locks and threw trash on her car.

• HONOLULU, Hawaii — A man who killed a transvestite in 1993 was sentenced yesterday to the maximum statutory 10 years for manslaughter. Demian McGuire pleaded no contest to the reduced charge under a plea agreement reached in September, nearly seven years after Dinh Van Vo was found dead in his Kapiolani Manor apartment. Vo, 51, an unemployed hairdresser, was found strangled Sept. 6, 1993.

McGuire was indicted on a second-degree murder charge in 1996. McGuire, when arrested, told police he strangled the transvestite after watching a pornographic video showing strangulation scenes.

• TROY, Mich. — Police say that a 74-year-old man found dead last August was killed by a nephew who needed inheritance money to pay for a sex change. The transsexual, Harry V. Titlow, was arrested in Chicago last week and is expected to be returned to face murder charges. Police say the uncle, Donald Rogers, had heart trouble and was thought to have died of natural causes.

"Shortly after the death, we received information that there might be more to the death," said Lt. Steve Zavislak. Zavislak said the department believes Titlow, who received \$100,000 after Rogers's death; forced a large amount of vodka down Rogers's throat and then suffocated him. The 33-year-old Titlow, who goes by the name Vonlee Nicole Titlow, has been arrested twice on prostitution charges and has advertised herself for hire in a weekly Chicago newspaper as an escort and dominatrix.

• Just when you'd seen it all .... Gay white supremacists (Yes, the 'fringe of the fringe') are now using the Web to boost membership. ... a handful of internet-based gay and lesbian-identified groups promoting more than just gay pride among their members. With names like "Real Swastika Knights," "Gay Aryan Resistance," "Gays Against Semites," "Angry White Women Get Even," and "Gay Racist Network," the groups formed mainly to promote their belief in white supremacy.

How are they faring with other supremacist groups? Wrote one white supremacist in response to one of the groups: "Gay Aryan Sisters? When we take power we will have special camps for vermin like you." This has to be the epitome of an oxymoron ... with special emphasis given the last half of the word!

(Continued on Page 16)



## **TATS Tidbits**

(Continued from Page 15)

• Scottish gay couple jailed for torture.... Two gay men who tortured a former drag queen by stuffing a frozen chicken down his trousers were jailed, the Scottish Daily Record reported. Shaun Whitehead, 42, and Jamie Rawson, 31, were sentenced to eight years each. The court found that the two took Francis Mason hostage in July. In addition to forcing the chicken down Mason's pants, the men also beat him up, gagged him with his underwear, and poured bleach over his head.

• Transgender activist Roslyn Houston was honored with a Tasmanian Award for Humanitarian Activities at a December 4 ceremony in Hobart Town Hall, with dignitaries including the town's mayor. The awards are presented by the Human Rights Week Organizing Committee.

"Ros has taken the lead in educating the Police Service on transgender issues and has been instrumental in advocating against Tasmania's archaic cross-dressing laws," said Human Rights Committee chair, Robert Henderson. "Ros is an example to all Tasmanians of how someone with a good heart and a courageous spirit can work with quiet persistence to successfully break down barriers, overcome stereotypes and promote harmony."

• ISTANBUL, Turkey \_ There are some things in Turkey it's best not to be, and Demet Demir is all of them: a political activist, a human-rights crusader, an animal lover, an environmentalist, a prostitute and, in a revelation that stunned even her left-wing buddies, a transsexual.

Now Demir's embarking on another quest: equal rights for transsexuals and transvestites. She said Turkey's 3,000 transsexuals and transvestites must be accepted into society. They want freedom of expression, jobs, benefits, education opportunities, and state-issued licenses for prostitutes. Transsexuals find it virtually impossible to find work in Turkey.

• SEOUL, S. Korea — An unprecedented move to show a South Korean's sex-change operation online has stirred up controversy in this country of little tolerance of homosexuality and transsexuality. South Korea is one of the most conservative Confucian societies in Asia. However, the Internet medical-information company and the private clinic involved defended their decision, saying that webcasting the operation would help give a better understanding of transgender surgery.

The surgeon, Chang Song Sun, defended his decision to allow it to be shown on the Internet. "Some people might be horrified," he stated. "I think it will help those who are considering this operation although I don't think the webcast will be the deciding factor for their decision."

## **XMAS FOR LOS ANGELES....**

(Continued from Page 12)

small town's ordinance that anyone can be forgiven for not knowing about (and I'd be willing to bet that there are a few out there that have been enacted with no notice whatsoever.)

But Los Angeles? C'mon. How many queer lawyers are there in L.A.? At least a couple I'm sure. And how many HRC-oids (and NGLTF-oids, etc.) are there in La La Land? A few I'm sure. I live in a small town in Minnesota but found a reference to the L.A. ordinance online in a published opinion of the California Court of Appeals.

To make sure I wasn't hallucinating, I called the L.A. City Attorney's Office and had Section 49.71 faxed to me (I'm sure they had better things to do than help a Minnesota Kat with a law review article, but the folx I spoke with were quite helpful nevertheless — and I am indeed grateful.) If I can come up with this gem o' info, why couldn't HRC or any of the national queer powerhouses whose paid staffers likely all make more \$ than I do? HRC mouthpiece Liz Seaton was recently quoted in the Washington Blade as saying "transgendered people have never been included in [the definition of] sexual orientation."

These are the clowns who are going to educate Congress about us?

If you read my column, you know I'm not Xian — or even religious at all. But, if any of you want to give me an Xmas present this year, here's my request: Call NGLTF. Call Lambda Legal. Call GLAD. Call NCLR. And, yes, even call HRC. Tell them that they need an attorney on staff who has the unique perspective of a male-to-female transsexual who has been discriminated against not only by heterosexuals but also by homosexuals — a perspective that drives her to dig and to dig and to dig into whatever archives I run across to find information that can be used to free my people from economic slavery.

Who knows? I may be the one who could free all of us — if given the chance.

Freedom for all of us would be the greatest gift of all, wouldn't it?

Happy Xmas, War Ain't Over

## **EDITOR'S RANT**

(Continued from Page 4)

attempts to dismantle this country's constitution with the help of those at the core of our own government. And talk that 'equality' is about to be a thing of the past; replaced instead by the more fashionable 'political incorrectness.' None of this bodes well.

As it turns out, a lot of my friends — both T and straight — have a strange sense of foreboding or an outright depressive mood. Things just don't seem right to them for some indescribable reason. "Nobody told me there'd be days like these...."

It's a winter of discontent for a lot of us. Perhaps it's just the winter blues due to the gloom of the grayer and colder Texas winter we're having this year. Or maybe it's due to the fears of what we face with a changing of the political scenery. Maybe it's stress brought on from overwork (both employment and group or volunteer-affiliated work). Everyone I talk to laments the same overburdened schedules and lack of personal time anymore.

Regardless of what it may be, we don't have to stay mired in the emotional muck. Perhaps putting in a little more effort? I know that sounds as anathema to what I just mentioned about overburdened schedules. But sometimes it actually improves the mood when one is able to clear off at least a few of the many things stacking on ones plate. We can take this proactively and pull ourselves out. Or we can give up.

As for thing that have occurred recently that might be contributors to our emotional funk, there's nothing we can do about them. Lamenting the fact does no good; it prolongs the agony. I'm a firm believer in karma: if someone has done you wrong, let their own deeds be their undoing. It can happen!

We've all got much work to do, and we're best to focus on the tasks ahead. Taking that negativity and using it as fuel — a motivator — will start us all toward accomplishing those needed goals. That's a positive! If you don't like things, take action in a positive manner! And never give up! Then we'll all shine on ... like the moon and the stars and the sun....

Just imagine.... Thank you, John.

**We Love Our Advertisers — Please Support Them as They Support Us!!!**



**LILLY RODDY**

**Astrologer**

920 West Main • Houston, Texas 77006

Tel: 713/529-5842 • Fax: 713/529-6406

Website: <http://www.cybersim.com/hermes> • Email: [Lillycath@aol.com](mailto:Lillycath@aol.com)



**When our community needs help...**

**THE RECOVERY COLLECTIVE**

*Chemical dependency is not a weakness, it's a disease.*

• Intervention • Treatment • Co-dependency  
• Reasonable Rates • Groups / Families / Couples

**Sharon Goodwin**

Email: [SG126@aol.com](mailto:SG126@aol.com)

Licensed & Certified With  
Over 30 Years Experience

(713)

**527-8788**

**2715 Bissonnet, Suite #509**



# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 9, Issue 2

Houston, Texas

February, 2001

*TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.*

## TATS MEMBER GOES TO JACKSONVILLE OVER BEEF WITH WINN-DIXIE

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

What, all flights are booked into Jacksonville today? With that question answered by Jo Pittsworth, Director of TriEss International, we started a 15 hour road trip. We drove all night arriving at our motel at 4:30 A.M. With three hours sleep and a greasy buffet breakfast, we found St. Luke's MCC Church. We were all to meet here and formulate the protest over orange juice and donuts.

Terriane Summers, North Florida Transgender Group, was there when we arrived that cold morning. The sun was up and warm, but I still had on my leather jacket AND leather coat. The cold didn't seem to bother Jo, as she was pumped up. I am not sure with what, but she was definitely ready for the protest at Winn Dixie.

Winn Dixie in Louisiana fired Peter Oiler, a Winn Dixie truck driver of 23 years, for his crossdressing in his home. The Dan, a Facilitator of Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network (JASMYN) unlocked the church. College age girls started arriving as we exchanged names and dunked donuts. There were seven girls representing JASMYN; Megan, Shannon, Lindsey, Kerry, Garrett, Stacy and Malena. These girls became the backbone of our protest, as they had plenty of signs for all to carry.

Monica Helms, Director of Atlanta based

Trans=Action and Bobby Young from Tampa came in about this time. I was dead, as I worked the night before we left, but Jo was talking to everyone and throwing their names back to me to write down. I hope I got them all right.

We left for Winn Dixie headquarters and parked on the side street their truckers use. This is where I panicked, as about two dozen (off the clock?) Winn Dixie workers were at what appeared to be a break area close to where we parked. Across the street from them were two police cars. I waited in the car as Jo walked up and conferred with Jessica Archer, Director, Florida Organization for Gender Equality (FORGE), who happened to be on her cell phone with the ACLU

(Continued on Page 5)



Ain't just whistlin' Winn Dixie: TATS' Brandi Welch Williams (far right), and Tau Chi Tri-Ess' Jo Paulty Pittsworth (squatting on right) join the other protesters calling for action in front of Winn Dixie headquarters.

## JESSICA REDMAN VOTED VP OF CAUCUS

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

For the second time in a month, another transgender has made a bit of history by being elected to the number 2 position in a local GLBT organization. This time it was Jessica Redman who was tapped for the vice president of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus at their January 5 election.

Jessica wasted no time in making her way through the ranks of the Caucus. It was only last May when she was formally voted in as a board member. Eight months later, she has now moved to the second in command to the re-elected president, Sean Carter. Jessica has been active in

(Continued on Page 4)



Jessica Redman, at the Caucus Awards Gala

### MEETING SCHEDULE

February 10	Feelings Meeting at Transgender Community Ctr. @ 3 P
February 24	Social Meeting at Transgender Community Ctr. @ 7 P
March 10	Feelings Meeting at Transgender Community Ctr @ 3 P
March 24	Social Meeting at Transgender Community Ctr @ 7 P

T. A. T. S.  
P. O. Box 142  
Bellaire, Texas 77401



## TATS Officers

[ vacant ]  
President

**Melanie Black**  
Vice President

**Sarah Jane Connell**  
Secretary / Treasurer

**Vanessa Edwards Foster**  
Newsletter Editor

## TATS Board Members

**Monica Roberts**

[ vacant ]

**Alicia Beckman**



## HOW TO REACH US:

If you need directions to a TATS meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (281) 437-2975 twenty-four hours a day and leave a message. The voice mail is reviewed periodically, and the message is forwarded to an appropriate spokesperson. Your message is confidential.

If you have something to offer in the way of support, if you need to get in touch with someone in the group, if you are interested in becoming a part of the group, or if you just need to talk to somebody, please leave a name, number, and the best time to call.

Our newsletter/editorial Email address is: [moonflowrr@aol.com](mailto:moonflowrr@aol.com)

To contact the board members, Email a message to: [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org)

Also, visit our web page at: <http://www.genderweb.org/~tats/>

Articles in this newsletter may be reprinted by other non-profit TG groups provided a copy is sent to TATS, Inc. within 2 months, and proper credit is given the author. Opinions contained in this newsletter are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of TATS.

## EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

These are the times that try our souls. The paraphrase of Thomas Paine's quote is quite apt. It's been a rather trying period. It's truly been a month of constant challenges, but there seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel. Perhaps it's a beacon lighting the way out ... or maybe, it just an oncoming train.

Nonetheless, there's an impending sense of change. For me personally, it feels doesn't feel like either good or bad change ... just change. Our challenges are rising to meet us. Respondingly, we must be willing to rise to meet our challenges as well. Will we as a community do so?

For TATS and I, the group meetings did not meet at my place this month. That era of TATS has passed as of the year's end, as has my active involvement in the Caucus. Yet even giving these up, I still find I have more work; not less. My friends have gone through their bouts of questioning and depression (or maybe it's a recession ... since it's not really a long one.) Jessi Redman mentioned she felt this month as I felt last month, a vague impending sense of doom. Almost frightening. Others have echoed the same feeling.

Other friends of mine, both here and out of state, have found their family dynamics shift dramatically. Both (a pre-op here in town, and a post-op in Ohio) have experienced turmoil with their ex-wives; some of which spilled over into the relations with their kids. The paradigm shift was more severe for my friend in Ohio, where she now finds herself embroiled in a custody challenge with her ex and children. The wife has challenged the court-ordered custody and enlisted the kids to withhold relations with her. Sadness and stress seem to be the new winter fashion this year.

My pulls have been in several different directions at once; one of which has me focusing more decidedly in the national direction. I'll be exporting a lot of our state lobby days organizational knowledge to the national stage, where I'll be organizing the NTAC Lobby Days - my first on a national level. It brings opportunities, but also accordingly, the stresses along with them. If it were only so simple, though....

This past month has seen an escalation in the level of effluvium from more agitative oligarchs of NTAC. Small cadre be it may, it's managed to sidetrack all planning for the upcoming lobby days, as well as disrupt the flow of planning for the next



After the interview at KPFT (L-R) Dan DiDonato, local activist Ada Edwards and Vanessa Edwards Foster

board meeting and reception at the upcoming True Spirit Conference. Seemingly lost amidst all the havoc are those who are there for a legitimate reason and with pure intent. A few of those are new to activism, and are only catching their first glimpse of 'transgender activism' ... and frankly, it's an ugly picture at the moment thanks to this radical cell. Though another group has popped up on the scene, it appears to be an opportunistic grab for power by its principals. And one wonders if any of us can get it together to lobby for our community.

(Continued on Page 14)

## In Memoriam

**Robin West**

1959-2000



*I want this to be  
a harmony of voices  
— Lauren D. Wilson*



**Karen Deppard**

1953 - 1999

*Our joys as winged dreams do fly,  
Why then should sorrow last?  
Since grief but aggravates thy loss,  
Grieve not for what is past."*

## A 'Special Thanks' go out to ...

for submitting articles

**Christopher Heredia, San Francisco CA**

**Julie Friedmann, Baltimore MD**

**Katrina Rose, Albert Lea MN**

**Monica Roberts**

**Vikki Lynn Skelton**

**Lilly Roddy**

for submitting humor

**Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV**

## Annual Subscription Rate:

**\$18. per year**

## Our Advertising Rates Are:

Business card sized ad (1 1/4 inch x 3 1/2 inch)

**\$42. per year**

Quarter-page ad (4 3/8 inch x 3 1/2 inch)

**\$106. per year**



# INAUGURATION DEMONSTRATION DRAWS OVER 300

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

It was a sad day for Democracy. So read a sign held by one of the handful of children attending the Inauguration Day Protest held simultaneously with inauguration of the country's 43rd president, George W. Bush.

The protest was a organized a by a conglomer-eration of groups: the Rainbow/PUSH coalition, Trust The

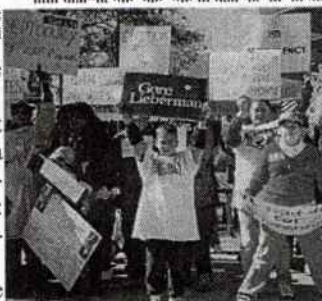
cious occasion.

One striking quality of those attending the demonstration was the variety of those attending: children, to elderly ladies, gay, lesbian, and trans-

we all saw a wrong that needed addressing. The messages were also similar in the answers to the rhetorical questions asked therewith: we must come together and take action.

with a rousing call to action. Local activists Ada Edwards of the Shrine of the Black Madonna Church, and DeLoyd Parker of the SHAPE Community Center also gave rousing re-

**INAUGURATION**

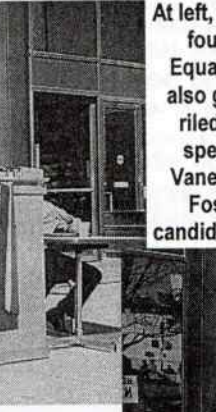
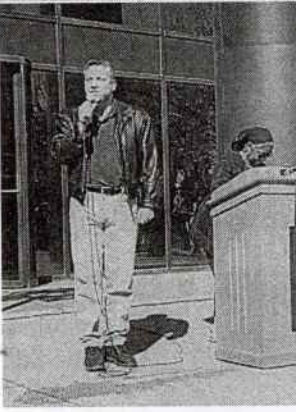


A crowd of over 300 attended

Inauguration Demonstration (above and at left) in front of the Federal Courthouse downtown. At right, perennial activist, Ray Hill, fresh out of the hospital (with cast on foot) addresses the assembled crowd as one of the charter members of the Equality Rally, Inc. Expectedly, Ray put on one of the best performances of the demonstration.

At left, Dan DiDonato, founder of the Equality Rally Inc. also got the crowd riled up with his speech. Below, Vanessa Edwards Foster speaks candidly to the crowd

People, the Harris County Democrats and the Equality Rally Inc. (of which, yours truly is board Secretary.) As well as the above named groups, a sizable number of other groups participated, and sent representatives to speak to the coalesced group in front of the Federal



Courthouse downtown. Among those groups speaking were reps from the Shrine of the Black Madonna Church, the AFL-CIO, ROADwomen, the Green Party, LULAC, SHAPE, and numerous democratic legislative offices. Yours truly was there to represent (among other groups) both NTAC and TGAIN.

While it was a sad day for Democracy, and a cold, dreary day in the nation's capital, it was a crisp, sunny day that greeted the coalition of protesters. Oddly enough, it was almost a party atmosphere with music blaring the tunes like the Isley Brothers R&B hit 'Fight the Power'. Folks were dancing. The mood was surprisingly happy, even though it was on what the assembled felt was an inauspi-

gendered, as well as very heterosexual union laborers, black, white, brown, young radical youth, and middle class couples with kids and grandkids in tow. The signs, and even the costumes worn by the attendees were clever and colorful.

In essence, it was a picture perfect pastiche of America coalesced in one unified cause: to bring attention to, and hopefully reestablish integrity in, the free election system.

Even the speeches and the speakers themselves mirrored that same concept. All of us were from varied backgrounds, and varied interests; but

The speakers themselves, did a wonderful job of stirring the crowd. William Paul Thomas of the Rainbow / PUSH coalition began the slate of speakers



quests for bringing integrity back to the voting system.

Jim Cumming of the Heights Democrats proved to be one of the real sleepers amongst the speakers. He's got a wonderful gift of theatre that he very aptly applied to his speech. Cumming called for the crowd to "buy War Bonds" —

(Continued on Page 7)



Above, State Rep. Garnet Coleman strikes a resonant chord with the assembled protesters (below).





## JESSICA REDMAN CAUCUS VP...

*(Continued from Page 1)*

the Caucus since January a year ago, when she made her first big splash at the Caucus retreat.

"Jessica had been an exemplary member during my first term as President and served as fund raising chair with immense energy," said Caucus President, Sean Carter. "I was honored in awarding her the Jim Owens Newcomer of the Year Award and look forward to working with her as my right hand for the next year."

Since the board retreat, the ever-so-popular Ms. Redman was instrumental in creating the concept for the Caucus' two big fundraisers this past year. The first one, a ticket raffle to the Millennium March On Washington brought in \$2500 to the Caucus coffers - all this before even being voted onto the Board.

The last one was a last-minute coordination of the Caucus' annual Awards Gala. On an impromptu visit to the Hotel, Jessica made quick plans to secure the room, and quickly organized a very well put-together banquet. The banquet itself was quite a success for the Caucus, effectively paying off the outstanding debt carried over from the previous year, and bringing in over \$1,800 to the Caucus coffers.



Since being elected to the Board (L) in May as Dave Roberts looks on, up to winning the Newcomer of the year Award (R) with Sean Carter presenting, Jessica Redman has made an impact on the Caucus



"This is also a wonderful moment for the Caucus as we see the first transgender individual take on the position of Vice President" proclaimed the Caucus' Sean Carter. "It shows that we truly can show unity and leadership on such a diverse level."

"This is yet one more sign signifying the maturation process of the gay/lesbian/transgender

communities into one seamless community," said a proud Sarah DePalma, who was there when Jessica won her award last November. Putting it into the context of lobby days, she added, "we have all come to realize that the wolf is at the door and it isn't asking whether we are gay, lesbian or transgendered. Only our mutual efforts will keep the wolf at bay."

## Ms. Smith Goes to Austin: Fun and Revelations At Texas Lobby Days

**By Julie Friedmann**

**R**oughly two years ago I went to my state capitol to lobby for transgendered, gay and lesbian rights. I was part of a great big group (more than 30 people) comprised of crossdressers, transsexuals, transgenderists, spouses and our brothers, the FTM counterparts. We visited almost every state senator and representative, in excess of 150.

Why tell you this? It was *fiuuuuun!!!* It was inspiring, meaningful and instructive. It was challenging, daunting and bold. It was delightful. Best of all, its happening again in February. The day before The event began before I arrived a whole day before. Sarah DePalma, the take-no-prisoners activist for T-folk in Texas and everywhere, had arranged for a primer the night before we lobbied. We met at a motel near the state Capitol so that people could learn, arrive late and get dressed the next morning in safety and style. There were speakers who coached us on what to say. The organizers fielded questions and made sure everyone had what they needed. Most importantly, they handed out sheets listing the critical information: the names of the elected officials, the location of their offices, a map showing how to get there and the times of their appointments. The organizers had already scheduled appointments, so that

part was set. In addition, everyone was given the names and numbers of key bills we endorsed and disliked. This made it very simple to talk directly to our representatives in a cogent, forceful and meaningful manner.

I had to work the night before, but I took a day off from work and drove three hours to Austin to be there and do my part. I didn't have much vacation at the time (still don't!) but my spouse and I

agreed that it was an important thing to do. We were right. The main event

First things first, the girls and guys all lined up in front of the state capitol for a big picture. We held up a banner, mugged for the camera and made history. (For the record, the photo was strictly voluntary.) The offices of an extra-friendly representative, Deborah Danburg, served as our headquarters. Her staff was very friendly, supportive and helpful, even in the midst of all their other work. I'll never forget them. One of the nicest things about this event, though, held true no matter whose office we were in we were treated with dignity and respect by absolutely everyone. That includes the state capitol police and the most conservative nut cases you could imagine. (It's so nice to feel like a lady.)

Well, we hit the halls. There was encouragement and discouragement. There were highs and lows, and lots of surprises. One of our girls, Vanessa Edwards Foster, tried to talk a staff member into supporting a particular bill, one that would help provide job security to the transgendered. The staffer said she didn't think her office could support the bill. Vanessa quipped, "Well, I guess you don't mind if we all go on welfare." This caught the staffer by surprise, and after a few minutes of

*(Continued on Page 12)*

### AGAIN MAKES FINAL PLANS FOR LOBBY DAYS

The Texas Gender Advocacy & Information Network (Tgain) is in the final stages of gearing up for Transgender Lobby Days. The event is hoping to eclipse the previous record for attendance two years ago, when 52 made their way to the State Capitol. Final planning points for this year's edition of TG Lobby Days are below:

- 1) Today Executive Director Sarah DePalma spoke with the legislative assistant for Debra Danburg. The name change/gender marker bill is waiting for final markup. We will have a bill number within a week to ten days. As soon as that happens we will pass along the information.
- 2) We have also begun the process of identifying legislation, which we will support, and bills we will oppose. It's unlikely that anyone will be surprised with the final results.
- 3) If you have not already made your decision to attend Lobby Day, the time for waffling is about to end. We would like to get a sense of how many people we can expect to attend. Please send an E-mail letting us know if you will be coming alone or if you are bringing a group of people. (And of course the number of people in your group.) It would also be helpful if you could tell us whether individually or as a group you will be attending the Lobby Training 101 on February the 19th.
- 4) We have not received many requests for roommates or help with transportation. Time is running short. If you need help speak up now or forfeit your right to complain.
- 5) If you live in the Houston area, we need two volunteers who can help Sarah cross reference legislative room assignments. If you are available for three hours on Saturday the 10th please let us know.



## TATS' BEEF WITH WINN DIXIE...

(Continued from Page 1)

representative, Ken Hurley.

It was decided we could park in front of Winn Dixie's headquarters on the street. As it was, we were parked about 1/4 mile from the street we were planning on picketing. We then were told we could park in front on the side of the street. We drove back to the front for a short lived few minutes. Two of Jacksonville's finest told us, there, we could not park on the street. So, Jo and a few others drove the cars back down the side street while the bulk (rest?) of us kept walking the sidewalk with our signs.

Numerous news reporters and camera people were waiting to interview us. I think everybody got interviewed at least one. NBC, ABC, CBS, FOX reporters were there. You can see some of the newspaper articles at [www.jacksonville.com](http://www.jacksonville.com) in the archives for January 5th or 6th. It was at this time we all realized the police officers were there for our safety. They reminded us to, "Stay off of the grass and on the sidewalk". Someone pointed out a Ford Taurus across the street with a camera sticking out of the driver's window, along with a like colored Taurus down a ways at the Chevron gas station.

Shortly there after, we saw a sheriff's deputy get into one of the cars. As the day wore on, we waved to the sheriff's cars and surprise...they waved back! Jo and I started waving to the truckers, especially the Winn Dixie trucks, and gesturing for them to blow their horns. Numerous truckers waved and honked, adding to the cacophony at the protest site. A few cars surprised us by continually honking and hollering as they drove by. JO



Above, protesters from the JASMYN group line the streets in front of Winn-Dixie's headquarters at the Jan. 5 protest. At right, the principals of the organized protest at Winn-Dixie's Jacksonville office: (L-R) Monica Helms of Georgia's Trans=Action, organizer Jessica Archer of FORGE, and Terrienne Summers of the now-defunct North Florida Sisters.

started shouting, "Hello America" and got it confused and said, "Happy America"! She sure is a hoot and a great road trip companion!

When the sun started it's downward stretch, our girls from JASMYN seemed to go in slow motion. A few sat down, but kept their signs held high. As the rallies' final minutes approached, we huddled together for a group picture in front of Winn Dixie's corporate sign. I heard of other protest's in other Winn Dixie cites, but JAX's protest

had two things the others didn't. That was two Texans in boots that were ready to go the distance!

We regrouped at the church for feedback (debriefing?) and to say our good-bys. Jessica asked what we noticed during the day. The answers were varied..."The cars passing by seemed to be supporting us". One driver shouted, "Go back to work".

Jo mentioned that while she was waiting at the corner for me to bring the car up, a lot of Winn Dixie employees came out after we left to have



their smoke break. We made an impact on these employees for sure! Monica and Jessica did a rough count and stated about 12,000 cars saw the protest. Of over 40 supporting organizations, over 30 were represented at this protest.

Jo and I were back on the interstate at 3:15 PM.... West Bound and Down.

## COALITION URGES CONTINUED ACTION AGAINST WINN-DIXIE

### NTAC PRESS RELEASE

The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition, (NTAC), has signed onto the call for continuation of action against the Winn-Dixie Corporation. NTAC has joined a broader coalition of activists, organizations, and supporters who wish to express dismay over Winn-Dixie's discriminatory treatment of a transgendered employee.

The recent protests on Jan 5, 2001, followed a boycott started on Dec. 18, 2000. At the heart of the protests and boycott were issues surrounding Peter Oiler's job termination on Jan 5, 2000. Mr. Oiler, a truck driver for Winn-Dixie in the New Orleans area, was employed for 21 years by the company before being fired because he crossdresses away from work. In October 1999, amid rumors that he was gay, Mr. Oiler, who is married, confided to a supervisor that he is transgendered.

Within three days, management asked Oiler to resign, saying that someone had seen him cross-dressing off duty; and how this could be bad for the corporate image. When he refused to resign, he was terminated.

Eric Ferrero, one of Peter Oiler's ACLU attorneys from New York, said the specifics of the case could not be commented upon, but was quick to express appreciation for all the support from the GLBT community. Winn-Dixie spokesman Mickey Clerc said the company 'could not comment on any pending litigation.

Jessica Archer, director of the Florida Organization for Gender Equality (FORGE), was coordinator of the protest at Winn-Dixie's corporate headquarters in Jacksonville, FL. "I feel it is always important to stand up when there's discrimination or bigotry of any kind," Ms. Archer said. Her group wants Winn-Dixie to begin company wide diversity training, gender education, draft anti-discrimination language for employment policies, and to publicly acknowledge diversity is welcome at the company, and to realize it is vital to a safe, productive work environment.

The Winn-Dixie action saw an unprecedented, broad-based coalition form; which organized a massive e-mail and phone campaign directed at the company's corporate offices. In addition to the protest in Jacksonville, there were similar protests organized at other Winn-Dixie locations, including the division offices in New Orleans.

*(The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition is the nation's preeminent transgender civil rights organization. NTAC works for the advancement of understanding and the attainment of full civil rights for all transgendered and intersexed people in every aspect*

of society. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.ntac.org>



TATS' Brandi Williams (far right) and Jo Tittsworth (crouched on right) take a proactive stance against discrimination.



## Ally's McBoston McTransphobia McPresentations: Full McCircle

By Katrina C. Rose

**M**y father didn't like any cop or detective show except *McCloud* (as a comparison: a woman I knew in college once told me that her policeman father would let her watch any cop show except *McCloud*.) It might not be surprising that he also was a self-anointed expert on the reality behind the fiction on TV. And, it might not be all that surprising that most of his insight wasn't all that insightful. Most, but not all.

One of the few bits o' wisdom o' his regarding television violence that I think was actually quite insightful went like this: People bitch about blood and guts on television; it will supposedly warp children's minds. But, those same people have no problem seeing someone crash through a plate glass window, hop up, brush glass off of his clothing and then be on his merry way. What's more likely to harm a child in the long run, however: getting the impression that crashing through a plate glass window will rip you to shreds or getting the impression that crashing through a plate glass window will not?

And then there's *Ally McBeal*.

I can't stand *Ally McBeal* — the character or the show. The show makes L.A. Law look like a documentary by comparison and I refuse to waste space talking about the character.

Since its debut in 1997, I've only voluntarily watched three complete episodes of the show. The total would be four, but I missed the first of this year's Cindy episodes.

By now, most of you know that Cindy was an attractive, confident, intelligent pre-operative male-to-female transsexual who entered the McUniverse as a client and ended up dating one of the McLawFirm's legal McBeagles (I'm not even going to attempt to keep track of the names of the show's characters; I can't stand any of them, even Lucy Liu's character.)

Once he found out about Cindy's genitals, the male McLawyer character had trepidations about the relationship but treated Cindy as a woman and tried to continue the relationship.

And then came the transphobic badgering by many of his McPartners. A blonde McShrew said it would affect the firm's credibility (sound like anything you may have heard about same-sex relationships or interracial ones?) Another McLawyer told him to drop "it." And, yet another McLawyer said there was nothing wrong with transgendered people but that no one should ever touch one.

I asked this question a few weeks ago, but I'm going to ask it again: Do any of you really believe that the same sort of discussion, drenched with the same sort of disgusting bigotry, does not occur when a Cindy who happens to be an attorney is considered for employment at real-life Ally McLawFirms?

Even though transphobia (in a hiring decision no less) was seen three years ago in an episode of the *Drew Carey Show*, that was, well..., the *Drew Carey Show*. Cindy's treatment by the Ally

McBigots may well have been the biggest dose of realistic transphobia that prime time America has ever seen.

Most transgender activists are hailing the Cindy character as a sea change in the presentation of transgendered characters in mainstream programming. More importantly, those hailing the character recognize that the bigotry being shown wasn't anti-transgender in purpose but, rather, *anti-bigotry* as anyone who watched the third Cindy episode could see who was "aberrant."

And it wasn't Cindy. Applying my dad's plate glass window theory: if a realistic transgendered character is used on a television show, would you prefer her to have nothing but happy endings or to be treated as she likely would be in the real world? I mention this because there are actually some transgender activists who not only can't grasp this but also have encouraged people to write to FOX to protest the portrayal of Cindy. Obviously the Log Cabin Republicans have yet to corner the myopia market.

*Ally McWhatever* did egregiously insult transgendered people, but not with Cindy. Three years ago there was Stephanie, the transgendered woman who would up in the sex trade because her family had disowned her and, after being rescued from the street with a McLawFirm secretarial job, without any explanation whatsoever in the storyline went back to hooking and ended up dead.

The only message about transgendered people that America could glean from that episode: transsexuals = prostitutes. However, Stephanie ≠ Cindy.

On a fan-maintained website honoring Lisa Edelstein (the actress who portrayed Cindy) there was recently a notation that Cindy is slated to return later in the season. Of course, now Robert Downey, Jr. has decided that he likes meth and blow more than staying out of the joint and pulling in big bux as a new legal McBeagle in the Ally McUniverse. Will FOX decide that a fictional attractive intelligent transsexual is better for said McUniverse than an increasingly undependable, non-fictional cokehead of an all-but washed-up actor?

Cindy *should* be back a bit earlier than planned. Maybe FOX can even dump the obnoxious McUniverse from the post-*Boston Public* (already a better show than *McSqueal* ever was) timeslot and give Cindy her own show.

But, we'd need a storyline. Let's say she gets pissed off that Massachusetts' real-life employment anti-discrimination law protects gays, lesbians and, of course, obnoxious heterosexuals such as those at Ally's McLawFirm, but does not protect transgendered people such as herself. She learns that the overly-monied gay politicians are just as transphobic as Ally's McPartners, so she decides to run for office herself. Senator Cindy.

Far-fetched? Maybe — but its certainly no more, um..., aberrant than, say, Congressman Frank. Oh, silly me, I forgot. He's not fictional.

Too bad — at least for transgendered people.

## TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY APPLAUDS THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOR APPLAUDING HISTORIC GAY INCLUSIVE CIVIL RIGHTS PACKAGE

WASHINGTON — The Transgender Friends of Human Rights Campaign Club today applauded the Human Rights Campaign for applauding the Democratic leadership for introducing a gay-inclusive historic civil rights package in Congress. This is the first civil rights bill of its kind and it shows the Democrats' commitment to achieving equality for our gay and lesbian friends, says Transgender Friends of the HRC Club.

"This is a landmark bill that will pave the way for the introduction of important bipartisan legislation that will protect lesbian and gay Americans from hate crimes and job discrimination," says Transgender Friends of HRC Club Political Director, Whinny Greblehcats. "The Human Rights Campaign leadership, particularly Elizabeth Birch, deserve special thanks for sending the message that gay and lesbian equality is an important priority. This legislation should be supported by the vast majority of Americans, as well as receive the full support of all transgendered people."

As part of a larger legislative package, the Democratic leadership introduced the Protecting Civil Rights for All Americans Act. This legislation includes six different provisions that show a commitment to basic human rights.

The first section is federal hate crimes legislation that includes sexual orientation. The second is a study that will explore the national problem of racial profiling. Section three would give more money to the Legal Services Corp., which provides legal representation to low income individuals and families. The fourth section is legislation to outlaw discrimination based on genetics. The fifth section is legislation that outlaws employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. The final section deals with increased funding for law enforcement agencies that deal with enforcing civil rights laws.

During a press conference immediately in front of Park Bench #1276, Greblehcats acknowledged that some transgender activists will not support the Protecting Civil Rights of All Americans Act because protections on the basis of gender identity or expression are excluded. Greblehcats notes, however, that in 1998, the Human Rights Campaign passed a resolution supporting civil rights for all Americans regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. The Human Rights Campaign has also been engaged in real and meaningful work for transgendered people on Capitol Hill since September of 1995. In addition, the Human Rights Campaign maintains an extensive list of all activities which indicate their support.

Greblehcats says that Transgender Friends of the Human Rights Campaign Club was formed to provide a more realistic perspective of the political potential for passing transgender inclusive

(Continued on Page 12)



## INAUGURATION....

(Continued from Page 3)

a clever campaign stump to encourage the throng attending to support the Democrats financially. "This is War!" he declared. His alliterative, and passionate speaking style was arguably the big rouser of the day.

Not to be outdone, of course, was our own Ray Hill – granddaddy of queer activism. Typical to form, Ray took hold of the microphone as if he owned the place! Even though he'd just left the hospital, and was preparing to go back in the following week, Ray stumped (with cast on foot, appropriately) like the professional showman he is! This author can't tell you what a good feeling it is to look across the way, and see the old man's visage with the fire (as always) in his eyes!

Democratic Party Chair Sue Schechter also took a turn on the mic, exhorting the democrats to take action. Other speakers included State Rep. Garnet Coleman, and an aide to State Rep. Debra Danburg's office, Betsy Alvarado from the Mayor's office, Dale Worthing from the AFL-CIO, ROADWomen's Dalia Stokes, among others.

Equality Rally founder, Dan DiDonato, also took a turn at the mic. His was yet another alliterative speech that brought the crowd to a cheer. His speech alluded to how he and many others felt: pissed! In a call-and-answer cadence, Dan asked "are we gonna take this?" The crowd responded an enthusiastic "NO!!!"

And yes, even on this day with so many other voices, transgenders also had their say.

As emcee Ada Edwards announced me, "Vanessa Edwards Foster with the National TRANSGENDER Advocacy Coalition", and I grabbed the microphone and walked out in front of the podium, I could see a puzzled look on some of the faces in the crowd. So I repeated, "Yes I am a transsexual ... from NTAC, and the Texas Gender Advocacy & Information Network, and the Texas Association for Transsexual Support, etc, etc." At that point, what I had prepared in my head in the hour before my turn at the podium immediately vanished! Wing it!

That I did, telling the crowd we transgenders represent the lowest of the low – the queerest of the queer – to conservative America.

Next, I moved on to how we'd just experienced history – never before had we experienced an election like the one we just went through ... where it no longer matters who has the most actual votes or electoral votes, but who has the right people placed in the right spots to vote them in. Partisanship. "We need accountability!" I shouted. "Put them on record! Make them account!"

Now we have a president who promises bipartisanship, and nominates ... John Ashcroft for attorney general. We have a president who wants to heal the country, and calls African Americans a

'special interest group.' "They're coming after us." I reminded the gathering.

Continuing, I alluded to the similarities between the circumstances that brought Hitler into power, and what we'd just experienced. How when the Nazis came to power, it was under a close election and under cloudy circumstances. How once they had power, they started coming after groups, and they came after the drag queens and transies first – the smallest, most obvious and marginal group. Gaining momentum, they then rounded up the lesbians and gays, then went after the disabled and the gypsies, then went after the Jews; then added "I remember history. All of us here today represent the hated class. We're not 'them'".

At this point, the raucous crowd had become hushed. "I feel like a canary in a coalmine. We (the transgenders) will be the first ones they come after. And they're already starting to come after us here



Vanessa (L) and Jackie Thorne (R) enjoy a lovely day at the rally.

GOP candidate was being inaugurated that morning, a half-dozen GOP supporters stood across the street from the rally, protesting us. Jeez, they're even sore winners!



Roused rabble at the Protest! (L-R) MCCR's Tamara Jones, Harris County Dem. Party Chair, Sue Schechter, Ricky 'Rainbow' DeKlown' Hurt & Vanessa Edwards Foster get activated!

in the state. When they take us out, you'll know it's starting. Remember history! Remember to put them on record – hold them accountable! Make them account!"

It was the first time I was ever cheered giving a speech! Exhilarating! Even more exhilarating were the reactions from the crowd – not necessarily the ones from friends like Sue Schechter and Tamara Jones, but more from strangers who sought me out to give their comments. One woman, fiftyish, saw me walk up and extended her hand, squeezed, and said I understand. Her eyes were welling with tears. She was definitely not trans, but she was certainly touched.

So much for prepared speeches....

All in all, I came away feeling rather enthused. Far from being defeated, it appeared that America was instead resolved to make this a catalyst for change. For action instead of apathy. For truth instead of treachery. For democracy instead of defeat. All the various unheard voices finally had coalesced and discovered a voice!

And it will be needed. For even though the

## CROSSDRESSING SHERIFF'S DEPUTY FORCED TO RESIGN

FAYETTEVILLE, NC — In what's turning out to be a repeat of the Winn-Dixie case, a cross-dressing Cumberland County Sheriff's deputy says he was forced to resign after someone outed his lifestyle.

Richard Silvestri resigned Oct. 5, the day after Capt. Van Parker advised him in a memo that an internal investigation was being conducted regarding possible violations of unbecoming conduct, failing to obey a direct order and other allegations.

"The possible policy violations relate to your making public your transgender lifestyle, how that admitted lifestyle affects your ability to perform your duties as a deputy sheriff and to interact with your co-workers and the public perception of any apparent endorsement by the Sheriff's Office of such a lifestyle," the memo reads.

Silvestri, 47, said he resigned because he did not want a witch hunt that would hurt his friends and family. Now, however, he wants his job back, saying his personal life is his business.

"I don't bring it to work," he said. "I've gotten a lot of support from a lot of officers. I was good at what I did. I did my job. The accusation was that I wasn't doing my job, and that's bologna. I want my job back."

In the memo from Parker, Silvestri is also accused of disobeying a direct order by wearing earring studs to work.

Silvestri, who served 20 years as an Army paratrooper, was married 25 years before his divorce was finalized this month. He has two grown sons.

It's yet another example of how even heterosexual crossdressers are no longer safe from the scrutiny, judgment and prejudice that was once primarily the reserve of transsexuals.



## ASTRO FORECAST FOR FEBRUARY 2001

By Lilly Roddy

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The most significant event for this month is the first of 3 mercury retrogrades. It begins on February 3rd and last till the 25th. And if you include the couple of days before and the a couple of days after those dates, then you have the entire month. Is Mercury retrograde always bad? The answer to that is no. We just have to remember that understanding astrology is much like following the seasons. For example, when the Sun is in Capricorn, it is the winter time here in the northern hemisphere. Do we plant our crops then? Do we flay about and consider that we have no control over our lives? No, we just go and get a coat or sweater and wait for the spring, the day the Sun moves into Aries. So, Mercury retrograde is about looking back at what we have been doing and re-viewing our past. This could be career decisions, relationship choices or simply trying to gain a better understanding of our life path. The problems that people experience with Mercury retrograde is from trying to start or begin a new project or enterprise. Then, things do go wrong. But in the context of planting crops in the winter, in Capricorn, no one would expect things to grow during that period. And we would just shrug our shoulders and ask ourselves what did we expect. And the best way to gain the benefits from Mercury retrograde is to clean out those closets, files, lives, bad relationships, family issues or what ever comes up during the retrograde period for you to take a re-look at.

Days to stay in bed are February 3rd, 9th, 12th, 15th, 22nd, and the 25th. Days to welcome the dawn are the 4th, 8th, 11th, 17th, 18th, 20th, and the 24th. Days to party are the 4th, 9th, 15th, 18th and 22nd.

**ARIES** – The first part of the month you are in a rest and retreat mood. You are still rather socially minded but you are choosing your associations more carefully. Expect to hear from friends from your past this month after the 7th. The pace at work picks up and you can expect to be rather busy. You may be over your limit and endurance by mid month. Don't overload your schedule. You will find yourself taking care of things at work that you thought you had finished but needed some fine tuning. Relationships seem to flow easier and even if you are not involved, you will want to be.

**TAURUS** – Now your directions definitely trends toward your career and your financial security. You will be re-considering your career direction and choice this month. There is a sense of unsettledness that keeps you from making a commitment to what you are doing and to uncertainty about leaving. Those of you born in the later part of the sign are more confident about your choices but there is still that nagging feeling haunting you. Although the pots seems to boil over for many of you in February, you still may not take any action on this till the very end of the month. At that time, the personal doubt decreases to a manageable level.

**GEMINI** – This is the month to review where you have been and to rework the things that have not gone as well as you thought. There will be times this month when you will be able to see your mistakes better than ever. Don't consider this a bad sign but an opportunity to correct what hasn't been working. Do not start any new projects this month. Take all the time you need to finish up and complete the ones you have on the shelf.

Get those files in order and your closets cleaned out. Relationships can be very bumpy from mid month on. For some of you, this is the final act and you will be bringing this play to a close. Others will have to rise to the occasion and recreate that part of your life with your current partner. But you cannot avoid the issues there.

**CANCER** – Money and shared resources that you have with your partner becomes the significant emphasize this month. The money differences may be a sign that you or your partner wants to know more and feel more secure about your connections. Surface answers won't fill the bill. You will have to dig a lot deeper. Your work environment is very creative, volatile and restless. Stresses there can take a toll on your health this month. Make sure that you get plenty of exercise so that you have a health outlet for the excess energy of worry that you are creating. Relationships between coworkers could be combative. Don't get in the middle unless you want them to aim their weapons at you.

**LEO** – Relationships are the theme for this month. Your feelings about your relationships are likely to be on the surface and visible for all to see. Normally you are able to keep your self a bit detached from that part of your, but not this month. If you are in a relationship and there are problems brewing you have been avoiding, they will be conspicuous for all to see. This applies to business as well as personal relationships. If you are not in a relationship, you will want to have someone close to you so that you can bounce off your ideas about partnerships. If relationship is doing well, you will still want some time to make sure that you and your lover are working for the same life goals.

**VIRGO** – This is your month of reorganization. You are going to clean out those filing cabinets, straighten out those closets and finish up those projects that have been hanging around. The things that have been bugging you, you will not be able to ignore them anymore. This could be issues around the office coming to head between you, your boss and/or your coworkers. This is the time to get the cards on the table and find a resolution. Otherwise, these issues can be especially explosive in the first 10 days of the month. Try to avoid starting any new projects until March. Otherwise, they will not work out as you planned and you will have to go back and restart them later.

**LIBRA** – You are ready to take a break from all that you have been doing. Consider changing your routines, a short trip out of town or going to a new restaurant. You are needing some stimulation for your brain. Spending time with your children would help and give you that novel point of view you are looking for. If you don't have any children, consider borrowing some. Ideas that you used in the past and couldn't make work will find their way back into your brain pathways this month. Recycle those ideas. And for the relationship sign, you are ready for some new contacts after the 4th. Your current relationship needs a boost or a new partner. Your sexual energies are stronger and an adventure could renew those vows.

**SCORPIO** – Now your high energy starts to irritate your family. They want you to pay more attention to them and to redirect your energy toward them and their projects. You could feel very restricted or trapped at the beginning of the month. You could take this productive element and do some work around the home. You have been really trying to create a strong foundation in your life over the last couple of years. And this is essentially to your career. Unless you are able to stand, psychologically grounded, you will not be able to put your

creative endeavors out there. You will feel that the personal work that you expose to others will trap you in a cycle of having to do the same thing because of their expectations. Take a trip back home and explore your roots. That will help.

**SAGITTARIUS** – Relationships enter the picture for you this month. They will stay a strong theme for the rest of this year. If you are in one, you will want to renew it. If you are not in one, you will want one. If you have one and it isn't working well, you will want to get rid of it. February is the beginning month of this process. You are communicating well this month. In fact, you are taking care of those emails that you haven't gotten around to answering. Driving could be a bit tougher as you are side tracked by not being able to keep your mind on the road. Pay closer attention or ride the bus so you can think more freely. You will get a real burst of energy after the 15th.

**CAPRICORN** – Money aspects are highlighted this month. You are taking a long term look at the way you have been spending your money and how you have been using your talents. You will not be able to move forward on new investments or even new projects until you have take the time to look at what you have done over the last year. Tax issues could arise and you will be highly motivated to take care of these as soon as possible. If these have been around a while, you are really feeling trapped by them. This may also show up as you wanting to express different sides of your talents. You may have taken a more safe path over the years and now you are ready to break out of your shell and do something unconventional for you. Just get the plans made this month. Next month you can put them into play.

**AQUARIUS** – You are beginning to feel more social this month. And you are pulling out of that self imposed isolation that you had put yourself in last month. Old friends and business associates are very valuable this month. Renewing some contacts with them could be very helpful into the next year for business. You are beginning to feel more comfortable that you have in 2 years. You are finally getting a sense that your home is where you want to be. You have been very restless for the last couple of years. Even though you have had a place to live, you were not sure you were going to stay there. And now you are ready to put down some roots. Taking with others is very important this month, also. You will need others around you to bounce your ideas off of.

**PISCES** – The first part of February is a period of rest and retreat for you. You are in a cocoon preparing to address the issues of your upcoming career change and new life direction. So, just consider that you are gathering your strength and consolidating your resources for the big life move that is coming at mid month. Right about the 15th, you are ready to spring into action. You are restless and those career problems that you have been avoiding are really making their presence known. Your tolerance for old ways and old problems has reached it maximum point of patience. You will want to prepare well, but you may want to wait until the very end of the month to put your new plans into action. You will certainly feel restless and you may not sleep very well because you feel like you are on hold. But, the gathering period is not over until February 26th. Then you can leap from the box.

Visit Lilly Roddy at her website:  
<http://www.cybersim.com/hermes>



# Tales Of A Triple Minority - Da Sequel

By Monica Roberts

In January 1997 I wrote an article for the TATS newsletter in which I gave a little snapshot of what it's like to be a transgendered African-American female. It reflected my thoughts at that period in my life and I felt that it was time for an overdue sequel to that article.

It's January 2001 and I have been transitioning for almost 6 years now (time flies when you're having fun). There are some major strides that I have made in my life since then. I am integrated back into my family's lives and have a niece that adores her aunt. I still have many of my pre-transition friends and talk to them frequently on the phone or e-mail them. I have new friends, both transgender and non-T who have replaced those associates who split when I began transition. In short, I'm deliriously happy for the first time in my life and comfortable with the person I see in the mirror every morning.

However, there are times when somebody puts a nasty cup in my Kool-Aid. I still get a little pissed about the time I got called the N-word in Cousins several years ago, and I had a little drama with my former T-roommate when she called me a sellout because of the activism I was doing and she also asserted that I was 'too bourgie' to hang out with the peeps at Rascals.

Let's start with that drama with my ex-roommate. My roomie was sixteen years younger than me and I ripped her a new one after that comment passed her lips. I am proud of my heritage as an African-American and resent being compared to Clarence Thomas and emphatically told her that. I also won't apologize for the fact that I'm middle class, a TK (teacher's kid), grew up in the 'hood, am blessed with intelligence, have a college education and make good money working for a Fortune 500 company.

The bottom line is that when I am lobbying on behalf of the T-community, at work, or just hanging out one of the things people are going to notice is my skin color, and there isn't a damned thing I can do about that. Since the good old USA has done everything based on skin color since the 17th century, I won't hold my breath that those attitudes will change in the 21st century. All I can do is be the best person I can be, and if some bigots and playa haters in the T and non-T community don't like that they can go to Hades.

There is nothing more difficult in this society than being a Black male, with the exception of being a Black female trapped in a Black male's body. To be Black in America is to endure daily slings and arrows in terms of negative comments, prejudicial assumptions about your abilities (or lack thereof), and just dealing with a world in which the messages sent about you and your people are overwhelmingly negative or racist in content. Just last week at work I tongue-lashed a passenger who made the mistake of saying in front of me that all Black people were brainwashed into voting 90% against George Junior. She said this after she looked at my ID badge and verbally changed my last name from Roberts to Lewinsky.

I don't miss the days before transition when women would switch their purses to their opposite arm as I walked by, or clerks would follow me around stores as-

suming I was going to steal something, or the three times I was pulled over for Driving While Black. In the 1983 DWB incident the White cop that pulled me and my friends over had the nerve to ask us what we were doing over in SW Houston when our licenses had South Park addresses on them. (We had just left a Black club on Fondren and W Bellfort and Fondren Southwest at that time was about 85% white). It wasn't all bad, though. I led a fairly interesting life on the other side, I just never felt comfortable being male and that makes it very difficult to deal with the issues that you face being a Black male.

Another aspect of being a Black transsexual is the 'First Black' or loneliness factor that you are constantly battling. I was the only African-American at the 1999 Texas Lobby Day and I will probably be the Lone Sista again, and I'm the only one at the TATS meetings that I can make. Sometimes the Lone Sista Syndrome hits when the conversation turns to music groups that I didn't grow up listening to or when I'm trying to discuss a point with a conservative trannie whose exposure to what African-Americans think has been filtered through AM talk radio. Don't get me wrong, I like everyone in TATS and Sarah DePalma, Phyllis Frye, and Vanessa have been my mentors in terms of my growth as an activist, but there are days I feel underappreciated and wish I wasn't "The Black Trannie". I get tired sometimes of having to act as the spokesperson for all Black trannies and wish I had other Black T-peeps willing to step up and take some of the responsibility and load off my shoulders. But as Dorothy Height once stated: 'When you're a Black woman you seldom get to do what you just want to do; you always "do what you have to do" and being an activist is what I want, need and have to do. So is being a role model.

There are many Black trannies here in Houston, but many are stealth and are reluctant to have any public contact with yours truly because of my activist profile. There are others that don't wish to associate with me because they don't know me and echo the same sentiments that my ex-roomie uttered, and there are a few that I don't want near me because they care more about the street life's easy money than working 40 plus hours in corporate America and making it legitimately. I do have some Black T-friends, but most are out-of-state with the exception of my girl Jordan (not her real name) who works more than I do and lives across town. Jordan is a UH alum (like me), possesses a drop-dead hourglass figure, and when we do get together we talk for hours on a wide range of subjects. Dawn Wilson and I are the same way when we hang out. It's just nice to be able to talk to someone that shares your cultural background and has gone through the same trials and tribulations that you have.

In 1892 Anna Julia Cooper stated that "When and where I enter... then and there the whole race enters with me." I am discovering after almost six years of transition that statement applies to me as a transgendered African-American female. I accepted this challenge in 1995 and I will never forget that I am trying to live up to a legacy of Black women such as Harriet Tubman, Barbara Jordan, Coretta King, my mother, and my grandmothers. Am I succeeding? I believe the answer is yes.



## San Fran Trans-Woman First TG Appointed To Human Rights Board

By Christopher Heredia, *San Francisco Chronicle*

Surrounded by well-wishers at a brief swearing-in ceremony yesterday, Theresa Sparks basked in the attention that came with being another of San Francisco's "firsts." Holding two colorful bouquets and wearing a gardenia on the lapel of her black suit, Sparks — the city's first transgender appointee to the powerful Human Rights Commission — said she hoped to bring the perspective of a marginalized group to the panel and be a role model.



"I hope to give our community a voice in the enforcement of discrimination laws in San Francisco," Sparks, 50, said in an interview after the ceremony in Mayor Willie Brown's office. "Even in San Francisco, transgender people are still stereotyped," she said. "Transgenders are fine as long as they're street theater. As soon as we move into the apartment next door or use the bathroom, then we become a problem."

The first meeting of her unpaid, four-year term will come next week. "Finally, we have a part in helping ourselves rather than having to rely on the help of others," Sparks said. "For so long, we've been on the outside looking in."

The 11-member San Francisco Human Rights Commission investigates and mediates discrimination complaints, monitors city contracts for compliance with city nondiscrimination policies and certifies minority- and women-owned businesses in city contracting.



Theresa Sparks at the City Hall press release

"We've tried to reach out to the transgender community so that our city commissions reflect the diversity of San Francisco," Brown said. "Theresa helps... brings representation that we didn't have." There are an estimated 15,000 to 18,000 transgender men and women living in San Francisco.

Leno, who attended the ceremony, said Sparks' appointment accomplishes one of the Transgender Civil Rights Task Force first goals: getting more transgender men and women into city jobs and commission slots. "Theresa brings insight, human understanding and fairness to the commission," Leno said.



## Another Understanding, Another Approach! – Part 3: ENDA, Another Approach!

**By Vikki Lynn Skelton**

In Part 1 of this series, I wrote about how we are basically our own worst enemy in that we tend to cause division amongst ourselves through personal attacks and in having a "My way is better than your way" attitude. I also talked about how we need to (1) Come together as a community and develop an overall consensus on a common purpose(s), (2) Allow each other, as individuals and as TG groups, to accomplish the purpose(s) as we see fit as long as we are not hindering the efforts of others in accomplishing the purpose(s), (3) Work on dividing and conquering the "opposition," and (4) Encourage each other, help each other, and offer suggestions that may help others accomplish the purpose(s) in their own way.

In Part 2, I wrote about how we are actually fighting a war fought on the battlegrounds of the hearts and minds, the beliefs and emotions, of those we talk with. Therefore, we must make sure our strategy includes ways of reaching those we talk with on the deeper levels where change needs to really take place and thus possibly cause change upon the surface in the political, religious, and economic arenas.

In Part 3 and the final part of this series, I am going to write about my opinion on ENDA and another way of approaching it. If you have any comments on this article feel free to e-mail me at [heres\\_2\\_u@theglobe.com](mailto:heres_2_u@theglobe.com).

### **Include or Not Include, That is the Question!**

It seems to me that the GLB leaders that are pushing for ENDA are not really interested in including the T Community. Think about it, the opportunity to include us within their fight, within their agenda, was avoided during their speeches at the Democratic National Convention. If they wanted us to be included, that was the perfect place to mention the T-community, on national T.V. We have and continue to push and push and push inclusion without much headway. It doesn't seem to me that we will be included anytime soon. All we seem to hear is rhetoric saying, "We will support you!" However, their actions seem to say, "We don't want to really include you." Maybe I am wrong in my perceptions and assumptions on this matter. The point I think we need to realize is that, if they really want to include us they will, otherwise, we are beating our heads against a brick wall or we need to approach the leaders of the GLB from the approach mentioned in Part 2 of this series.

### **A Greater Benefit**

Why does it seem that the GLB leaders that are promoting ENDA do not want to include us? Probably because they see a greater benefit of NOT including us in ENDA versus including us. They feel that ENDA will pass easier with us NOT on it. If the benefits of including Transgenderism were greater than not having it included then they would include it. What do you think? They say that we should not worry about being included for now, because once the current form of ENDA passes they will work to get us included later. Right! I have a feeling that if ENDA passes they will become complacent on the matter and enjoy the victory and not fight as hard, if at all for our inclusion. That is usually how human nature works. Therefore, I suggest a different approach.

### **A T-Only Version of ENDA: EGENDA**

I wonder if it would actually be easier to get a T-only

version of ENDA passed. Maybe we could call it something like EGENDA (Employment Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act) or some other name. Whatever we call it, I feel that we need to make sure that the T-only version...

(1) Replaces the term "Transgender" with the term Gender Expression (GE) or Gender Role (GR),

Why? Because it may be possible, taking into account what I have written in Part 1 & 2 of this series, to get a T-only version of ENDA under the radar by making it more acceptable in using new terminology. Why do you think the term "sexual orientation" is used instead of "homosexuality," "gay," "lesbian," or "bi-sexual" in many cases? It is more acceptable and also includes, in one's mind, the heterosexual community. However, it seems to be becoming associated more and more with primarily the homosexual community in people's minds now. Using the terms "gender expression" or "gender role" includes everyone both male and female and at this time does not carry any negative connotations to them.

(2) Does not include sexual orientation, and

The term "sexual orientation" and "transgender" are much brighter red flags than "gender role" or "gender expression." Also, the words "sexual orientation" have been bounced around so much that they are almost automatically related to homosexuality in the minds of many which is still taboo in society as a whole and in many politicians minds. The term "transgender" seems to have the same stigma attached to it. That is why it may be better to use the expressions "gender expression" and or "gender role." It may be easier for more to swallow, especially those sitting on the fence and thus even go somewhat undetected by their mental radar unlike if the terms "sexual orientation" and or "transgender" were used.

(3) Is attached to other bills by T-friendly politicians.

In finding T-friendly politicians that will attach a T-only version of ENDA to another bill that is very likely to be passed and needs to be passed it will help us get it under the radar or at least increase our possibility of getting it passed. This is what happened with President Bush. He said, "No new taxes" during his campaign and then when he took office a bill was presented to him with a tax bill attached to it. He felt that it was more beneficial to sign the bill with the added tax bill than it was to not sign it. In essence, he was forced to pass "new taxes" even though he did not want to and thus become a liar concerning his statement of "No new taxes." Why not do the same?

### **We Want Sexual Orientation Included**

Now, I know that there will be those within the T-Homosexual Community that would not like sexual orientation removed from the T-only version of ENDA. Let me ask, "Who needs to know what your sexual orientation is?" The reason why we need ENDA is because the employer makes sexual orientation an issue in the work place. But just as heterosexuals are expected to keep their private affairs out of the work place we should also. If the current form of ENDA is passed then that will cover the sexual orientation part of your life. If only EGENDA is passed then that would protect the gender expression part of your life and possibly the sexual orientation if approached right. If both ENDA and EGENDA are passed then 100% of your lifestyle will be protected.

For example,

- What if you do not pass as the opposite sex? More than likely, your employer will see you according to your body's birth sex and not your gender. In this case EGENDA would protect you. If you are a T-Homosexual and not passable as the opposite sex and you are dating someone with a body sex opposite of yours, your employer will probably see you as a heterosexual rather than homosexual. That means that the sexual orientation issue will most likely not be an issue and EGENDA would protect you in regards to the gender expression issue.

- What if you did pass as the opposite sex of your body's birth sex and they hired you as a woman thinking that your body sex is female and you started dating women? Your employer would probably see you as a homosexual. In this case, ENDA would protect you if it were passed. If it was not and EGENDA was passed then you could, if approached right, be protected under EGENDA. If they later found out that your body's birth sex was opposite of what it portrays now, then EGENDA would still protect you.

Most people see Transgender individuals as homosexuals, even though the majority of the T-community is not. This is especially true among heterosexual males. I feel that if we can...

- Disassociate sexual orientation from the T-community,

- Get those we are talking with educated about the nature of T'ism, and

- Get them to see it as a gender expression/role issue and or possibly a sex discrimination issue (i.e. individuals born with female bodies are allowed to wear clothes that are malish in nature while those born with male bodies are not allowed to wear clothes that are femalish in nature without losing their job or being harassed for doing so.)

...we just may open up more doors for acceptance.

### **Outside Help**

Sometimes, in order to bring down the castle, you have to enter it through the back doors and the secret tunnels and attack from within. If we could get some of the major corporations that already have made headway by including us in their anti-discrimination policies (i.e. Shell, Chase, and etc.) to lobby with us, we might increase our chances of success. How would it help if we could get some of the big lobbyists (i.e. pharmaceuticals from which we purchase our medicines and hormones from, the oil industry, and etc.) to include EGENDA in some of their lobbying efforts? How would it help to get those in the medical, mental health, and legal professions (both T's and Non-T's) that work with the Transgender community to join us? What if we could convince ministers of faith that understand the Transgender issues to lobby with us? What if add a more personal touch by having more of the understanding and accepting parents and children of Transgender individuals joining us in our lobbying efforts? I wonder what kind of effect we would have.

### **Out of My Mind?**

Maybe I am dreaming and maybe I am out of my

*(Continued on Page 14)*



# TRANS/GENDERFEST 2.0 SET FOR MAY 17-19 CALL GOES OUT FOR LOCAL TALENT TO BE FEATURED

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Remember TransGenderFest? Those of you who've been in the community for the past three years well-remember it, no doubt. The showcase of local gender variant talent from Houston, and the nation, is back! TransGenderFest 2.0 is scheduled for May 17 - 19 at DiverseWorks. The overwhelmingly well-received show was a knockout on the first version. This edition is looking to match or surpass that! But the call is going out for local talent to be featured.

The festival is broken into three portions: the first night, Thursday, May 17, will feature a film or documentary about, or with a transgender / gender variant theme. Such films tentatively being looked at for the opening night are *Southern Comfort*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (see the TATS Tidbits about the Sundance Film Festival for details), or any other independently distributed or produced films that revolve around a central theme of gender variance. Details will be firmed up and provided when the schedule is set.

Friday night, May 18, will be the headliner's night. A national transgender act will be center stage at DiverseWorks. The 1998 TransGenderFest had Loren Cameron, nationally acclaimed F2M photographer, who provided a photo exhibition, as well as his own performance art around a similar theme.

Saturday, May 19, will be the closer: 12 Minutes Max - the showcase of talent that packed the house and wowed the audience. That's where the local talent comes in! 12 Minutes Max is a series of performance vignettes - anything from skits (always a favorite - the more avant garde, the better!), poetry readings, stand-up comedy, music ... whatever talent exists in the transgender and gender variant community in the region.

The previous edition starred TATS members Daniell McCleney and Jennifer René Pool in a poignant skit written by Ms. McCleney. Additionally, TATS' poet laureate, R. J. Schoubroek gave an intimate reading of his original poetry, revolving around his own life story and transition.

In fact, virtually every performance was tremendous. And for the local TG community, it was a magnificent venue to exhibit our local talents. And the call goes out for those wanting to audition for the showcase! For details, contact any of the curators: Vanessa Edwards Foster, [MoonFlowrr@aol.com](mailto:MoonFlowrr@aol.com), Lynne Huffer, [huffer@rice.edu](mailto:huffer@rice.edu), or organizer Loris Bradley at [loris@diverseworks.org](mailto:loris@diverseworks.org)

## TOP TEN WORST CORPORATE FOREIGN MARKETING SCREW-UPS

1. Coors put its slogan, "Turn it loose," into Spanish, where it was read as "Suffer from diarrhea."
2. Scandinavian vacuum manufacturer Electrolux used the following in an American campaign: "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux."
3. Clairol introduced the "Mist Stick", a curling iron, into German only to find out that "mist" is slang for manure. Not too many people had use for the "manure stick."
4. When Gerber started selling baby food in Africa, they used the same packaging as in the U.S., with the beautiful Caucasian baby on the label. Later they learned that in Africa, companies routinely put pictures on the label of what's inside, since most people can't read.
5. Colgate introduced a toothpaste in France called Cue, the name of a notorious porno magazine.
6. An American T-shirt maker in Miami printed shirts for the Spanish market which promoted the Pope's visit. Instead of "I saw the Pope" (el Papa), the shirts read "I saw the potato" (la papa).
7. Pepsi's "Come alive with the Pepsi Generation" translated into "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave", in Chinese.
8. Frank Perdue's chicken slogan, "it takes a strong man to make a tender chicken" was translated into Spanish as "it takes an aroused man to make a chicken affectionate."
9. The Coca-Cola name in China was first read as "Ke-kou-ke-la", meaning "Bite the wax tadpole" or "female horse stuffed with wax," depending on the dialect. Coke then researched 40,000 characters to find a phonetic equivalent "ko-kou-ko-le", translating into "happiness in the mouth."
10. When Parker Pen marketed a ball-point pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to have read, "it won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you". Instead, the company thought that the word "embarazar" (to impregnate) meant to embarrass, so the ad read: "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant."

**STOCK UP AND SAVE! LIMIT: ONE PER PERSON!**

*Mt. Killmanjaro, the breathtaking backdrop for the Serena Lodge.  
Swim in the lovely pool while you drink it all in.*





## TG FRIENDS OF HRC....

(Continued from Page 6)

legislation. "Political progress is always incremental. Now is the time for gays and lesbians to secure their civil rights. Much education is needed before transgendered people can secure their rights. We are just glad that the Human Rights Campaign invites us to their fundraisers. That is progress enough for our members."

Greblehcats also is happy that the Human Rights Campaign once bought her donuts during a lobby day breakfast in 1998. That was the only food she had that week so she remains grateful.

Greblehcats remains confident that once the Protecting Civil Rights for All Americans Act passes this year that the bill will be amended to include protections based on gender identity and expression. The Human Rights Campaign promised this to the transgender community. We have no reason to think that the Human Rights Campaign will not keep their promise to our community.

When asked if it was a coincidence that her name had much in common with the name of the HRC political Director, Greblehcats indicated that it was just a coincidence. "There is nothing backwards about HRC or the people associated with them. Such claims are just misinformation about HRC", said Greblehcats.

The Transgender Friends of HRC Club is the transgender fan club of the largest national lesbian and gay political organization with members throughout the country. It holds press conferences in conjunction with press releases from the Human Rights Campaign to show support for HRC.

## TOP TEN QUOTES HEARD IN THE WHITE HOUSE DURING INAUGURATION WEEK

Submitted by Holly Foster Wilson

10. "All right, George, you win the bet. Tipper, come over here and give the man some tongue."

9. "Hillary, you grab all the pens - I'll get the towels and dishes."

8. "...and for the Oval Office, what say we get rid of all those books and put in a Sony Play-Station and a red-velvet-topped pool table?"

7. "Only one ambassador to Colombia?!? Well, hell, let's appoint a few more!"

6. "That musta been some party. Last thing I remember, someone was daring me to run for president."

5. "Woo-hoo! Now I get a full-time designated driver!"

4. "I, George W. Bush, do solmeny... somenly... salmon - dammit! - swear to uphold the Constipation of the United States."

3. "If a Mr. Satan calls, tell him I'm not in."

2. "Dickster, I'm pretty hammered, man. Don't go chest-clutchin' on me while I catch some Zs."

...and the Number 1 Thing Overheard in the White House during Inauguration Week...

1. "So lemme get this straight: They named a White House bedroom after the guy who invented those little toy logs?"

## SLOGANS FOR THE NEW WOMAN

God made us sisters, Prozac made us friends

Warning: I have an attitude and I know how to use it!

Coffee, chocolate, men ... Some things are just better rich!

I'm out of estrogen - and I have a gun!!!

Next mood swing: 6 minutes

All stressed out and no one to choke.

## OBEY IT! IT'S THE LAW!!!

Odd, but true, laws from around the country.

- In Lexington, Kentucky, it's illegal to carry an ice cream cone in your pocket.

- In St. Louis, Missouri, it's illegal to sit on a street curb and drink beer from a bucket.

- In Arkansas, it's illegal for the Arkansas River to rise higher than the Main Street Bridge in Little Rock.

- In Pocatello, Idaho, "the carrying of concealed weapons is forbidden, unless same are exhibited in public view."

- In Utah, it's against the law to fish from horseback.

- In Wilbur, Washington, it's illegal to ride an ugly horse.

- In Jonesboro, Georgia, it's illegal to say, "Oh boy!"

- In Devon, Connecticut, it's illegal to walk backwards after sunset.

- In Harthahorne, Oklahoma, it's illegal to put a hypnotized person in a display window.

- In Frankfort, Kentucky, it's illegal to shoot off a policeman's tie.

- In Zion, Illinois, it's illegal to give cigars to cats or dogs.

- And in Bexley, Ohio, it's illegal to put a slot machine in an outhouse.

- On average, 100 people choke to death on ball-point pens every year.

- Dr. Seuss coined the word "nerd" in his 1950 book "If I Ran the Zoo"

- It takes 3000 cows to supply the NFL with enough leather for a year's supply of footballs.

- Five Jell-O flavors that flopped: Coffee, cola, apple, chocolate, and celery! (Celery??? What were they thinking???)





## TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• Tickets for the 9th Annual Unity Banquet tickets are still on sale. This year's banquet, set for March 24th, 2001 Westchase Hilton Hotel - 7 p.m. until ? will feature comedian, Nancy Ford, as this year's emcee. Tickets are \$35, and can be purchased by credit card - a first for the Unity Banquet - by calling Melanie Rudd [melpag@pmpub.com](mailto:melpag@pmpub.com) or phoning 281-347-6878. For TATS members, tickets can be purchased by contacting Melanie Black at: [thanatos@cityscope.net](mailto:thanatos@cityscope.net), or Sarah Jane Connell at: [shalonsarah@cs.com](mailto:shalonsarah@cs.com)

• The Sundance Film Festival awarded prizes to two TG themed movies this year. The documentary grand jury prize went to "Southern Comfort," an intimate portrait of a dying female-to-male transsexual and his romance with a male-to-female transsexual. Directed by Kate Davis, it traces the last year in the life of Robert Eads, who died of ovarian cancer toward the end of the



**Lola Cola (L) and the late Robert Eads in *Southern Comfort*®**

film shoot in 1999. The movie, much of which was shot with a handheld digital camera, chronicles Eads' budding romance with a transsexual named Lola Cola.

"Hedwig and the Angry Inch," a raucous musical



## 2001 Sundance Film Festival Filmmakers

adapted from the off-Broadway play about a rock singer struggling with her botched sex-change operation, won the dramatic audience award, chosen in balloting by Sundance movie-goers.

"Hedwig" also won the dramatic directing award for John Cameron Mitchell, who stars in the title role. Can transsexuals in TV sitcoms (no pun intended) be far behind?

• While on the subject of trans-folks in the media,

there's a new book coming out with a TS as the main character. "Contessa" is a new book out by author and playwright, Jack Fitzgerald. As stated in the press release, "book spotlights the ignorance, bigotry, self-righteousness and absurdity society forces us to live under. Specific cases of the sexual injustice various individuals have to suffer are told with extraordinary insight.



**John Cameron Mitchell as the title character in the movie adaptation of *Hedwig & the Angry Inch*®**

"Contessa is the perfect guide for saying bonjour to a new 21st Century of sound social reasoning and adieu to the neuroses of the 20th Century. As has been shown most recently in film, stage productions and books, gender dysphoria is a very viable topic at the present." Perhaps so ... we certainly have hope.

• The West Hollywood City Council announced last month that they will consider creating a seven member task force to make recommendations on issues impacting the transgender community, with a report back to the Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board within six months. Similarly, Brenda Thomas is trying to scare up a similar committee here in Houston on her task force.

• PHILADELPHIA, Penn. — What event over the past 25 years has had the greatest impact on Philadelphia's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities? "It occurred in 1996, when Mayor Ed Rendell declared Labor Day, Sept. 2, to be Transgender Employment Day in Philadelphia." So said the Philadelphia Gay News in their Street Talk column.

"This is not a well-known event within the sexual-minority community. But it was significant for the transgender community," stated the author, attorney Kristine Holt. "We have a lot farther to go. But it was a start. At the time, it indicated a recognition on the part of the city's political structure that it's difficult for many transgender people to overcome employment."

• Quote of the month ... "Putting the transgender community in our acronym but not in our legislative agenda is simply wrong." — David Baker, co-founder of the Baltimore Activists Coalition (BAC) criticizing GLBT groups' enthusiastic support of Gov. Parris N. Glendening for sponsoring the Anti-Discrimination Act (SB 205), which would ban discrimination against gay, lesbian, and bisexual people but not transgenders.

• Christians have condemned transsexuality as "a fantasy and an illusion", arguing that sex change operations should be banned! The latest from the U.S. Religious Right? Nope. This is coming from the more enlightened environs of the U.K.! Sounds like American exports are increasing....

Stated Don Horrocks, author of the study published by the Evangelical Alliance, "We suggest that radical surgery, to manipulate their bodies into line with what they feel themselves to be, isn't right. We feel there is another solution. We would include prayer and psychological counseling in that. We don't accept that God makes mistakes." Ex-

actly! God obviously meant to create intersexed! Ditto with transsexuals! Besides, who said we're mistakes?

• Should a transsexual counsel rape victims? Such is the controversy in Vancouver, BC where Kimberly Nixon, an M2F post-op transsexual has volunteered to counsel female rape victims at the Vancouver Rape Relief Society. While she may be physically and emotionally comfortable in her new skin, rape vic-

tims may not be so ready to open up to a counselor "who looks like a man wearing a woman's dress," as the rape center puts it.

Though the article on it was written in hatefully sarcastic tones, there were some valid points brought up. Can women traumatized by rape feel comfortable, in face-to-face counseling, falling into the caring arms of someone who spent most of her life as a man? Can someone not raised as female relate to the mindset of someone who was born knowing from childhood that she is a potential victim from elements of the opposite sex? Who is the real victim — the transsexual not hired for this particular job, or the female rape victim in need of counseling?

• BHOPAL, India — Eunuchs, or transgenders, in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh will start a national political party with membership open to all sexes, the country's only eunuch legislator said. Shabnam Mausi or "aunt" Shabnam, who is a member of the state's legislative assembly, said she would apply before the Election Commission of India for national party recognition after January 26.

Heerabai, another eunuch elected to a local public office, said the party would be launched on January 29. India's eunuchs, called "hijras" and thought to number about 500,000, are mostly men castrated at puberty but they are referred to as "she." Who'd have ever envisioned India being more progressive than the United States? We live in interesting times....



**Jewel's BOUTIQUE**

**Featuring:**

- Wigs
- Fashions
- Large size shoes
- Jewelry
- Alterations
- Personal Make-overs
- Electrolysis
- Breast Forms
- And more...

*Private Sessions By Appointment*

Email: [txjewel@hotmail.com](mailto:txjewel@hotmail.com)  
 Phone: 713/523-3557  
 Fax: 713/528-1861  
 2404 TAFT @ FAIRVIEW  
 HOUSTON, TX 77006

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:  
[www.geocities.com/westhollywood/6481](http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/6481)





## ANOTHER APPROACH...

(Continued from Page 10)

mind. But I feel that we would have a better chance at success doing the above than trying to continue to push the various GLB leaders kicking and screaming into including us in ENDA. Either way, it will probably take a couple of years, if that, before we will ever see anything politically positive happen for us. As a matter-of-fact, we will probably have to take it step-by-step as we have been and continue to work in front of and behind the scenes to get what we want.

### Last Words

There are many ways to accomplish the goal of getting some form of an Employment Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act passed. There are many ways to help gain greater acceptance in society in regards to Transgender issues. We need to realize this, make sure we are dividing and conquering the "enemy" instead of ourselves, and then approach the whole issue at a deeper level when talking to people that will help them change their belief system in favor of Transgender issues.

Until we can change the hearts and minds of the people we talk to, we will continue to see, even among the GLB and Liberal camps, resistance to including the T-community in their agendas. Until then, we need to do what we can to come underneath the radar of peoples hearts and minds, educate the various communities in society on T-issues, and never give up.

## POLICE HELP???

The Jackson, Mississippi police were searching for a man they suspected of a string of burglaries. They had six photographs of the man, all taken in different locations and from different angles. They sent fax copies of these pictures to police departments all over the country.

Several days later, Jackson received a fax report from the police chief in a small town in Nebraska. The memo read, "We immediately went to work on those six pictures you sent. We've arrested five of the suspects, and we have the sixth under observation right now."

## EDITOR'S RANT....

(Continued from Page 2)

And at the government level, the razor close election has been somehow construed as the 'conservative mandate', and the rhetoric of "bi-partisanship" has been pulled quicker than an X-rated video at Wal-Mart. Meet the new presidential cabinet: Ashcroft, Norton, Dilurio.... Suddenly, as opposed to the last eight years of prosperity, the national economy is suffering a downturn and companies are again laying off. Déjà Vu! Welcome to Reaganomics, Round II! And a government that appears every bit as welcoming to us! We face a future that's as certain as the prediction in a Chinese fortune cookie. May be rough road ahead, chilluns'!

"Tyranny, like hell is not easily conquered," continued Paine from the same passage as the story-lead paraphrase. "(T)he harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly." True enough, it's a long hard road, and we must walk the straight and narrow in order to get there unbowed. But it's not completely impossible.

On the horizon are some promising stirrings. The Inaugural Protest was well received, and was a pure example of the various, unrelated communities uniting for a common purpose: integrity and justice. Coming up this month is another shot at that: the TGain Lobby Days in Austin. Contrary to the national set-up, this one runs like clockwork. At least something is right with the world!

Perhaps we will overcome the new change and rise to meet the challenges. Whether we think we can or not, we've still got to attempt to make things change for the better. It's better than the alternative ....

A thief broke into the local police station and stole all the lavatory equipment.

A spokesperson was quoted as saying, "We have absolutely nothing to go on."

"Reality Bites. And sometimes those who get bitten by reality deserve every bit!"

— Jessica Xavier

## MS. SMITH GOES TO AUSTIN

(Continued from Page 4)

talking and explaining, she changed her stance.

I talked with a very conservative lawmaker. He'd shot down many bills in the past. The main reason was that he was an insurance spokesman, and fought any bill that would cost insurance companies money. This included (amazingly) hate-crimes legislation and health care for those transitioning. However, he *did* decide to back two pieces of legislation – one allowing GLBTs more access in adoption, and one striking down a state anti-sodomy statute. Since they didn't affect his business, he didn't have objections.

A number of legislators said they could not support bills, but that they could help in other ways. One way was to take a walk, meaning that they would be absent when voting occurred, thus neither voting for nor against. Others said that they would not block votes for a bill to leave committee to get on the floor. All in all, it was terrific. These were the people who made and changed the laws in the state. It was a treat to get to meet them and to get a sense of what makes them tick. It'll make us that much more effective the next time around. The highlights

Of course, there were some truly spectacular moments, moments that I will never forget. One of them was eating lunch. We all met in the cafeteria, collecting into groups of three or four to fill the tables. What a sight – a half dozen tables of crossdressers and transsexuals sitting among the states finest. I remember seeing a few extra-tall gals standing in line among some rather short and uncomfortable staffers. I had lunch with a friend and two FTM crossdressers. It was an inspiration to meet these brave boys and hear their stories. They were both married, and had supportive spouses. Their children didn't know (sound familiar?) and they, too, had taken vacation time to be there. For all the torture we endure, they also have a very tough road to hoe, and I was glad to know my brothers and speak with them.

I was also glad, very glad, once during the day. I saw a pair of sisters getting out of the elevator, followed by two rather hungry-eyed gents. Suddenly, they realized at just WHOM they were looking. I must say, I found their discomfort rather tasty. I left that day at 4:30 to beat the traffic. I was overwhelmed with feeling and satisfaction. Can one girl really make a difference? Maybe. Can thirty girls? You betcha. Best of all, I dressed in my best all day long and felt wonderful for it, and would never feel quite as uncomfortable in public again. That was worth the price of admission alone.



We Love Our Advertisers – Please Support Them as They Support Us!!!



**LILLY RODDY**

**Astrologer**

920 West Main • Houston, Texas 77006

Tel: 713/529-5842 • Fax: 713/529-6406

Website: <http://www.cybersim.com/hermes> • Email: [Lillicath@aol.com](mailto:Lillicath@aol.com)



**When our community needs help...**

**THE RECOVERY COLLECTIVE**

*Chemical dependency is not a weakness, it's a disease.*

• Intervention • Treatment • Co-dependency  
• Reasonable Rates • Groups / Families / Couples

**Sharon Goodwin**

Email: [SG126@aol.com](mailto:SG126@aol.com)

Licensed & Certified With  
Over 30 Years Experience

(713) **527-8788**

2715 Bissonnet, Suite #509



# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support ●

Volume 9, Issue 3

Houston, Texas

March, 2001

*TATS is ... a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping transsexual persons, their partners, their families, and their friends accept life and experience it to the fullest.*

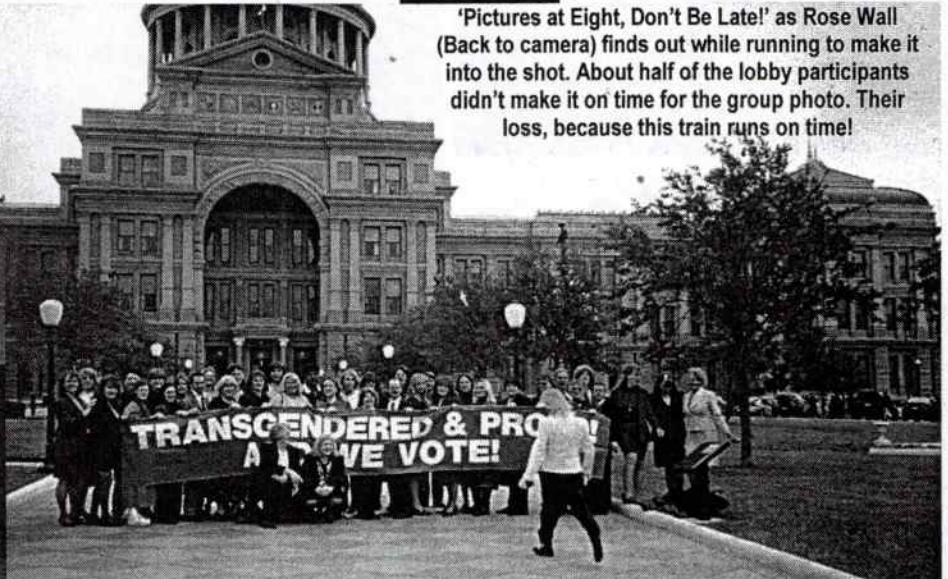
## TGAIN LOBBY DAYS DRAWS 82 TO AUSTIN!

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

"It was our most successful lobby day yet!" So gushed Sarah DePalma, Executive Director of the Texas Gender Advocacy & Information Network (TGAIN) of the 2001 session of the Transgender Lobby Days - Texas Style! Probably one of the most active It's Time, America! chapters in the country,



Lobbyists convening in the capitol halls: (L-R) Monica Roberts, Christie Lee Littleton, Tyler Zotterrelle and Phyllis Randolph Frye reflect on a capitol success!



'Pictures at Eight, Don't Be Late!' as Rose Wall (Back to camera) finds out while running to make it into the shot. About half of the lobby participants didn't make it on time for the group photo. Their loss, because this train runs on time!

TGAIN's second large-scale lobbying effort managed to visit every office in both houses of the state government this year - a first!

This year's edition of the effort drew folks from as far away as El Paso to come lobby for a slew of bills being proposed. Most

importantly, the Name and Gender Change bill has been filed in the House (HB 1587, sponsored by Rep. Debra Danburg), and now (thanks to Christie Lee Littleton's pre-lobbying) has a sponsor for

*(Continued on Page 7)*

## THREE TG DEATHS IN HOUSTON

### 2 TG MURDERS MAR YOUNG YEAR

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The year is barely two months old, and already Houston has suffered two transgender murders. The most recent one gives every indication of being a bias-related crime; however there are no hate crime statutes in Texas, and the current proposal will not include transgenders. Police have arrested Aurelio Campos, 19, alias Wayo Campos, in connection with the shooting death.

In the second killing, that of local female impersonator Brandi Houston, police are seeking

*(Continued on Page 4)*

### Kelly Bishop Passes Away

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

Local resident Kelly Bishop, a participating member of Houston's Transgender Unity Committee, was found dead in her Clear Lake apartment on March 5. Foul play has apparently been ruled out as a cause of death.

According to information gathered, she her apartment was locked when she was found, and her body showed no sign of external trauma. An autopsy is still inconclusive on the cause of death at press time, but according to Roy Thibodeaux of the medical examiner's office, they discovered a

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## MEETING SCHEDULE

March 10	Feelings Meeting at: Transgender Community Ctr. @ 3 PM
March 24	<b>Unity Banquet 2001:</b> Westchase Hilton (Westheimer / Briarpark): 7 PM
April 14	Feelings Meeting at: Hou. Lesbian/Gay Comm. Ctr. @ 3 PM
April 28	Social Meeting at: Hou. Lesbian/Gay Comm. Ctr. @ 7 PM

T. A. T. S.  
P. O. Box 142  
Bellaire, Texas 77401



# BATTLEGROUND: HOUSTON! THE WAR FOR OUR RIGHTS!

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

In a hastily called meeting, approximately 45 of Houston's most politically active Gay, Lesbian and Transgendered leaders met at the Hollyfield Center on a Saturday morning to discuss something the community has anticipated for some time. The meeting assembled by the brand new mayoral liaison to Houston's GLBT community, Janine Brunjes, and chaired by both Mayor Lee Brown and Councilmember Annise Parker, was an open community discussion to gauge the community's opinion and seek some direction by consensus. At issue was a likely referendum to come up before the city's voters.

What had originally arisen as an attempt to include same-sex domestic partners in the city's benefits package became a political football by the city council's more conservative members: namely Rob Todd and Orlando Sanchez. Both councilmembers Todd and Sanchez, with backing from councilmembers, Mark Ellis and Bert Keller, decided to push the same-sex benefits issue to a referendum vote – in other words, to have the city's voters decide the issue. Little did we know the outside forces contacted or how ugly this situation was going to be.

Thus, a meeting was called to get community feedback and to strategize the next move in regards to the referendum. Representing the transgender community at the meeting were three of the four most politically active trans-folks in the city: TATS members Sarah DePalma (Exec. Dir. of TGain), Jessica Redman (VP of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus), and yours truly. Phyllis Frye, now retired, declined the invitation.

While the issue started out as same-sex benefits, this author's concern was why stir up the hornets (so to speak) for domestic benefits? Why not go for the big prize: non-discrimination? Apparently, everyone else in the meeting came with the same idea. Annise and the mayor apparently holed up and had come to the same conclusion even before the meeting was called. This meeting was just formality – to make sure that everyone was on the same page.

Talk of the upcoming referendum inevitably turned towards the last referendum vote back in 1985. There were a good number of participants this time (including Annise) who were around, and remember all too well the history of that previous attempt for equal rights.

"In a word, it was ugly," recalled our own Sarah DePalma during the meeting. She remembered the situation the first time around



**Battle plans:** Maria Gonzalez (R) of Progressive Voters in Action (PVA) details the strategy and the need for volunteers at the meeting at Hollyfield Center, while (L-R at the podium) Mayor Lee P. Brown, Councilmember Annise Parker, and new mayoral GLBT liaison Janine Brunjes look on approvingly.

vividly. The social environment was "frightening." At one point during the election, rather inciteful flyers were passed out in various neighborhoods around the city. In the Heights, the neighborhood

operatives) and kicked the shit out of us!"

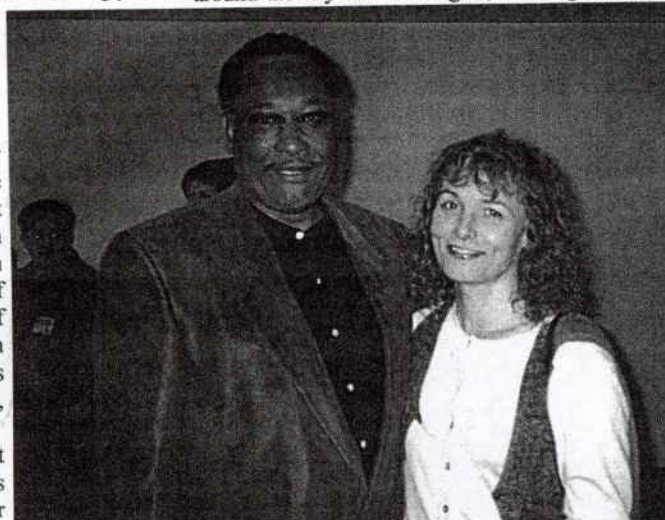
The result of the referendum was that months later, when the city's races came along, a "Straight Slate" of candidates was coalesced and won most all of the following election races. "Trish's and my home in the suburbs were surrounded by homes that all had "Straight Slate" yard signs pointed directly at our home. It was like being Jewish surrounded by swastikas or a Person of Color surrounded by burning crosses."

History has proved this will be an ugly fight, and indeed it was confirmed even before the meeting. Sarah DePalma received a call from our friend in Colorado Springs, Dianna Ciccotello, who monitors the goings on of the Focus on the Family (FOF) / Gary Bauer-James Dobson folks. According to Dianna's report, FOF had already declared Houston to be "the next battleground."

As if to emphasize that, the following week during the city council meeting, a 'straight slate' of arch-conservatives one-upped the GLBT strategy. The group took the initiative to push for their own referendum: change the City Charter in order to prevent any future considerations or laws protecting anyone who is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. The opposition has officially fired the first salvo over our forward bow!

Thusly engaged, we go into battle; and we'll need all hands on deck! As history is our teacher, it will be ugly! More importantly, our friends on city council – Mayor Brown, Annise, and anyone else on council who supports us – will take their share of shots. They will be targets in the next elections.

Our task is two-pronged: become heavily involved in PVA and the upcoming referendum battle, and also work diligently to keep our friends on city council – most especially, Mayor Brown and Annise! Fear will push all of us off the fence, either into action or into the closet. Those of us community leaders have our tasks cut out for us. So lock and load ... it'll be a long fight!



**Hugs for the Hero!** Vanessa Edwards Foster (R) gives Mayor Brown (L) a hug of appreciation for his courage in standing up for us all.

where Sarah lived at the time, flyers were attached to the front porch mailboxes.

"On the front of the flyer – a tri-fold flyer – was a little girl of about eight or nine with her hands raised, shielding her head," Sarah described about the flyer found on her mailbox. "When you opened the flyer, there was this crazed-looking man sinking an axe into the top of her head, with the words: 'This is what happens when Gays get rights!'" Other flyers had similar themes.

Phyllis Frye also remembered how 1985's "referendum on queer rights was forced by the *hate filled*." In a vote that went against the proposal by a 5 to 1 margin, "the the *hate filled* turned up the heat (from their pulpits and their Republican Party



## 2 TRANS MURDERS....

(Continued from Page 1)

a Georgia man in connection with that murder.

According to a news reports, the body of 29 year old Francisco Javier Luna (femme name unknown to us) was found at around 4:30 AM Sunday, March 4, in a parking lot in the 7800 block of Avenue E in Magnolia Park area on Houston's East End. The "man masquerading as a woman" was shot four times - in the face, abdomen and shoulder - after a witnesses heard an altercation and several gunshots. Luna's body was found lying beside a maroon Dodge Dynasty with paper dealer tags. Luna was dressed en femme, with a brown ladies' wig found near the body.

"We've ID'ed the shooter," HPD Det. C.T. Mosqueda told the Houston Voice on March 8 regarding the Luna murder. The following day, 19 year-old Aurelio Campos was arrested and charged in connection with murder. However, there will be no hate crimes charges to add to that.

Police are uncertain how Campos and Luna met, but believe the two arranged to meet downtown. "Basically, the victim was told by this particular suspect to meet him at the 7800 Block of Canal," Det. Mosqueda said. "We don't know if it was a drug deal or a sexual-type deal."

Mosqueda said witnesses saw Luna enter the passenger seat of Campos' vehicle. "There was some type of activity in the vehicle - we don't know what - but something occurred that set the suspect off and he jumped out of the car and ran around to the other side and shot the victim."

The victim then reportedly exited the vehicle and fell the ground where Campos allegedly shot Luna several more times. Campos then fled the scene.

"Information provided to TGAIN suggests that this was a definite hate crime" declared TGAIN executive director, Sarah DePalma. "I cannot begin to express the anger I feel that if this should turn out to be a crime committed due to hate, it would not be covered under either of the proposed hate crime bills working through the Texas Legislature. Anyone who would like to know why transgenders are not included in this legislation should contact the Lesbian / Gay Rights Lobby of Texas."

The previous murder was more sketchy, as it was reported first as a murder, then natural causes and finally back to a murder. Brandi Houston, a local performer in at EJ's and similar venues, was found dead in her apartment on January 26. Though a performer, it was reported Ms. Houston lived for the most part as Brandi.

Original word from GCTC president Jackie Thorne was that Brandi killed, dead of a broken neck. Later police had given a contradictory scenario. Former Imperial Court emperor Bob Bouton had mentioned a couple days later that it was thought that Brandi had died of a massive heart attack, and that the other circumstances were subsequent to the heart attack.

However, it was learned after last month's newsletter went out that indeed Brandi's death had been ruled a homicide. The police are seeking

Richard Masterson, a resident of Atlanta GA for questioning in the murder. Masterson, a frequent visitor to both Houston and Dallas, was a recent acquaintance of Ms. Houston and attended the Court's In-Town Show at Chances, later going with Brandi to Decades, where most of the Court members spent the evening.

After leaving Decades, the couple went to Cousins where they closed the down the bar. Sometime about 2AM, they gave a ride to "Jeremy" (last name unknown) and returned to Brandi's home. "Jeremy" is still being sought for questioning as a witness in the matter. These two murders now make up 2/3 of the transgender murders to date, as reported by the Remembering Our Dead site ([www.gender.org/remembering](http://www.gender.org/remembering)).

## KELLY BISHOP....

(Continued from Page 1)

quantity "pills in her stomach." Though it's too early to say this caused her death, they are now focusing on the pills and trying to determine if it



**Kelly Bishop, from the 'blonde' days in New York.**

was an accidental overdose, or suicide.

A Navy veteran, Kelly had reportedly suffered bouts of severe depression in her past, as well as alcoholism. She had a bit of a checkered past in New York City, but was active in the community there. She was a member of Transsexuals Anonymous, a group chaired by Riki Ann Wilchins of GPAC. During that period in the early mid-90's, she was one of the original members of what eventually became Transsexual Menace.

Kelly had moved down to Houston from New York in August of last year. She hoped to start anew in an attempt to get her life in order, and found some limited success upon first arriving. She was active for a time in the Unity Committee meetings planning the upcoming Unity Banquet, and also had non-TG friends down in the Clear Lake area as well.

According to one of her close friends in New York, she was despondent over her job prospects when she'd last spoken with her on Valentine's Day. Though she'd really made a push for permanent employment, Kelly was finding only unfulfilling temporary positions. Her only known next of kin is her father, perhaps living in Bayonne NJ. As yet, her relatives have not been located.

## NY CITY COUNCIL POISED TO BAR TG DISCRIMINATION

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**A**fter months of behind-the-scenes wrangling at New York's City Hall, a change in the city's human-rights law, giving explicit protection to transgender individuals, could soon become law. The March 7 report stated City Council Speaker Peter Vallone had given the go-ahead the week before for the bill to be considered in the General Welfare Committee. The proposed bill has languished in the city attorneys' office for eight months.

The speaker's office held up the potentially controversial bill, sponsored by Councilmembers Bill Perkins and Margarita Lopez, because discrimination by gender already is covered in the human-rights law. The proposed amendment would prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior or expression, whether or not it is "different from that traditionally associated with the legal sex assigned to that person at birth."

"Gender to me is male or female," said democratic Councilmember Lopez of Manhattan in a report to the New York Post. "It does not include those perceived to be male but who dress like a female." Councilmembers Lopez and Perkins found that victims of discrimination were often made into pariahs, lost jobs and apartments, and were refused service in public accommodations such as restaurants and stores.

Council officials said the bill was in limbo while they waited for clarification from city lawyers. That clarification never came. "The Corporation Counsel indicated that they would send something in writing and the absence of that means we have to move ahead," democratic Councilmember Perkins of Harlem stated.

Mayor Giuliani's position on the matter is so far unclear, and city lawyers did not comment.

A spokesman for the city's Commission on Human Rights, Andres Roura, said transgender city residents, including pre- and post-surgery transsexuals, are already protected by law. "It's not a protected class by itself, but they are protected under our gender category," he said.

But advocates argue the law is ambiguous. "If the law is written in black and white, then it's clear," said Victoria Cruz of the Anti-Violence Project, who describes herself as a female born with male organs.

The first hearing has been tentatively scheduled for this month.



**Sponsoring New York City Councilmembers Margarita Lopez (L) and Bill Perkins**



# SARAH DePALMA LOBBIES CONGRESS CAUCUS

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

The times, they are a-changin'.... That line from the old Bob Dylan classic would be very pertinent today. Once upon a time, Sarah DePalma was going toe-to-toe with critics – such as Ricky 'Rainbo DeKlown' Hurt – regarding transgender inclusion in the Caucus. Two years hence, she was now the guest speaker at the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus meeting Feb. 5 at the Lovett Inn. And none other than Rainbo himself in white baseball cap and jeans, sat front and center at the meeting, hanging on every word; and actively participating in the discussion! Even the Caucus Vice President, who introduced Sarah, is TATS' own Jessica Redman! The times have a-changed!

It wasn't merely a token appearance. Sarah was there not only to speak on her personal history, but also to teach a bit of Lobbying 101. And indeed,

mayor's newly named liaison to the community. And Janine made a point of stating its new title of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Liaison to the mayor's office. And for emphasis, she reiterated she represents the bisexual and transgender communities! This author knows Janine from the '97



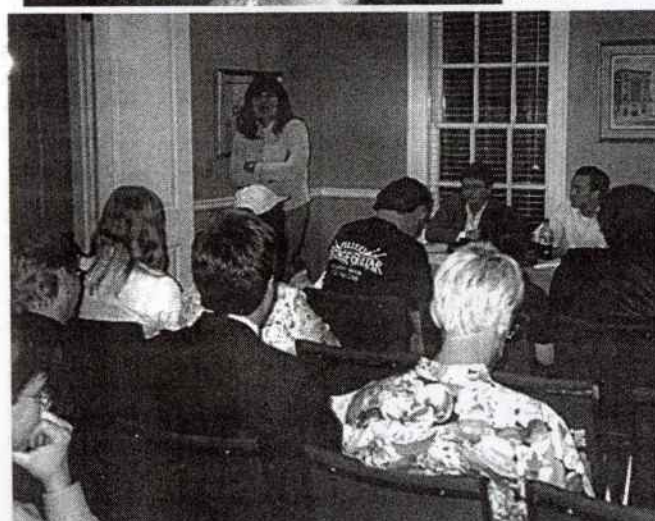
Above, Sarah DePalma (L) gives a brief 'Lobbying 101 as (behind her) the Caucus' Deborah Rogers (L-R), Sean Carter & Jessica Redman listen. Right, Democratic Natl. Committeewoman Sue Lovell



addresses the Caucus, Feb. 5. At left, Janine Brunjes introduces herself as the mayor's new GLBT (yes B & T this time!) liaison.

Below Right, Return of the Prodigal Daughter: Sarah gives a bit of her background in gay activism during the Caucus meeting. Below Left, Caucus VP Jessica Redman prepares to introduce the Caucus' guest speaker for the evening (below)

TATS' own Sarah DePalma.



per capita, transgenders have become the most organized, active, and everything just short of effective, lobbyists in the state. About the only thing we lack is funding.

So here was Sarah at the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, drumming up support for lobbying in Austin on TGAIN's Transgender Lobby Days. Just before Sarah's speech we heard the DNC Committeewoman, Sue Lovell (who's experienced a 180 shift in her attitude on transgenders) introducing Janine Brunjes, the



Parker Campaign, and will agree she is truly supportive!

To be sure, Houston's GLBT community has seen a dramatic paradigm shift these last few years. And Sarah's rousing call to action, and the warm reception given her at the Caucus punctuates that sentiment.

But the more things change, the more they stay the same in some ways. Now our community faces what could be as ugly, or an uglier, fight than we encountered back in 1985 with the upcoming referendum, financially backed by none other than Focus on the Family. So while we've mended wounds in our own house, we've still got the same old enemies waiting at our door; and they're definitely looking forward to battle.

We're all together now, and it feels great. Will we hold it together in the long run? Time will tell....



# NTAC RECEPTION HOSTS SYLVIA RIVERA, PETER OILER

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**T**wo guests of honor – Peter Oiler of the Winn-Dixie lawsuit, and Stonewall hero Sylvia Rivera – wowed a recent reception held by The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC). NTAC's Feb. 17 event was a Lobby Days kickoff reception at the True Spirit Conference in Washington DC.

The two speakers (and a third, with a little help from Peter Oiler's wife Shirley) packed the reception room to beyond capacity. There were literally folks standing in the hallway craning to hear the speeches. Sylvia Rivera announced the re-creation of her 70's era activist group and gave a poignant first-hand recount of the events at Stonewall – the event credited with beginning the Gay Rights Movement. Afterwards, Peter Oiler described his life post-Winn Dixie, and the galvanized community support.

make that a reality.

"I've been very fortunate ... I've found so many friends since this has all happened," said Oiler during his speech. He and his wife Shirley thanked all of the various groups who've stood shoulder-to-shoulder with them during the past year. Indeed they feel it's helped build a sense of community, and hopefully a greater understanding of the plight of transgenders of every stripe.

"Nobody should be kept from being able to live their lives," Oiler finished, "because of fear."

NTAC member, Sylvia Rivera was the STAR of the evening! She began her speech by announcing her newly resurrected group, Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries (STAR). The group, begun in 1970 barely a year after Stonewall, has come back to the forefront of activism with



**Julia Murray & Sylvia Rivera (L-R) pose with NTAC board members Roslyn Manley, Chris Stinson (back) & Vanessa Edwards Foster.**

and renewed direction.

During a portion of the evening, Ms. Rivera agreed to a retelling of the events of the Stonewall Riots. The crowd packed in closer and literally sat hushed, like children, at the feet of the doyenne of Stonewall as she told the story.

Some interesting facts: Stonewall was perceived as a drag bar, but Ms. Rivera disputed that, saying "they wouldn't allow the drags queens in there."

Instead it was a bar where white middle class patrons came to pick up hustlers.

And the actual flashpoint for the rioters was not Judy Garland's death, as popularly theorized, but the fact that the police came for the second time in a week to raid the bar. The street girl who was the first to be arrested snatched the keys from the police and ran into the bar.

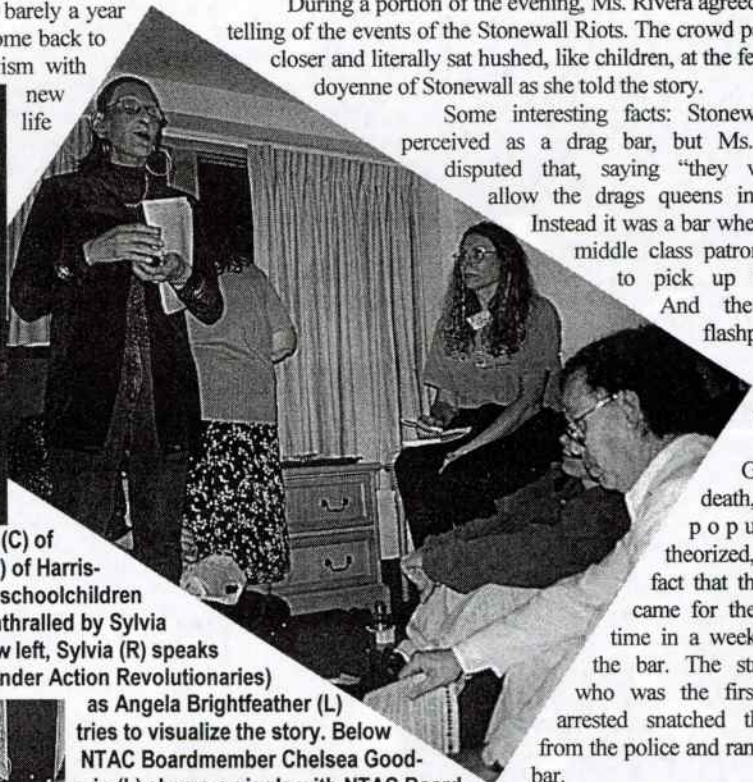
When the police began the arrests, it was pocket change that was thrown at them (a reference to a common practice at the time for police to take payoffs to keep from busting a bar too frequently.) Once riot police began a line movement down Christopher Street, "the street kids formed a chorus line, kicking their

*(Continued on Page 12)*



**Above, one of the guest speakers at the NTAC reception, Peter Oiler (C) of New Orleans cuts up with a couple TATS members, Mara Keisling (L) of Harrisburg, PA & Vanessa Edwards Foster (R). At right, the room sits like schoolchildren (Peter Oiler in the foreground, Alisha Clarke in the background) enthralled by Sylvia Rivera's (L) re-telling of the events at Stonewall back in 1969. Below left, Sylvia (R) speaks on the resurrection of the group she founded: STAR (Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries)**

new  
life



**as Angela Brightfeather (L) tries to visualize the story. Below NTAC Boardmember Chelsea Goodwin (L) shares a giggle with NTAC Board Chair, Yoseño Lewis (R) at the reception.**

Guest of honor Peter Oiler's speech drew correlations between what happened to him, and the rights that many Americans take for granted. He detailed his current fight with the regional supermarket chain, and explained how this was an employers' attempt to affect employee behavior on their own time. Oiler did a surprisingly wonderful job of tying together the needs of all Americans; describing how African Americans even still are struggling to be able to enjoy an equal share of the American Dream. Summing it up, Oiler noted, "We can all work together," as has been exhibited in his case, to







## TGAIN....

(Continued from Page 1)

SB 829, and likely co-sponsor in the Texas Senate: Leticia VanDePutte, who happened to be a scrub-nurse at Christie's sex reassignment surgery! Additionally, Christie is now hitched with one of Sen. VanDePutte's uncles! Big state, small world!

Yes, TATS' Christie Lee was there herself! Other notables included TATS & TGAIN's Sarah DePalma,

(Continued on Page 9)



At left, Monica Roberts smiles at the camera as others mill about before the group photo shoot, including (R-L) TATS' Alyssa Wright, Dianne Boucher (back to camera) and Jenifer René Pool (L foreground)



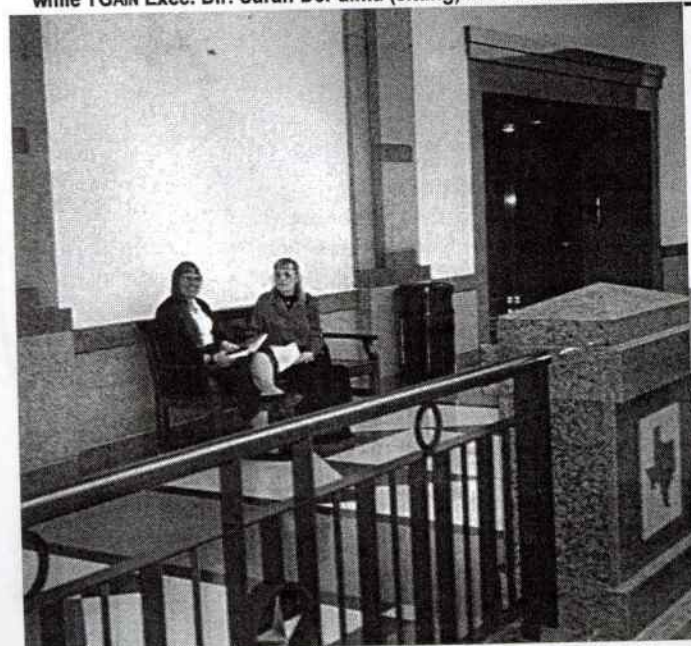
So let's get this show on the road! At right Marie Denise Gallagher (L) giggles as Vanessa Edwards Foster (R) becomes impatient while waiting outside of the Capitol. Time to take on those Austin powers, baby!



Poring through the packets and searching for their assigned offices, a gaggle of Houston girls ready for their day ahead. (L-R) Jackie Thorne of GCTC, Beth Richard of TATS, Jill Miller of Tri-Ess, and Sarah Jane Connell and Melanie Black of both CATS & TATS study while TGAIN Exec. Dir. Sarah DePalma (sitting) instructs an unidentified girl (in fur coat).



At Right, Looking like a picture out of GQ Magazine, the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus' contingent, President Sean Carter (L-R) and Vice President Jessica Redman stride through the Capitol's Halls



Caught ya! TATS' first president, April Lauper (L) and Bettie Ann from Paris TX relax a bit between stops during lobbying.

At right, first stop of the day before actual Lobby Day, Jessica Redman (R) gets into some early lobbying, as Dem. State Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt (L) of Dallas listens intently.



At left, a quick group photo with State Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt (C) for the TATS / TGAIN / NTAC resident lobbyists, Jessica Redman (L) and Vanessa Edwards Foster (R). It was determined that TGAIN visited every office but the top three in the Texas Statehouse!



# STAR RESURRECTED

## WILL ORGANIZE AMANDA MILAN VIGIL DURING MURDER TRIAL

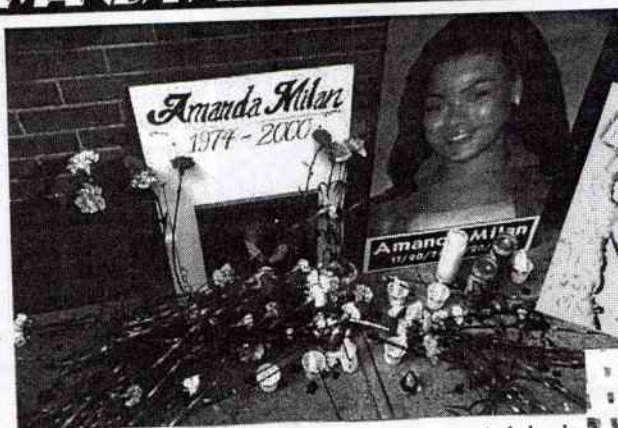
By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**NTAC PRESS RELEASE** — The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) is proud to announce its strong support of the Amanda Milan Vigil in New York by a newly resurrected group that harkened back to the days of Stonewall. The organizing group, Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries, or STAR, has recently had new life resuscitated into it by one of its founders, Sylvia Rivera. The move by the board of NTAC only highlights the history and fresh new direction undertaken by this storied group.

The upcoming vigil will coincide with beginning of the murder trial of the two men charged in Amanda Milan's death. Ms. Milan, a transgendered woman well-known and well-liked among New York's street-workers, had her throat slashed in front of dozens of witnesses in the early morning hours of June 21 last year. The killing drew national attention due to the reactions of the bystanders at the scene. After 20-year-old Duayne McCuller sliced Milan's jugular, leaving her dying on the city sidewalk, nearby cabbies who watched the incident stood by cheering and applauding. Both McCuller and accomplice Eugene Celestine — the man charged with both encouraging him and supplying the knife — go on trial sometime in April.

Ms. Milan's death and bystanders' response inspired outrage from the national transgender community. An outpouring of grief and anger drew an estimated 300-plus to a candlelight vigil in memory of the victim — unprecedented for the death of a street-worker. Most notably it galvanized New York's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community like nothing since ... Stonewall! Thus it's fitting that Ms. Rivera, widely credited with instigating the Stonewall Riots in 1969, resurrects her creation from that era to coordinate the Amanda Milan Vigil in 2001.

Sylvia Rivera and the late Marsha P. Johnson originally founded STAR in New York City in



Above, pictures of Amanda Milan grace the street shrine in her honor after last year's memorial vigil. At right, last



Above, Sylvia Rivera at an NTAC Reception this past month

year's vigil march in New York included Octavia St. Laurent (C), who gave a powerful eulogy before an estimated 300 at Amanda's memorial service.

1970. Both Rivera, then 20, and Johnson, who was in her late twenties, are



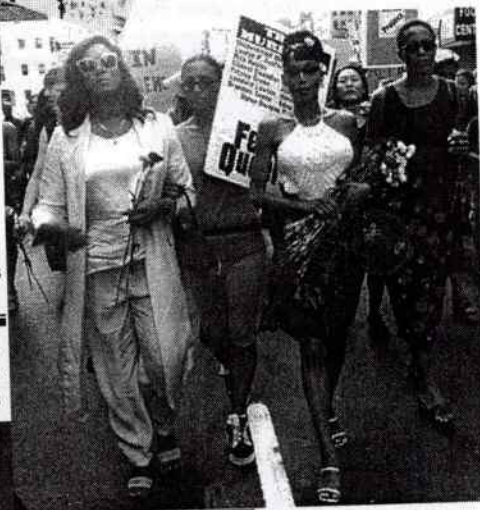
announces STAR, her recently resurrected street activism group. Sylvia, of course, is still the reigning doyenne of trans-activism, as shown in a protest (above) circa 1998, and one at left from the Stonewall era of both Sylvia (L) and her favorite accomplice, Marsha P. Johnson (R).

widely known as the street queens who helped propel Stonewall from a routine police bust of a queer bar to a revolutionary call for greater LGBT activism and rights.

Now some thirty years later, Sylvia Rivera continues her street level activism pressing for civil rights for queer people, and all people facing discrimination. Ms. Rivera has been the guest of the Transgender Center of Bologna at World Pride week, was arrested with the Soulforce delegation in their action at the Catholic Bishops Conference in Washington DC, and also arrested in support for the Irish Lesbian and Gay Association

in New York's St. Patrick's Day Parade — all just in the past year!

"I've spent forty years of my life on these streets," related Ms. Rivera in a recent reception held by NTAC at the True Spirit Conference in Washington DC. After a long, hard life, punctuated with a period of homelessness in the mid-90's, Ms. Rivera is now drug and alcohol-free and living in a



cooperative communal residence reminiscent of the 60's, aptly named Transy House. Most especially, Ms. Rivera is excited about rebuilding STAR.

STAR is also rather well known in New York's LGBT community due to the many books and articles which cover Sylvia's role in Stonewall and the movement that grew from it. A street queer Menace, STAR aims to galvanize the poorer and most oppressed member of the transgender community — a segment that is most difficult to politically organize.

"The young girls respond to Sylvia very well," said Rusty Mae Moore, a board member of NTAC who also works with STAR. "They instantly see that she is a survivor in a very tough game in life. In a world of limited opportunities, Sylvia tell people, get a job, get a real life."

For more information on STAR, visit their website at: [www.geocities.com/catskillmarina](http://www.geocities.com/catskillmarina)



## TGAIN LOBBY DAYS....

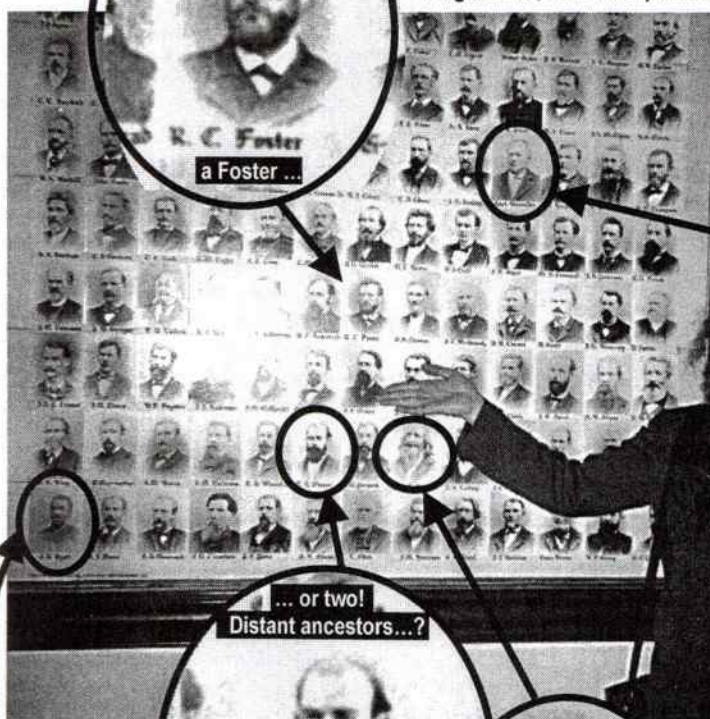
*(Continued from Page 7)*

Phyllis Frye, and Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus President, Sean Carter. Some of the additional TATS members, former and current, attending this year were: Melanie Black, Dianne Boucher, Sarah Jane Connell, Marie Denise Gallagher, April Lauper, Jenifer René Pool, Beth Richard, Monica Roberts, Mary Michelle Robinson, Lilly Roddy, Sara Rook, Katrina Rose, Rose Wall, Brandi Welch Williams, Alyssa Jacqueline Wright, Tyler Zotterelle and of course, yours truly. Other Houston T-folks included Wendy Parker, GCTC President, Jackie Thorne and newbie Jill Miller of Tri-Ess' Tau Chi Chapter. Of course, it wasn't just Houstonians who filled the lobbying ranks: Dallas folks got into the act this time, with a few a handful of girls making it down with DFW dynamo, Robin Washburn. Austin also sent a contingent along with their therapist Katie Koontz (who



Laying down the law... At Left, Jessica Ann Redman holds center court while explaining to the legislative aides on either side of her in Rep. Irma Rangel's office why she as an intersexed person cannot marry if the Texas Defense of Marriage Act passes. Caucus president Sean Carter (L) sits listening intently. Below, Jo Paullly Tittsworth (L-R) talks about the day's events, as Heather Day awaits an unknown lobbyist debriefing with TGAIN's Sarah DePalma and Sara Rook (R).

Texas' 18<sup>th</sup> Legislature! Below, Vanessa Edwards Foster stops outside of Rep. Warren Chisum's office for a photo with 1881's body of legislators, with a couple surprising finds:



a Foster ...

... or two!  
Distant ancestors...?

G.W. Wyatt, an  
early African  
American Rep.



...and even J. D. Barry, an early hippie chemist state legislator! Pretty liberal bunch of politicians for 1880's Texas! Perhaps maybe a transgender representative then? Not a chance!



Antonio's Alamo Boyz!

Though we missed our attendance goal this year (I was fairly useless in that respect this session) we still managed to see every one of the state legislative offices, with the exceptions of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House. That was definitely a first in TGAIN Lobby Days history!

The training session alone managed to draw 49 people to the Cheshire Cat,

Santos Benavides, an  
early Hispanic State  
Representative....

Devin Smith's business in the North University area of Austin. Needless to say, it was a packed house – just what a lobbyist likes to see! During the session, State Rep. Glenn Maxie dropped by to speak to the group. He very patiently answered all questions – even the hard ones! Maxie's definitely one of the good guys!

Afterwards everyone scattered to various locales around Austin for a quick bite of dinner then off to bed. Not necessarily to sleep, mind you. In true lobby days tradition, I can't sleep before the first day of lobbying. Not that I try not to sleep! I'm never tired that first day, either .... Oh well.

*(Continued on Page 11)*



## SAN ANTONIO SHERIFF'S LIEUTENANT TO TRANSITION, FRED PHELPS PROTESTS

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

**A** Bexar County sheriff's deputy has gotten the go-ahead to undergo an on-the-job transition in preparation for sexual reassignment surgery. In an extremely courageous move, the county's sheriff has unequivocally supported the decision. However, the decision spurred protests pitting zealous religious demonstrators from Kansas against counter-protesters including Christie Lee Littleton VanDePutte.

The officer, traffic lieutenant Brian Lunan at the county's Eastside sub-station, informed Sheriff Ralph Lopez of the change on February 20. Initially reticent, Lopez recently ended weeks of speculation by holding the news conference allowing Lt. Lunan to proceed with counseling and the transition process.

Word, though, got out quickly through the religious community as the incident drew immediate ire. Less than a week after the news hit, Rev. Fred Phelps of Topeka's Westboro Baptist Church — and creator of the GodHatesFags website — began the expected denunciations. Not willing to let that suffice, he then concocted an obscenely cartoonish flyer depicting the Sheriff in leather harness and fishnet hose.

"I support lieutenant Lunan's constitutional right to make individual choices. That is my official position," said Bexar County Sheriff, Ralph Lopez in a March 5 press conference on KSAT TV. "This is something that is covered under the Americans With Disabilities Act," stated Lopez in regards to questions about the transitioning. Sheriff Lopez. The sheriff intended to abide by that decision.

Meanwhile as the press conference took place inside, the church group from Kansas and counter-demonstrators sparred verbally outside the county sheriff's department. Leading the circus-like demonstration was Rev. Fred Phelps himself, railing against Lunan's decision and Sheriff Lopez' support.

Phelps and several members of the Westboro Baptist Church from Topeka, Kansas, demonstrated with signs and even got into arguments with several people. "Thou shall not libel mankind with woman kind, that is abomination," Phelps blasted. "That will take

your soul to hell!" "If you believe in the Lord and you have faith, you know that the Lord is a God of love," one unidentified woman said,



Sheriff Ralph Lopez at the press conference

Court lawsuit) was out there doing a little in-your-face protesting with Fred and the gang as well. Fresh on the heels of the Texas State Lobby Days, Ms. Littleton (now VanDePutte) has given clear signs that she has every intent of being anything but a closet case! I believe we may have us another strong activist in the making!

**Sheriff Lopez is a senile old fool who needs a frontal lobotomy, & Lunan needs a frontal castration**



...and you better not change your story old man... or I'll tell what we did last night!



**A flyer designed by the GodHatesFags Church. Clearly Fred Phelps is a man with too much idle time on his hands!**



responding to Phelps vitriol.

"You can't worship Mr. Peanut and expect to go to heaven when you die!" a church member countered.

According to Sarah DePalma, Ms. Christie Littleton VanDePutte herself (of the recent Littleton v. Prange Supreme



Lt. Lunan is said to have already spoken openly to many of the deputies about the decision and plans to hold a news conference soon. "I was pretty much caught by surprise," said Steven Metcalf, a deputy. "When he told me what his intentions were ... he asked me how I felt about it ... I



**Rev. Fred Phelps of Topeka KS at the recent protest outside Bexar County's Sheriff's Dept. holds signs of his ignorance. Amazingly he made it out of the state alive after holding the Flag Flag sign ridiculing the Texas state flag! Them's fightin' words!**

said bottom line ... the person has to be happy ... it's his duty to do what he has to do."

Lunan has been a lieutenant at the Eastside substation since 1997 and has been with the sheriff's department since 1985. Lopez said that he has already given the officer permission to start the transition process by allowing Lunan to grow her hair and to start dressing as a woman soon.

The lieutenant is said to be well respected. "I respect him as a supervisor ... to me it doesn't matter if he's a male or a female ... I still believe he can do the job," Metcalf said. While there's still work to be done regarding pronouns, the officers at Bexar County Sheriff's Dept. are to be applauded for their loyalty and their open minds. In an environment as frequently oppressive as South Texas, progressive mindsets such as theirs are very refreshing indeed.



## Jealousy Over Transgendered Girlfriend May Have Led To Teen's Death

**BUFFALO NY** — A Buffalo, NY, teen who was beaten, strangled, and sexually assaulted with a broomstick may have been murdered because of his relationship with a transgendered girlfriend, The Buffalo News reports. The charred body of James J. Mack was found behind a Catholic church on January 22.

Authorities say that five teens lured Mack to an apartment, where they hit him with beer bottles, kicked him, dropped a television set

on him, stabbed him, sexually assaulted him with a broom handle, strangled him with an electrical cord, and then put his unconscious body facedown in a bathtub filled with water. They then set the lifeless body on fire in a large trash container. Autopsy results concluded that Mack died of drowning in addition to blunt-force trauma and strangulation.

Erie County district attorney Frank Clark said that Mack's relationship with a

transgendered teen known as Tashia was at the heart of the motive for the crime. "Mack's relationship with Tashia appears to be a motive for at least two of the five actors," Clark said. "I think 'jealousy' is the right word for it."

He refused to elaborate further. Four young men and one young woman, ages 18 to 20, have been charged with the crime. Friends and relatives apparently believed that Tashia, a biological male, was a woman.





## TGAIN LOBBY DAYS....

(Continued from Page 9)

Comments from the Lobby Day participants, both veteran and virgin, were glowing!

"It was great being a part of history and part of the team that may have gotten our name change bill through the Texas Legislature!" gushed veteran lobbyist Monica Roberts. "Kudos to Sarah and her worker bees who helped this Lobby Day work like a well oiled machine."

This was easily the most politically successful day in our history, added TGAIN Executive Director, Sarah DePalma. "On this day we quit talking about building a statewide community and actually created the building blocks upon which

our statewide community will be built."

"To hear Sarah DePalma's enthusiastic talk afterwards, this was a major turning point for transgendered folk in Texas," said first-time lobbyist, and relative newbie to the out TG community, Alyssa Wright.

"Someone commented yesterday that Lobby Day was empowering and I had to agree. 'You know, if I can traipse through the halls of the Texas State Legislature as a woman, I can do so anywhere.'" Alyssa continued.

"It seems to me that other people had even greater leaps of confidence. Sarah DePalma commented about people starting out as 'scared rabbits' but later learning they could do this." Alyssa finished "for those of you who may have worried that if you went you would be embarrassed or something, let me assure you that people in general treated me and the other participants with respect."

Indeed, we were shown respect and courtesy at every office we went to. Well, perhaps not so much from my friend, Rep. Talton's office. Late in the day, his legislative aide evidently called for a DPS escort back to the office after finding that a group of us had made our way back to his offices again. Apparently they still remember my visit with Mr. Talton back in 1999. Hey, I wouldn't have been difficult if he wouldn't have!

Caucus President, Sean Carter also found his first organized lobby event a learning experience. "It's incredible just watching Vanessa and Jessica in action," Sean said. "Those two make the perfect team. Vanessa plays the good cop, and Jessica plays bad cop."

"My favorite part," Sean recalled, "was when we went in to visit with (conservative Republican State Rep.) Warren Chisum; Vanessa softens him up, then Jessica lays into him and bends over - showing (her) cleavage!" Sean quipped. "The poor man! Half of his staff had to come into the office to watch us!"

Other stories of the day were equally as amusing. Both Sarah and I have decided to award Beth Richard the Purple Heart Award if for nothing else than her infinite patience! We know it wasn't easy! You done good, girl!

Jo Paully Tittsworth of Tri-Ess got the most impressionistic award. Jo, a crossdresser in male cowboy garb, being wheeled around in a wheelchair by Brandi



**James Byrd Hate Crimes Act sponsor, Rep. Senfronia Thompson (L) watches as Jessica Redman (R) points to crucial wording in TGAIN's legislative packet.**

Welch Williams, was a big stereotype-breaker everywhere they went. Many of Jo Paully's assigned offices were West Texas Reps, who could relate, in a sense, to the ranching crossdresser; and yet at the same time were taken aback by the juxtaposition of this person compared to their preconception of what transgenderers are.

I may have picked up the 'wow' award by nothing more than just finagling a picture with my state representative: conservative, Eagle Forum member Talmadge Heflin!

Jessica Redman got the most cheers of the event, recounting visits she and I had with both Speaker Pro-Tem, Tom Uher of Bay City (a really sweet gentleman!) and also our report of our education of Rep. Senfronia Thompson on the

(Continued on Page 13)



**It's as simple as that! Rep. Senfronia Thompson (L) and Vanessa Edwards Foster show that it's easy to lobby.**

## What I Learned From Lobby Days

By Brandi Welch Williams

1. The Capitol gets bigger every other year.
2. No matter how good a map you have.... north is the other direction.
3. Jessica Redman is the Energizer Bunny.
4. True friends never get mad at you.
5. Zeb Zbraneh's legislative assistant knows what a Lone Star Farmer is.
6. Mrs. Christie Littleton is most gracious.
7. DPS officers made excellent guides.
8. No matter what I wear, Phyllis Frye surprises me with some nice comment.
9. We are making progress....
10. It's fun to share your lunch table with Nursing Care Lobbyists and wave at them during the day.
11. We had a sheriff amongst us.
12. Wheelchairs are free in the Capitol building, they fit in all the elevators, and make great doorstops.
13. Everybody looks up and makes eye contact when you say you want to work and pay taxes.
14. It's the only place I know of where there are longer lines for the elevators than the woman's room.
15. Katz on Sixth Street serves awesome Strawberry Daiquiris.
16. Pigeons love to get in pictures with us.
17. Cell phones don't work in the Capitol Extension.
18. The longer a Senator or Representative stays in office and makes B.S., the State rewards him or her with more office space to store it in.
19. The Capitol Rotunda is not a port call for Captain Janeway.
20. Lobbying is fun and we get to do it again in May in Washington DC.



## NTAC HOSTS SYLVIA RIVERA....

(Continued from Page 6)

their legs in the air and chanting 'We are the Village Girls, we wear our hair in curls, we wear our dungarees, above our nelly knees...!'

"This was the true beginning," stated Ms. Rivera, "of the (GLBT) revolutionary movement."

But Ms. Rivera's first love is the most marginal of the transgender community, the street youth. As

such, her rejuvenation of STAR seeks to give that segment a positive direction for their energy in a world of severely

limited opportunities. STAR's first task is organizing the Amanda Milan Vigil for a street girl whose killing, five days before New York's Pride Parade, made national headlines.

"I want to give these girls a sense of history," Ms. Rivera said during her speech at the NTAC



reception. The grand dame of activism added that the transgender community "has been sold down the river for 32 years!"

"Will we continue for another 32 years?" Ms. Rivera asked the crowd, "while our kids on the street continue dying?" Calling for action now, and taking action on the upcoming Amanda Milan Vigil during her killers' murder trials will begin to answer that question, she replied.

"Transgendered people must learn to speak for themselves!" Ms. Rivera exhorted. "The Gay and Lesbian Community doesn't. Politicians don't speak for us!"

"Speak for yourselves!"



Vanessa (L-R) with Julia Murray & spouse Sylvia Rivera hang out in the lobby at the True Spirit Conference in Washington DC

speaking for us! NTAC is the nation's premier transgender civil rights organization. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.ntac.org>

## An Open Letter to the Community from Christie Lee Littleton

I would like to thank all that were involved in the fight for justice over my case, *Littleton v. Prange*.

The support I received from all the LGBT community, the Texas Human Rights Foundation (THRF), the Texas Association for Transsexual Support (TATS), PFLAG and TGAIN; Donald Skipwith, Sarah DePalma, Beth Richard, Vanessa Edwards Foster, Monica Roberts, Denise Watten and all fifteen brilliant minds on my legal dream team; my legal counselors Alyson Meiselman and my most beloved big sister Phyllis R. Frye and her lifetime partner, Trish, I love you all!

As the heterosexual post-op woman with a transsexual past that I am, I've never been involved in the LGBT community. You accepted me... into your community with love, understanding and open hearts. I'd like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart and soul.

I know you all put your best work

into this case, long hours, newsletters, briefs, getting the issue out to the media & the world. Well you did a very important high-minded and excellent job; and your work hasn't gone unnoticed. Your efforts and hard work were noticed throughout the world and by myself. You have my love and respect. God bless you all.

I received thousands of e-mail from all over the world of concern, support and condolences. Thousands of e-mail, giving me assurance that we would've won this case if justice would have been served because I had the best people supporting me, the best legal minds and the most caring organizations standing beside me. I agree with them, you're the best! We didn't lose the fight, they just refused to hear our voice! Justice has not been rendered and I refuse to stop here!

I will join with the LGBT community to continue to fight for justice, equal justice for all! It's our civil right as humans and Americans. I continue to search for a way to have

the Littleton Ruling reversed. I just returned from Dallas searching for a new Law Firm to continue my quest - wish me luck.

Before I end my letter of appreciation, I would like to (acknowledge) Tere P. Fredrickson of San Antonio. Tere is a member of the SAERPC, which was also involved in our fight for justice. She is the one that deserves a lot of credit and (has) gotten little. Tere P. Fredrickson is a heaven-sent gift to me; she has helped me in so many ways that no one (will ever) know. Will you all please give her praise and an award for all her hard work she donated to the cause.

I thank you all, God bless you! I send you all my love and will see you in the near future.

Love to all, your friend forever,  
I couldn't ask God for better friends  
Mrs. Christie Lee Littleton





## A TEXAS ODYSSEY — Part II

By Katrina C. Rose

I often make mention of how the conservative leadership that has co-opted the civil rights movement is unusually white. Unfortunately, the sad reality is that if you look at many photos of groups of transgender activists (including the ones you might see of the TGAIN activists who visited the Texas Capitol in February — the reason I'm calling this piece part two of 2001: A Texas Odyssey), you'll see a whole lotta white and not much black or brown.

Why? It's not as if there aren't African-American transgendered people. NTAC, the only national group whose goal is a transgender-inclusive ENDA, has, since its formation, had African-Americans at the helm: first Dawn Wilson and currently Yoseño Lewis. And, one only need look at the Remembering Our Dead website to see the names of transgendered people of color who aren't able to engage in activism.

The readers are probably very familiar with how disgusted I am with the non-transgendered massuhs of the sexual minority civil rights movement when they purport to speak for transgendered people. So I am incredibly uncomfortable with the prospect of stating that 'I know' why there seems to be a substantial underrepresentation of TGs of color involved in TG activism.

My suspicions are tied to the embedded effects of hundreds of years of good ol' American racism: fear of coming out based on fear of losing what little one has managed to gain in spite of a economic and legal systems that still have a built-in bias in favor of white male Christians.

And I am sure that's part of it but, by itself, that would be too simple. Indeed, anyone who truly has been paying attention should be seeing 'divide and conquer: the next generation' in progress. Three decades ago one of America's political parties used racial fear to turn a geographic area of the nation which had traditionally voted for the other party toward the aforementioned race-baiting party. It should be obvious how that same party is using 'fear of the queer' to divide a racial voting bloc which has traditionally voted for the other party. It should be — but promises of a piece of the pie can be seductive.

While I was attempting to assemble my thoughts on my recent trip to Texas, I ran across an article about someone declaring to the media that homosexuals should be put to death.

No — I'm not trying to abruptly change the subject and, no, it wasn't the recent Texas Triangle article about the Bob Enyart groupies. Rather, it was an article in a London newspaper, The Guardian which began: "Few who saw it will forget it. There was Shabba Ranks, Jamaica's rude, lewd, skirt-chasing dance floor superstar, explaining to the audience of Channel 4's The Word that he was at one with the Bible in believing all the "batty boys" should be put to death."

The author of the London Guardian article,

Dave Hill, also noted "Black preachers, black activists and black politicians were at it too, not only from the Caribbean and North America, but also from Africa and all points between, including Britain. Of course, homophobia was running deep in plenty of white communities too. But suddenly, it was as if no force on this earth united its people of color quite like their loathing of the Queer Nation."

Hill's article was primarily about Delroy Constantine-Simms' recently-published collection of essays by several writers entitled The Greatest Taboo: Homosexuality in Black Communities, but it spurred me to ask longtime TATS member and founding NTAC member, Monica Roberts, an African-American male-to-female transsexual, for her thoughts about the lack of color in TG activism.

She commented that African-Americans are "very concerned about public perceptions of them as a people, and the group dynamic dictates that there are certain subjects that we don't discuss in front of White society because we're believe they will be used to cast us in a negative light. In other words: 'Dirty laundry stays in the family'" Not surprisingly, she has observed that "Homosexuality in the community is definitely at the top of the community 'dirty laundry list.'"

Said Roberts, "Black people for centuries have been vilified not only in the United States but also in other parts of the world, and oppressed people will take out their frustrations on another segment of the group that they don't like in order to boost their own self-esteem."

"The Amanda Milan killing in New York was an example of that dynamic in which you had an African-American killing another African-American because she was transgendered, and the person that handed the alleged killer the murder weapon was himself gay."

"The deeply conservative religious beliefs that African-Americans hold are another factor in why we have this contradictory attitude toward GLBT people. Most African-Americans have been taught from birth to respect other human beings and strive for fair play in this society. Hating GLBT people conflicts with that, so some people use the Old Testament scriptures condemning homosexuality as justification for their attitudes."

Remember what I said about promises of a piece of the pie being seductive when you see Reggie White and Clarence Thomas. This may or may not fully explain why TG activism is whiter than it should be but, before saying a whole heckuvalot about 2001's Texas TG Lobby Day, I wanted to give the readers some thoughts on it — and it wouldn't be right if all of those thoughts were my white ones.

## A TEXAS ODYSSEY — PART I

(Continued from Page 13)

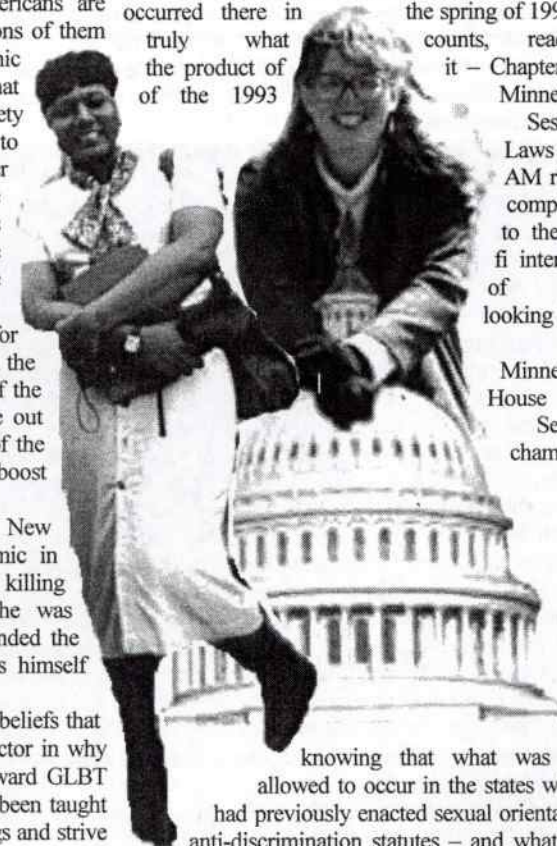
That nice fall day in 1999 was emotional for me in an entirely different manner. On the surface it was simply a confirmation that I'd escaped the despair in which I'd been drowning only a few months prior: I was indeed in Minnesota. Different state, ergo different capitol.

Simple, eh?

Naturally, it went deeper than that. There was that office which denotes that the governor is Jesse Ventura rather than, well, you-know-who.

But, it went deeper than that, too. Even though the North Star State's Legislature was not in session at that point, the main doors of the Senate and House were open — and into them I peered. And, that's when the emotional floodgate opened. There is where my brothers and sisters in Minnesota were liberated from the bonds of economic slavery.

Even though the substantive element of what occurred there in the spring of 1993 is truly what counts, reading the product of it — Chapter 22 of the 1993 Minnesota Session Laws — is AM radio compared to the hi-fi intensity of just looking into the Minnesota House and Senate chambers and



knowing that what was not allowed to occur in the states which had previously enacted sexual orientation anti-discrimination statutes — and what has not happened in any that have enacted them since and what will not happen in Maryland this year thanks to a conservative elite in that state which demands not only the right to be free from discrimination by heterosexuals but also the right to discriminate against the transgendered — happened: a trans-inclusive anti-discrimination law.

But, I know that's not going to happen in Texas, this year or any year in the near future. So, despite the snow and ice, I am glad to be back in Minnesota.



# ASTRO FORECAST FOR MARCH 2001

By Lilly Roddy

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**T**he special thing for this month is Venus is going retrograde in Aries on March 8th. Venus symbolizes love, beauty, money, art and talents. Quite often this represents a time when people look at their investments in themselves, in their saving accounts and in their relationships. You will be expected to look very clearly at what you have manifested in your life. And what is positive will be evident as well as what is negative.

Days to dance till dawn are March 1st, 3rd, 10th, 21st, 26th, 27th, and the 29th. Days to seek inner refuge with your spiritual guru are March 5th, 8th, 13th, 18th, 28th, and the 31st.

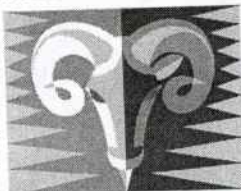
For those of you interested in how Easter is calculated every year, here is the formula. It is the first Sunday after the full Moon after the Sun has entered the sign of Aries. The Sun enters the sign of Aries on March 20th this year. The first full Moon is on April 7th. And the Sunday following is April 8th.

As the month begins, the Sun is in Pisces and enters Aries on the 20th. Mercury begins the month in Aquarius and slips into Pisces on the 17th. Venus remains in Aries as it retrogrades this month. Mars continues the long journey through Sagittarius. The outer planets remain in the signs they have been in with Jupiter in Gemini, Saturn in Taurus, Uranus and Neptune in Aquarius, and Pluto in Sagittarius.

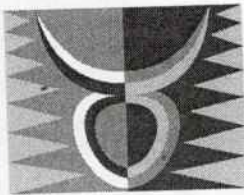
Famous people born during the times of Pisces are Mary Chapin Carpenter, Dirk Benedict, Samantha Eggar, Emilio Estefan, and Grover Cleveland.

## ARIES

— This is the time of the year when you are in your cocoon stage and you are getting ready for the spring to push your head through the soil. You are resting up for your birthday time. You are enjoying being with friends but are more sensitive than usual. With Venus retrograding through your sign, you are more touchy about your relationship needs that usual. And you may have to switch roles with your partner this month to see who is the most needy. And of course, you will win. Your energy rebounds at the end of the month and you are ready for action and adventure. Boredom can be your big nemesis for this time of the month. Break up those routines.



**TAURUS** — Now those work problems are finally working themselves out, you are ready to spend your time with your friends and associates this



month. You are ready to be social and get away from the stress of last month. Your self indulgent desires will be wonderfully active this month. My advice is to give into them. I hear that chocolate spread over the painful areas of your body and carefully removed by someone special can be very healing. By the end of the month you are ready for some rest from all the play. Avoid stress at work or in your relationship if you can. You may react and later regret the results from those actions.

**GEMINI** — Relationships are going to be your big theme for the month, most likely till the end of the of September. This is going to be a time



of major clean out in that area of your life. And with Venus, planet of relationship in retrograde, this just intensifies your desires to root out the problems that are there. Work may seem to offer you some escape from the intimacy but relating creeps into that part of your life as well. Disagreements over mixed messages may have you spending lots of time reexplaining yourself. You may have to avoid tact and diplomacy and shoot from the hip.

**CANCER** — Venus, planet of relationships and values is retrograding through your career sector. Old clients and associates that you haven't heard from in a long time will be getting in touch with you. If you are interested in marketing yourself or your business, work with people that you know and have done business in the past. Avoid trying to initiate new contacts. In the midst of all this, your diplomacy skills are remarkably enhanced. You will be over to smooth over the roughest road. Don't lay it on too thick, or some of your clients, friends and lovers will need insulin. By the end of the month, you are totally career focused and are ready to take on any projects. Don't start any new ones until April 23rd.

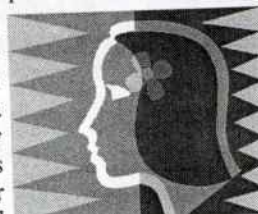


**LEO** — You get a break for all the relationship excavating you did last month. And you won't be grinding your teeth as much during the night as you have been. It is not that you are not as concerned, but you are ready to see other people's point of view. You may still not take their advice, but you won't feel as alone as you have. Money and shared resources raises it unsightly crest. Don't go at this problem alone. Get your partner involved. They have some great solutions if you can get them to share them with you. By the end



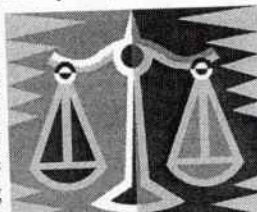
of the month, it is time for a vacation or at least a break in your regular operations.

**VIRGO** — You will be directing your attention and detail oriented persona toward your affinity and associations with those in your immediate and



customary environment. You will want to enhance the intervals that you, specially, expend with this other personage. You will pursue a direction to amplify the interplay twixt the binary alliance that you enjoin with them. And then your partner will take a stick and hit you in the head for not paying attention and you will get on with your life. Think less, play more. The Goddess of Winged Victory, Nike...says, "For goodness sake, Just do it?" At the end of the month, you will want more sexual activity. Play safe.

**LIBRA** — Venus, planet of commitment is reviewing your relationships structures and current engagements. Some will come up lacking because of early



withdrawal premature loss of interest. Penalties may result and damages may have to be taken care of. You will not be your easy going self. You will take on the role of the confrontive part of your relationship fabrication. Old flames may come and visit and fan the problems in your existing relationships. Can you say Jealousy? You are just bored and looking for a way out. But before you exit, take time to make sure you have finished before you leave looking for someone else to fill that space. At the end of the month, this just gets stronger.

## SCORPIO

— Creativity is your strong power this month. You are feeling analytical, just like a puzzle solver. You are seeing solutions to old problems that have been bugging you for a while. You could be a real star at work this month. You seem to be able to find just the right piece to fit into the conundrum to clear the picture for all involved. But, the key here is that the process has to be fun and not work. If it moves into the work mode, you will be overly burdened by their problems. Set your limits and boundaries and don't take on more than you want to. Relationships are coming to a head this month. Either you set new goals for your relationship or you will be looking for new partners. If you are single, you will not want to be. This forces will make you get out there and look. Resistance is futile.



(Continued on Page 20)



## EDITOR'S RANT

*(Continued from Page 2)*

front porch mailboxes in homes across the city. Sarah DePalma is still to this day in possession of the one left

However, we at TATS are an active organization, and will no doubt be very involved in the upcoming referendum and re-election efforts, and have continued

**Editor's memories: at right with Sylvia Rivera at this year's True Spirit Conference; At left, at SCC last Sept. with (L-R) founder of TSELF, Julie Johnson, Marisa Richmond of Tennessee Vals & Carrie Davis of TSELF; Below with U.S. Rep. Ken Bentsen at the 2000 State Democratic Convention**



on her mailbox. The level of conjecture and phobic fanaticism were beyond belief. As Sarah aptly put it, "it made my blood run cold to realize people like that were on my front porch, tacking stuff like this to my mailbox." As Sarah recalled to me, there was no telling the level of violence someone like that could be capable of once it



**At right, with State Rep. Terri Hodge at this year's TGAIn Lobby Days; At left, testifying before the State Juvenile Justice Committee during the EBAH Lobby Days in March 1999; Below boogieing with Councilmember Annise Parker (R), as an amused Jennifer René Pool watches at the 1999 Unity Banquet**



past few years, even being elected to the board for a couple terms.) I still remember 1996, shopping around for someone to take over when Sarah DePalma announced her retirement from activism. The response was a collective shrug. 'I'm not an activist!'

Even after my first return from lobbying, I recall it was anything but a hero's welcome, to be sure! Derision. 'We don't do politics in this group!' The following year, four other TATS



stopped being only rhetorical and started being acted upon physically.

Needless to say, their tactics proved quite effective: the righteously indignant cries of the gay and lesbian community painted them as attacking those sweet, soft-spoken conservatives. That, plus the smear flyers, added up to a 5-1 margin of defeat for the 1985 referendum.

This time around we're much more cohesive and organized community. But the fact we cannot ignore is that the religio-

political organizations have endlessly deep pockets, many more members at their beck and call, and a very deep-seated hatred for anything GLBT. And we can't forget, Focus on the Family has declared war on any initiative for GLBT equality in Houston. We're the new battlefield.



**At left, catching a photo with her representative, conservative State Rep. Talmadge Heflin in his office during this year's TGAIn Lobby Days; At Right clowning around with the irrepressible Kate Bornstein during the Coming Out Day celebration at the Texas State Fair in Dallas in October, 1998.**

members went to DC with no urging at all on my part!

TATS became active in more than lobbying. Local politics became another arena in which we helped make

*(Continued on Page 17)*



to remain active to this day. This belies TATS' initial history as this group did not move in the politically active direction we've seen over the past four or five years. Dee McKellar was involved in TATS, but was encouraged not to 'be political. Sarah and Phyllis Frye were pretty scarce in those days (even though Phyllis remained so, Sarah became more active over the





## EDITOR'S RANT

(Continued from Page 15)

history; specifically Annise Parker's successful third try for city council. Additionally we enjoyed great successes on a bit of 'passive' activism – my pet project, the panel discussions! It and all the other political and non-political projects that TATS has undertaken over the last few years has earned our group an honored reputation among those in and outside of the local trans community, and even notoriety among the national TG community as well. TATS may be the only local support group to have sent a representative for the past four years (soon to be five!) to lobby in Washington DC!



More memories: Above, (L-R) PVA's Director, Alejandro Morúa, Vanessa, State Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt & Jessica Redman at the PFLAG / Hatch Youth Scholarship Fund (PHYSF) Banquet last April, At Left, with NTAC Board-member Kathy Padilla, and PFLAG Executive Director, Kirsten Kingdon last May at PFLAG's Headquarters in Washington DC, At Right, with Christie Lee Littleton at KPFT-FM immediately following the 2000 Unity Banquet. Below with PFLAG's T-NET founder, Mary Boenke at the IFGE convention in Alexandria VA in March, 2000.

Below, joking around about her impending retirement with NGLTF's Exec Dir. Kerry Lobel at IFGE's Convention last March



TATS members have played a part in setting state and national transgender history: one of our longtime-activist members created ICTLEP and its Law Conference, another created the first statewide It's Time America! chapter in the nation and still thrives as TGAIN today, and three who are among the seven founding members of the newest TG civil rights organization, NTAC. I've been very fortunate to have been this group's newsletter editor and to have presided over such a period; one in which we enjoyed so much activity and earned our renown.

Regretfully, though, I must now resign my position of editor for this newsletter.

One reason I step down is personal: my time has become stretched so thinly, I'm unable to adequately meet the task. I must focus on what is most important. The other reason is the direction this group is currently going.

A recent board meeting of two of the board members (out of the five remaining) was called with

no proper notice given, and declared a proper quorum in its minutes. New board members were elected and the vice president moved to president. This was a knowingly, manipulative defiance of the by-laws. Never in TATS' history have we witnessed such an incident. Thus, I have lost confidence in the current board of TATS.

Rather than squabble over this, I choose instead to step aside and join the other three



resignations from the board this term. It is time for me to step down. The board now has a quorum to conduct a legitimate election. This group has a lot going for it: history as well as potential. My sincere hope is for TATS to continue nurturing its storied place in the local community, to think outwardly as well as inwardly, and to act not only in our own interests, but the community's interests. I wish you all best of luck.



Below Left, making history with Team Parker (L-R): Vol. Coord, Patrick McIlvain, Field General, Deborah Bell, Campaign Mgr. Grant Martin, Vol. Coord. Vanessa Edwards Foster, and the only out candidate ever elected to office in Houston, Councilmember Annise Parker at her victory celebration in Dec. 1997, and again celebrating at the re-election party with Grant & Annise in Nov. 1999.





# TransGenderFest 2.0 coming in May

**Y**es! The talent extravaganza TransGenderFest makes its triumphant return. The performance event of the season in version 1.0, which packed the house back in 1998 will again hit the stage on May 17, 18 and 19 at DiverseWorks in the Warehouse District.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to showcase our local talent — talent many of us never knew we had amongst us," said one of this version's curators, Vanessa Edwards Foster. "As a bonus, we also have a chance to bring in nationally renown transgendered performance artists."

Thursday, May 17 is scheduled as a slide presentation on trans-men and also a performance by F2M artist Mo B. Dick. The slide show will feature photographic images compiled by chronicler extraordinaire of the F2M community, Judith Halberstam.

Friday, May 18 will be the big day for the local performers — 12 Minutes Max! The 12 Minutes Max! is a series of performance vignettes — anything from poetry reading, to comedy, to performance art (skirts to avant garde), to short films. Last version's 12 Minutes Max! show packed the house, and this year's could very well do likewise!

Tentatively scheduled performers include: Jenifer René Pool, and Janelle DuBois of Dallas — both veteran performers from the first TGFest. Other tentatively slated performers include Troy Ham, Ina Shook, Kimberly Burnham and stand-up comedian, Jami Ward.

The Saturday night performance will be the headliner, who as yet hasn't been named. Kate Bornstein announced her play would not be ready by show time, and had to bow out.

However, we are still searching for local talent, just in case there's anyone gender different who

has a yen for performing! It's the perfect venue to do it! Contact Vanessa at: [MoonFlowrr@aol.com](mailto:MoonFlowrr@aol.com)

**Unity Banquet**  
**2001 - THE ODYSSEY**  
Sat, March 24, 2001 - 7PM  
Westchase Hilton  
9999 Westheimer @ Briarpark  
• Tickets - \$35 — Still Available!!!  
• 281-347-4878 — [melpag@pmpub.com](mailto:melpag@pmpub.com);  
• [shalomsarah@cs.com](mailto:shalomsarah@cs.com) [thanatos@cityscope.net](mailto:thanatos@cityscope.net)

## Daily Confrontations By Kimberly Burnham

Here lies Lester Moore ... from two shots from a .44 ... no less, no more. — from a gravestone in Tombstone, Arizona.

Melanie Hope once said "I want to forget all the empty past." You see, memories can delight us or pang us on the head as we look back. People should take an inventory of their own selves, and keep mindful of the present. The events of the future has its genetic origins from the past and present. If you have a problem focusing on the present, maybe you should seek spectacles. You should come up with a way to look at your histrionics honestly, and be constructive with dealing with them.

As we approach the patterns we've repeated,

the impact of our actions on others and the consequences to ourselves, we don't have to beat ourselves over the head with regrets about the past, or concerns about the future. After constructing this characteristic into your light-hearted persona, and you still feel worried, maybe you should ... freak out, and allow someone to take care of you. If that is too dotish of a solution, the answers you seek lie within you. Because any damn fool can recognize where he / she came from, what gifts he / she possesses, and what areas of denial or conflict he / she wishes to feel, heal or kill.

Perhaps it's time to face an addictive substance (like cough syrup) or behavior (like co-dependency, lechery, or parasitism) that stands

between us and our connection to our authentic self. Maybe we are ready to take another step in the unfolding of lesbo, queer, people whom bat for both teams, or drag queen identity. But keep away from me as you do it! I have enough of these people in my authentic life! However, there doesn't seem to be enough lesbians... pity. We need to take an inventory of the past so we can have ourselves committed... I mean commit ourselves to the process of change.

Today I am going to be careful out there in the real world. I know they are shooting real bullets. I don't want to end up like Lester Moore....



**TRANSActions**  
By Vanessa Edwards Foster

WOW! YOU'RE THE ONLY TRANSSEXUAL I'VE EVER SEEN!

(NO I'M NOT!)

OH YES YOU ARE! I'D REMEMBER IF I WOULD HAVE SEEN ONE BEFORE!

REALLY...?



YOU DIDN'T KNOW I WAS A TRANSSEXUAL A WHILE AGO! IF I DIDN'T TELL YOU, HOW WOULD YOU KNOW? FOR THE MOST PART WE JUST LOOK LIKE TALL WOMEN. THERE'S ACTUALLY ANOTHER TRANSSEXUAL WHO WORKS HERE TOO! YOU PASS BY HER EVERY DAY AND YOU NEVER EVEN KNEW IT!







## TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards Foster

• One last chance for tickets for the 9th Annual Unity Banquet! Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup> is the night (beginning at 7PM), and the Westchase Hilton Hotel – site of last year's banquet – is the place! This year's emcee is local comedienne, Nancy Ford of the Dyke Show. Tickets are \$35, and can be purchased by credit card by contacting Melanie Rudd at: [melpag@pmpub.com](mailto:melpag@pmpub.com) or phoning 281-347-6878. For TATS members, tickets can be purchased by contacting Melanie Black at: [thanatos@cityscope.net](mailto:thanatos@cityscope.net), or Sarah Jane Connell at: [shalomsarah@cs.com](mailto:shalomsarah@cs.com)

• SAN JOSE, Calif. — A Santa Clara County judge sentenced the Alina Marie Barragan's killer to 15 years to life in prison after a tearful speech by the victim's mother who told the defendant: "I hope you never forget what you've done... you've torn my family apart and I cannot forgive you." Kozi Santino Scott, 22, was convicted in January of strangling 19-year-old after they had sex and Scott realized Barragan was a male. Scott hid the body in the trunk of a car.

Scott could have drawn a first-degree murder conviction for the crime, which would have ended in a 25-years-to-life sentence. But the jury on Jan. 19 returned a second-degree murder verdict. Jurors also determined that the crime was not a gender-based hate crime, as prosecutors had argued. The 22-year-old's attorney, Charles Gillan, asked the court to set aside the verdict, saying it was unfair. The prosecution had argued that Scott became enraged after discovering that Barragan, who he originally thought was a woman, was male, and for refusing to acknowledge his biological masculinity, as Scott demanded.

• In entertainment news... actor Billy Bob Thornton will star as a small town cop in "Behind the Sun." The plot centers on the murder of a transsexual which, links many high-ranking politicians to a scandalous cover-up.

• Speaking of acting ... Jane Fonda? A gender supporter? Well, on March 2 she gave \$12.5 million for the establishment of a Center for Gender & Education at Harvard University. The Center, she hopes, will work to break down the stereotypes that divide boys and girls. She will help undo the damage she says is inflicted on young boys by America's schools. Fonda told of her new passion for examining the different ways boys and girls learn in school. "For too long it's been 'boys will be boys' and it's

just a hormonal thing' for girls," Fonda said. "It's much more than that, and that's what we want to get at."

Speaking to the New York Times, Fonda said: "I don't think women suffer any more than men do. In some ways men suffer more. The damage done to boys as a result of these gender strictures is very profound."

The new center will bring together researchers, psychologists and educators to help boys and girls fight the pressures of traditional sex roles. Now that is a class act!

• Even ex-Mayor Ed Koch supports trans now! Yes, the former "how'm I doin'?" mayor of the Big Apple has written a letter of support for the extension of non-discrimination rights to transgenders in the nation's largest city. Koch once wouldn't have gotten a favorable response from trans-folks to his trademark question. He was indeed mayor when the edict and then passage of the non-discrimination law took place, and it was exclusive of gender identity. To his credit, Koch acknowledged that!

"Public opinion had not reached the point of inclusion acceptance," Koch went on to say, "we were wrong to deny them justice, but it is never too late to correct an injustice." Alluding to current Republican mayor Giuliani's relative friendliness with transgenders, posing for pictures with many of them in the Gay Pride Parade, the former mayor went on to say it's time for New York to vote for what is right. "When Iowa City is able to accept (transgenders) without discrimination," Koch finished, "the City of New York, the sophisticated capital of the world, can learn" as well. Think there's a chance Houston could join New York and be as progressive as Iowa City? We shall see....

• Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls has released a solo album called "Stag." She had this to say about her new project: "It has a thread running through it. Gender identity, high school – kinda sorta 'what's going on with my hormones' kind of thing."



• Malaysian government 'gets it!' The conservative, mostly Muslim Malaysian government is considering counting transsexuals as they identify – recognizing transsexual men as women, a newspaper reported Sunday. Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, head of the Women and Family Development Ministry, said she would respond soon to a request from a group of male-to-female transsexuals that they be legally recognized as women, the Star newspaper reported. "We want to give this group some dignity so that they can move around in the community without being looked down upon," Shahrizat said. "This is very important."

• But not all Muslim countries think so humanitarily. A lesbian couple who passed themselves off as husband and wife were sentenced to death on Tuesday in Somalia's northeast port city of Bossaso, according to reports. The women were convicted of "exercising unnatural behavior" and were tried under Somali Criminal Punishment Law, which is based on Islamic Sharia Law.

• Not all that is T is sweetness and light... A transsexual professor has quit her job at Scotland's Stirling University on the eve of a disciplinary hearing. But this time, it's not the transsexual who professed being harassed, but rather she who was the harasser! Prof. Nicky Sinead Gardner, director of the Division of Academic Innovation and Continuing Education recently cleared out many of her belongings from her campus home.

Gardner, had been due to attend a hearing into allegations that she had harassed members of staff. It was alleged that she had "driven" members of her staff off, even visiting one at home to such an extent that the worker went to her doctor with stress. The doctor was so worried about what had been happening that he wrote to the university authorities, and they began an investigation. Apparently, this Scottish diva could dish!

• The Trinidad & Tobago government was ordered to pay a transsexual woman \$4,762 in damages for an unlawful arrest and illegal conduct by police officers who were eager to search her, the Caribbean News Agency reported. Jowell Taylor De Souza said her constitutional rights and freedom were violated because of her gender. De Souza was arrested in 1997 on a charge of assaulting and battering a newspaper photographer who she said was harassing her by putting his camera close to her face and taking her picture

after she had repeatedly asked him to leave her alone.

De Souza said a policeman who was nearby did nothing to stop the photographer but arrested her when she attempted to leave. At the police station, "a number of male officers came into the [interrogation] room and insisted they wanted to search me." A policewoman informed the male officers that they were not supposed to search De Souza, chased them out, and then conducted the search herself. Afterward the arresting officer came back into the room and asked De Souza if she was a man or woman. The assault and battery charge was dismissed in 1997. The policeman who arrested De Souza has since died.

• AKI, Japan — A Japanese policeman who dressed up as a schoolgirl in a bid to snare a sex pest had his fake breasts fondled. Detectives chased the alleged molester down and arrested him when he fled on a motorbike after groping the officer.

Police in Aki launched the undercover sting operation after reports of high school girls being targeted by a molester. Male officers dressed up as women and patrolled the affected areas in a bid to lure the offenders. Bet they enjoyed it, too! A police spokesman said: "Our tactics paid off in the end." ...No comment!

(Continued on Page 20)



**Featuring:**

- Wigs
- Fashions
- Large size shoes
- Jewelry
- Alterations
- Personal Make-overs
- Electrolisis
- Breast Forms
- And more...

Private Sessions  
By Appointment

Email: [txjewel@hotmail.com](mailto:txjewel@hotmail.com)  
Phone: 713/523-3557  
Fax: 713/528-1861  
2404 TAFT @ FAIRVIEW  
HOUSTON, TX 77006

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:  
[www.geocities.com/westhollywood/6481](http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/6481)





## ASTRO FORECAST....

(Continued from Page 16)

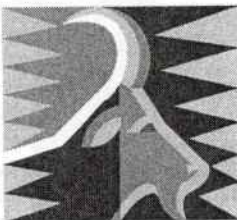
### SAGITTARIUS -

Mars, planet of action, confrontation and mememe, has entered your sign and will spend an unusually long time there. So, this is a good time to do work around the house, exercise, pay attention to your diet regime, argue with your lover or business partner or both, start new projects that you have always wanted to do and just be a sexual magnet. You could really enjoy entertaining at home with a few select friends. You are inviting them into your inner sanctum. And if you have children, expect to hear from them this month. They have some problem and will need your creative talents to help them out of their jam or jelly.



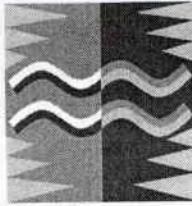
### CAPRICORN -

You got a double agenda this month. One is about being busy, active, and chatty in your day to day activities. The other is about focusing your resources on your family and your home. You are getting a certain pleasure this month in doing your daily activities. They are certainly giving you the pleasure of being active and productive. And you can really see the completion of your task as you mark them off your "to do" list. The other thing is making your home and your emotional habitat a prettier place to live. You are repainting or moving the furniture around. A visit to your therapist could accomplish the same thing internally. And at the end of the session, you will feel a real sense of accomplishment.



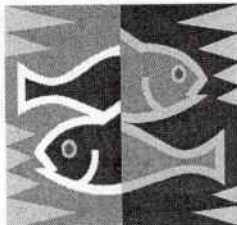
### AQUARIUS -

Last month, you were sloughing through the muck of changing habits and routines. You were confronting the restrictions that you had built into your routines that you weren't aware of. This month you are adjusting to your new routines. You are starting to think about the future and not just the daily grind you were being confronted with. It would help if you made sure you spend some daily time with your lover. Since your routines are different, you may feel lonely and not even know why. Make sure that you take some time to concentrate on your financial picture. Things are not out of order but by next month, you won't have the time to spend on this part of your life.



### PISCES -

This is your Solar Return time or birthday time in astrology. The Sun completes its yearly cycle returning to the point that it started from last year. So, you are in the mood to assess what you have accomplished this year. And as you reach the 3 days before your birthday, you are ready to initiate new enterprises for the next year. And a lot of these new projects are finishing up task that you have been working on for the last 12 years. And for some, even on things that you have been working on from past lives. Money and resources for the future are trying to gain your attention but you won't really pay much attention to that part of your life till the end of the month.



## TATS Tidbits (Continued from Page 19)

• **TAIPEI, Taiwan** — A deepening recession and lack of jobs is persuading men in Taiwan that they would be better off as women. A new report shows an increasing number of men in the country with transsexual leanings are resorting to sex change operations as a way out of economic problems.

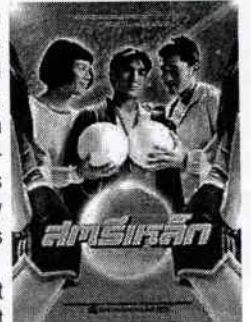
It is hard for effeminate men in Taiwan to find satisfactory employment, especially during this economic downturn, and more and more are determined to shed their manhood so they can get jobs such as female entertainers. Most have the operations carried out in Thailand, reports the China Times, and after the surgery almost all keep their original identity secret. But the association reveals that few are finding happiness after sex change, with some turning to prostitution.

• **BANGKOK, Thailand** — One of the great commercial successes of a new wave in Thai cinema is "The Iron Ladies" — a movie about an all-gay, crossdressing volleyball team from Lampang, a small town in Northern Thailand. The characters are strongly differentiated: One is extroverted and outrageous, another brooding and angry; there is a transsexual cabaret dancer, a muscular soldier comically inept at cross-dressing, a closeted fiancé eager to please his conservative Chinese parents, and a predictably homophobic token hetero, who eventually learns to respect the "ladies" for their talent.

Shot on a shoestring budget of about \$280,000, "Iron Ladies" is shot in almost documentary style, a simplicity that the scriptwriter and cinematographer told The Bangkok Post was "by design, not mistake." The actors, for the most part, are straight except for the transsexual, played by a real-life katoey. So far, the movie has been a hit at the Rotterdam Film Festival, and is slated to open soon at the Berlin festival as well. So far, the little film has earned over \$2.3 million. Write a film with transsexuals in it and you've got a hit!

• Speaking of transsexuals in film... British sitcom writer Brian Cooke advises new writers that they cannot go wrong if they open a script with a man dressed as a woman. Hilarity ensues, he said in his books on how to write for TV. Now British Channel 4 is doing the same but as a serious gender investigation. In "Boy Meets Girl," four men and four women volunteer to dress and act as their opposite sex. The aim is to see both how they are perceived when they go out in public and how the change affects their own perceptions of themselves.

Unexpectedly it was fascinating how the eight both consciously and unconsciously took on the characteristics of their opposite sex. They all did so well so quickly that they seemed to need little training. None of the eight had had a previous inclination to crossdress. However, just wearing different clothes genuinely transformed each of the eight and at times had them giving imaginative answers that surprised them, especially one man who explained why men are boring at sex. Okay, this is scary ... too close to real life!



♈♉♊♋♌♍♎♏♐♑♒♓♈♉♊♋♌♍♎♏♐♑♒♓

 **We Love Our Advertisers - Please Support Them as They Support Us!!!** 



**LILLY RODDY**

**Astrologer**

920 West Main • Houston, Texas 77006

Tel: 713/529-5842 • Fax: 713/529-6406

Website: <http://www.cybersim.com/hermes> . Email: [Lillycath@aol.com](mailto:Lillycath@aol.com)



**When our community needs help...**

**THE RECOVERY COLLECTIVE**

*Chemical dependency is not a weakness, it's a disease.*

• Intervention • Treatment • Co-dependency  
• Reasonable Rates • Groups / Families / Couples

**Sharon Goodwin**

Email: [SG126@aol.com](mailto:SG126@aol.com)

Licensed & Certified With  
Over 30 Years Experience

(713) **527-8788**

**2715 Bissonnet, Suite #509**