

# Texas Association for Transsexual Support

P.O. Box 142.-) Bellville, Texas 77401

Volume 5 Issue 5

(713) 827-5913

May, 1997

## Who We Are

Texas Association for Transsexual Support is a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping Transsexual persons, their partners, families, and friends accept life, and experience it to the fullest.

### In This Issue

#### Meetings Schedule

May 24	2:00pm	Pool party at Vanessa's
June 14	10:00 am	Meeting at Rosenberg Clinic in Galveston.
June 28	7:00pm	unMeeting at Sarah C.'s
July 12	3:00pm	ITCLEP at Ramada Astrodome.

#### How to Reach Us

If you need directions to a meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 827-5913 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.

You can also contact us by Electronic Mail. Send items for the news letter to Sarah Caffee at [scaffee@accesscomm.net](mailto:scaffee@accesscomm.net). To contact the TATS board members, send messages to [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org), which will reach all board members. Visit our WWW page at <http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/>.

### Table of contents:

1. IN THIS ISSUE	PAGE 1
2. HOW TO REACH US	PAGE 1
3. EDITORS MUSINGS	PAGE 1
4. MY TRIP (BY CAREY PORTER)	PAGE 2
5. SRS (BY CAREY DIANE PORTER)	PAGE 7
6. ITCLEP	PAGE 7

#### Editor's musings

This month's editor: Jessica W.



In the April issue of the TATS newsletter, Sarah spoke about the periodic changing of the guard in TATS, alluding to the transitions within the group, just as the membership experience their individual transition. Buried within the article were listed names of the changes in membership over the years, culminating with the last wave, the new kids on the block. The very last name listed among new members was Jessica. That's me.

Continued on page 2.



## PAGE 2

So how could this new kid on the block presume to edit the newsletter? I'm so wet behind the ears, I don't even know everybody's name yet. There are volumes of knowledge unknown to this writer about the in's and out's of transition. Why the first couple of meetings, this girl just sat and listened, trying to soak in the volumes of knowledge that she was hearing in the "casual" discussion going on in Michelle's, and Sarah's homes. When I got home, conversation with my husband centered around what I had heard, and what I could use to help me to successfully transition. My point is this: I really am the new kid on the block. I need TATS to help me navigate the sometimes murky waters of SRS. And as time goes on, there will be other new kids who need the advantage of my experiences as well.

So the answer to the question of how I can presume to edit this news letter on my own? I can not! Just as I must have the help of all the membership in TATS for my personal journey, all the membership is needed in publishing this newsletter. And again you have been there, with ideas, articles, and support when it was needed.

So why do I do this? Heaven only knows my plate is full at the moment. I have come to learn that transition can be a full time job all by itself, between group activities, study, doctor's visits, electrologist's appointments, preparing my work place for eventual transition, and on and on and on. Throw in a home schedule that is a shambles as a result of all this activity, a husband who wonders if he will ever see me again, usual daytime activity and work which is the fare of most non-gender gifted individuals, and an occasional depression because there "just isn't time" and it's the typical day of this transsexual woman...

I write this newsletter because it is a small something that I can do for a group who has in this few short weeks given me volumes of knowledge, information that one just cant get in books, and your hugs and support when I'm down. No one has told me I must do anything, only gently guided me by sharing your experiences and thoughts on a thousand different topics, helping me focus in a more complete and informed manner as my transition evolves.

It is this sharing from our common experiences and goals that dictates that I must be a part of the group, not apart from the group. Which means that time must be devoted to group activities, like publishing the newsletter, just as you have dedicated time to this new member, helping her find her way. Recently I was in a meeting with members of other gender groups. A leader from the Tri Ess group commented during the meeting that she was impressed with the seriousness and commitment she had observed in TATS membership. (Apparently she has not made it to one of our parties.) But she was correct. It is very unusual to be in a group where people ask for volunteers, and several people step forward. It is why this girl will keep coming back, to listen, to learn, and to contribute in some way as I move towards being one of the old guard. It's a whole lot of work, and worth every minute of it!

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## **My Trip**

by Carey Diane Porter

Thursday, March 13, 1997

Well here I am perhaps the biggest day of my life. I am leaving on "the trip". My parents have reluctantly agreed to take me to the airport. We arrive at the airport on time.

Unexpectedly the ticket clerk asks to see some proof of citizenship. I show him my drivers license, and my voter registration and he is satisfied. I check my luggage and board the plane, after saying good-bye to my parents.

The plane backs away from the terminal as scheduled, then guess what, we are delayed 45 minutes with hydraulic problems. The plane finally takes off and we arrive in Toronto about 30 minutes late. I have to hurry through customs to make it to my next plane, to Montreal. I have to pick up my baggage and recheck it for the next flight, "no problem there". Then I proceed to a row of



**PAGE 3:**

customs check through booths. I have to fill out a piece of paper with basic information. He asks me if the trip is personal, or business. I tell him personal. (Dr. Menard does furnish you with a letter to help you through customs, but recommends that you use it only as a last resort.) He asks me for I.D. I give him my drivers license and voter registration. He looks at that and then asks if I have my birth certificate. I do and hand it to him. He glances at me and sends me on my way. (I have an edge here over most, because my new name is very similar to my old name, but a birth certificate is a little difficult to read, I am not certain, he even checked it that carefully) Now I board my new plane and am on my way to Montreal.

Upon arrival in Montreal, I pickup my baggage and call Dr. Menard's pickup driver, Robert, he is waiting in the parking lot for my call and arrives within 5 minutes. We take a nice ride and arrive at the house, which is quite nice. It isn't necessary to tip Robert, but you can if you wish.

The house is a nice split level house, I am not sure of the square footage, but it has about 6 bedrooms, so I would say it is rather large. The outside temperature upon my arrival is about 25 degrees, (if felt great). Rafael is the cook. He is FTM, not unfriendly, but not typical Texas friendly either. Annie is the daytime assistant, to help us and clean the house. She is very attractive GG, but may not be around a lot longer, because her boyfriend is learning to be a "Mountie", and she may move out west with him. Dr. Menard's wife is Sylvia, she is also very nice.

Friday March 14, 1997

When we arrived yesterday there was a FTM who had a Mastectomy, his brother was stopped at the border and they wouldn't let him cross into Canada, so Dr. Menard volunteered to Drive Billy to meet his brother. It took him several hours because it was snowing all day and road conditions were not the best. Also today the most recent post operative girls returned to the house. This week there are three, one is Heather, one is Kerri, and the other is Marie Andre'.

There are three of us waiting to go, Arrow and myself, and Jason. Jason is an interesting story, and I swear this is

true, his Mama is now his daddy, and his daddy is now his mom, and Jason is FTM, and is there for a Mastectomy.

Jason and I went into town, took the bus to the Metro station, and then the subway to the mall. It was kind of fun, you don't have to spend too much time outside suffering in the cold, just enough to make it nice, at least to me. The only problem we had was when we wanted to return to the house, we took the wrong bus, or rather right bus wrong direction. After riding the bus for one hour, the driver let us off as close as he could to where we wanted to go. Naturally it was snowing, and we had to walk a lot farther than he said we would. A taxi happened by and I flagged him down, and we rode about 4 blocks to the house.

I might also like to take this moment to mention that we people in Texas, Houston/Galveston in particular, have it a lot better than we realize. I won't go into too much detail now, but after talking with people from different states, and Laura, and a few other girls from Canada, we do not have to jump through as many hoops to get our approval for surgery. We can get our hormones almost at will now, and we don't have to wait nearly as long for approval, so count your blessings. This however doesn't mean we can't continue to try to make things better still.

Saturday March 15, 1997

Arrow, Lydi, and myself went to town today. Same routine as yesterday, except Lydi lives there and she knows how to handle the system better, and she was gracious enough to give us some passes. We went back to the same mall, looked at some different stores, had some coffee, and then stopped off at her place on the way back. It was pretty nice. Lydi is married by the way, and both she and her spouse are chefs. Lydi is having trouble getting a job though. We stayed out past dinner and Laura finally called Lydi's place trying to find us, so we got into trouble for not checking in.

Back at the house, Heather and Marie Andre, seem to be healing fine, but Kerri is starting to get on peoples nerves. She is having a hard time, (didn't want to see stuff like that) She threw up on her way to the bathroom. Laura had to clean it up, (what a fun job.)



PAGE 5:

Friday March 21, 1997

Another dry breakfast. Dr. Menard came by talked for a minute, then he removed the packing. It is sown on with about 5 or 6 stitches. I had been wondering about that because there was a lump down there and I didn't know what it was. Once he took the packing off, it looked really gross. My first impression was it looked like a bomb crater.

He told me everything was OK, and that I could take a shower and get dressed to go home. As I am writing this I can't remember if I showered before or after he took off the packing, I think I showered first, and I remember he said don't worry about the blood, that it would just be dried blood, let loose by the water. Arrow didn't get dressed or anything, but they did take her home anyway. The hospital, closes for the weekend, and they will not leave you there, unless you have a big time problem, because it would cost him a lot of money.

When I got home I was given my cocktail. A rather large glass of prune juice and mineral oil. I drank the whole thing, by taking it in periodic gulps, while I watched TV.

Saturday March 22, 1997

Woke up this morning with a cramp thought it might be time to go to the bathroom, when I pulled down my panties, I had oil on the pad, then I knew it was time. First bowel movement, one of several firsts, that everyone makes a fuss over when you come back to the house.

Took a look at myself, and I had purple bruising across my front, from one side of my hips to the other, about 4 to 6 inches wide.

Had a chat with Tina and Marti, (the new people) and we talked a little bit about passports, it sounds to me like that is the best way to go. They acted like it wasn't a big deal, and if it says male, the Canadian people aren't checking that close anyway. They are mostly checking the name and the picture.

Laura taught me the routine for taking care of my new self. I have to periodically put on Lydosporin, alias

Neosporin, (cream style, not ointment) along all of my stitch marks to prevent infection and to aid healing.

Arrow is beginning to move around a bit, I was almost hoping she would be sick in her room all weekend.

We have another new arrival, Hannah. She is 25, a little tall, but rather attractive and very passable. Her biggest problem was her hands. She was an over the road truck driver(oh my) but her boyfriend was her co driver. She was post op, but wanted to have her chin shaved down a little and something with her forehead.

Sunday March 23, 1997

Well I feel worse instead of better today, still swollen.

Talked a little with Hannah, and she told me a little about her boyfriend, he is about 35 or so, and she told him the truth. She said sex is great, but, that she had not yet had an orgasm. She was confident that she would in the future. Gave her my address, and if she takes a trip to Houston, she may drop in on a meeting if the timing is right.

Princess Arrow is still raising hell. I think I am going to wash my hair today, yecceh.

Monday 24, 1997

Arrow woke me in the middle of the night, bitching about her packing or something. Dr. Menard is here very early, to remove my stent, and also Arrows, then he will be off to the hospital to operate on Hannah. Dr. Menard and his wife come into my room to remove the stent and the catheter. The catheter came out fairly easy, but not without some pain. Then he cut the two stitches holding in the stent and told me to push lightly and the stent began to slide out. He used the joke I have hear before, your first and last delivery.

Now I have to begin dilations, Sylvia shows me what and how to do them. I did wash my hair today, at least I look human again. Marti and Tina, checked into the hospital today, getting ready for their turn tomorrow. Only me and Arrow left right now, lucky me.



**PAGE 6:**

Tuesday March 25, 1997

Arrow woke us up in the middle of the night again. This time she couldn't pee it seems and Dr. Menard had to reinstall the catheter

I filled out the survey about the place, I have been pretty satisfied with my treatment, but it sure hurts a lot more than I expected. Took a nice bath, and then dilate, dilate and dilate some more. Took a short walk outside. I can breathe a little better now, managed to get a few dried pieces of blood out of my nose, from my nose surgery. Hannah is already back to the house today, she doesn't look too bad, and certainly feels better than I do.

Wednesday 26, 1997

Almost time to go home. Dr. Menard will remove my nose piece in the morning. I am ready to go home, but don't look forward to the flight. Began packing, washed hair again, and tried to fix myself up a little. And of course dilate, dilate, dilate.

Thursday 27, 1997

When I get up, Miss Arrow has already left for home. I don't leave until the afternoon. Spend all morning finishing packing, dilating, and trying to look decent for the trip.

Robert picks me up right on schedule, and delivers me to the airport. I tell him I have made no arrangements for a wheelchair, could he set it up for me. He tells me to wait in the car, and shows up in a few minutes with a wheelchair. Then he takes me to a counter and parks me and says they will take care of me. I give him a nice tip for his extra trouble. The airlines take excellent care of me, this wheelchair thing is cool, no standing in line, first on the plane and everything. Of course I am also last off the plane, but big deal. No problems on the flight, and we arrive in Houston, with no sweat.

Now that I am home, I stopped keeping a log, but recovery was pretty slow. I had trouble with the larger dilator, so I stopped using it for about a week and then began to bring it back into the routine. Which is of course what I have, dilate 4 times a day. I didn't leave the house at all for the

first week and a half. Then I walked to the mailbox, and rode with my mother to the store, but didn't get out of the car. As I write this paragraph it is now 4 weeks after surgery, and I am beginning to feel a lot better, but I still am dilating 4 times a day. One thing that I was told about, and am beginning to experience is you might be laying or sitting and move a little and hear a little snap or pop. The stitches are beginning to let go, which is a good thing.

I felt a pop last night, and when I got up to pee this morning it was much more natural. I am hoping to go back to work next week.

And so there you have my story of the big trip. I hope it helps someone to understand what they will be going through. Remember this was for Dr. Menard, and it will vary somewhat from doctor to doctor. One thing that seems possible is that although Dr. Menard is competent, recovery from his surgery may be a little slower than from Biber, and Shrang. This is merely an observation at this point, but I would like to try and investigate this, in the future.

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## SRS DESCRIBED

by Carey Diane Porter

The following is pretty much word for word, SRS surgery as described by Dr. Menard for official documentation. If you haven't ever heard it described before, or haven't seen anything on the Internet, then this is for you.



## PAGE 7:

The patient is placed in lithotomy position under general anesthesia. The perineal area is disinfected with Hibitane skin cleanser and the surgical drapes are placed in position.

The skin of the penis and of the scrotum is injected with Marcaine 0.25 with epinephrine (diluted 40 cc's Marcaine in 200 cc's sterile H<sub>2</sub>O). A posterior perineal flap is elevated.

A circular incision is made around the urinary meatus of the penis. The mucosa of the gland and subcutaneous tissue is dissected in a tubular fashion superficial to Buck's fascia as far as the base of the phallus.

The scrotum is dissected in the mid line and the testicles are freed together with the cords as far as the external ring. The cords are doubly ligated with dextron 1-0, cut and allowed to retract into the inguinal canal. Holding the denuded phallus the fascia near the base is incised in the mid line and the urethra dissected from the corpus spongiosum. The dissection is carried proximally beyond the root of the phallus. The two corpora cavernosa are double ligated with dextron 1-0 and sectioned one inch above their base. The remaining corpora cavernosa will serve to create the clitoris.

The course of the urethra is altered to lie at first behind and below the superficial transverse perineal muscle. A #14 Foley catheter is then placed via the urethra into the bladder.

You then proceed to from the new vaginal cavity. A cavity measuring 15 x 5 cm is dissected. This stage of the dissection is rendered easy by working in the plane of the strong fascia of Denonvilliers that separate the prostate from the rectum. The apex of the cavity is situated at the reflection of the pelvic peritoneum.

If the penile skin tube is too short, a scrotal skin graft is made and sutured on the top of the penile flap.

The tip of the penile skin tube is closed with chromic 4-0.

This tube is then inverted and excess subcutaneous tissue is removed. A soft stent (made with a condom filled with

gauze) is inserted in the tube then placed in the new vaginal cavity. The posterior perineal flap is sutured to the penile skin tube.

An anterior urethral flap is made from the remaining urethra. The penile flap is opened medially between the clitoris and the urethral meatus. The urethral flap is sutured and covers the clitoris. This procedure creates also the labia minora.

The labia majora are reconstructed from the scrotal sac. The excess skin is removed and the labia are sutured with chromic 4-0.

The vaginal opening is closed with two stitches of nylon-0 to keep the stent in place. A gauze dressing is also attached to the vulva with nylon 0 to prevent bleeding and swelling.

## 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ITCLEP CONFERENCE IS APPROACHING

by Jessica W.

The upcoming International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy will be held in July. Guests include a commissioner of the EEOC and the Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Registration before June 1 is cheaper, and the conference promises to be a good one. Several members of TATS are working on early publicity and efforts to bring in members of the moderate and liberal religious community, clergy and professors, the gay community, and business personnel officers to share and discuss transgender issues.

Topics to be covered will include how religious law affects secular law in dealing with transgendered people, as well as transgenders and the police, film issues, persons of color, and many other workshops. Of course all members of the gender community are encouraged to attend. Any members who wish to assist in these efforts, or can provide contacts to any of the groups listed above are encouraged to contact me. Your input is appreciated.





One of our members, our past president and friend, Carolyn Patec passed on Thursday, May 15, 1997. Carolyn was buried on Monday, the 19th. She will always be in our memory and prayers. Carolyn was a very caring woman.

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*Please feel free to contact any board member through our voice-mail or our numerous e-mail addresses*

10



# TATS

THE  
TEXAS  
ASSOCIATION  
FOR  
TRANSSEXUAL  
SUPPORT

P.O. Box 142 • Bellaire, Texas 77401

Volume 5, Issue 6

(713) 827-5913

JUNE 1997

## WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE'RE ABOUT, ETC...

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,  
not cats.  
Sorry!

(But yes - we like cats too)

## MEETING SCHEDULE:

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| JUNE 14 | OPEN HOUSE - ROSENBERG<br>CLINIC (GALVESTON) - 10:00 A.M. |
| JUNE 28 | UN-MEETING AT STEPHANIE B'S<br>7:00 P.M.                  |
| JULY 12 | • SOCIAL MEETING AT STEPHANIE<br>B'S - 3:00 P.M.          |
|         | • ICTLEP AT RAMADA ASTRODOME                              |
| JULY 26 | UN-MEETING AT SARAH C'S<br>7:00 P.M.                      |

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| GENERAL RAMBLINGS OF THE EDITRIX | 2 |
| POLITICALLY CORRECT              | 2 |
| -MONICA ROBERTS                  |   |
| I'LL SECOND THAT                 | 3 |
| -KATRINA C. ROSE                 |   |
| MY FIRST BASHING                 | 4 |
| -KATRINA C. ROSE                 |   |
| IN MEMORY OF CAROLYN PATEK       | 6 |
| -VANESSA EDWARDS                 |   |

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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, a number and the best time to call.

You can also contact us by electronic mail. Send items for the newsletter to Sarah Caffee at [scaffee@accesscomm.net](mailto:scaffee@accesscomm.net). To contact the TATS board members, send messages to [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org), which will reach all board members. Visit our WWW page at <http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/>



## **General Ramblings of the Editrix:**

Actually, I just thought I'd introduce myself. I'm Katrina C. Rose and I'm this month's editor-type-lifeform.

I'm one of the newer members of TATS. I've been coming to meetings intermittently since early 1996. The reason that I don't show up more often is because, in addition to working up to transition, I'm also a full-time law student. However, I'm always there in spirit. TATS means a lot to me. The fact that there is such an organization helped to keep me sane last year when I found the door to the closet that I'd been in all of my life.

I'm also a frequent inhabitant of The Gazebo - America Online's transgender chat forum: there, I'm TexKatrina. If you're ever there and happen to see me, feel free to say Hi!

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## **Politically Correct**

by Monica Roberts

The article by Vanessa concerning her trip to Washington, D.C., for the recent Lobbying Day made me recall something that happened during a TATS meeting several months ago. Katrina and I were having a discussion about our least favorite politicians - Newt Gingrich and Phil Gramm - when another TATS member interrupted our conversation with the comment: "Ladies don't discuss or get involved in politics!"

Politics determines everything in our lives from when our garbage gets picked up to how much money we get from the federal government to pay for highway construction. Politics can also influence how much progress minority groups make toward becoming full-fledged partners in society, so it makes perfect sense to be aware of what's going on at city hall, the state capitol and Washington, D.C. It becomes a life-or-death issue when politics is used as a weapon to retard your progress - ala the religious right or the Jim Crow segregation laws.

In short, ladies, especially transgendered ones, need to not only be informed about the issues that affect us, but make certain that they have up-to-date voter registration cards and - most importantly - VOTE, VOTE, VOTE! It is your best opportunity to impact the system - especially when in some elections only 10% of the registered voters even bother to go to the polls, which is pathetic when you compare it to the 85% of registered voters that participated in the British elections on May 1!

Okay, I hear some of you regurgitating that tired "My one vote doesn't count" excuse. I'd like to point out some examples of elections and historical events that were decided by one vote:

- When the Nazi Party was on the political fringes in Germany, they had an election for their party head. A World War I vet by the name of Adolf Hitler won by a single vote.
- John Kennedy became president in 1960 in an election that was so close the margin of victory was one vote per precinct.

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ballot box from south Texas containing 250 or so votes for Johnson. Just one vote per COUNTY across the state would have nullified those tainted votes. Had Johnson lost, he would have been out of Congress and probably would never have been heard from again politically. Ponder how *that* would have altered history as we know it.

- In 1986 the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a decision which gave state and local governments the right to discriminate against gays and lesbians (TG's too really, although the case involved homosexuality specifically.) That case was *Bowers v. Hardwick* - and it was a 5-4 decision. More importantly, one of those 5 later confided that he believed that he made the wrong decision. My point? Not only vote, but vote wisely. An ill-informed vote is MUCH worse than no vote at all. [My purely personal opinion here: NEVER vote straight-ticket. In the non-glamour races (you know - judges and the like? The ones that actually do affect our lives even though we never think about them until we're bitten by one), there is almost always a radical right-winger who sneaks in as a Democratic nominee and, though less frequently, a certifiable nut-case who gets a Republican nomination.]

As for TG politix in general: whether or not to get involved visually and/or vocally in the TG Rights movement (and to what extent) is a very personal decision. As vocal as I am on-line, in these pages and at meetings I'm not out yet. I have very real concerns about how coming out would affect me at school.

The key isn't to do the most that is physically possible by a human being. If you do too much, you get sloppy, and that ends up not helping anyone - especially yourself. If all that you are realistically able to do is to vote, then, by all means, do so. The same holds true if all that you are able to do is to send a few bucks to ICTLEP. Anything helps. Granted, there is also something to be said for "strength in numbers" when it comes time to, well, show our numbers to our elected representatives.

"Silence = Death" is a nice phrase, but perhaps a bit oversimplistic. Perhaps "Inaction = Death" would be more accurate. Some folx are good at being vocal. Some folx are better at working behind the scenes.

Do what you can that will help the most.

But, dammit - DO SOMETHING!

## **My First Bashing**

by Katrina C. Rose

As many of you know, 1996 was a year of firsts for me - the biggest of which was my first step out of my then-31-year-old closet. Thanks to all of the wonderful folx of TATS, I've started the most wonderful journey of my life: I began HRT in late January of this year and expect to transition in 1998.

Not everything in 1996 was so joyous, though. Being totally closeted up until my first TATS meeting, I'd never actually been on the short end of a bashing. I had been on the short end of homophobic epithets in high school, but that really wasn't the same - mainly because none of the accusations were actually true. In my head I knew I was TG at that point (and had since I was a wee tot), but I was also effectively devoid of any hormones of *any* type. I was younger than everyone else in my grade and had no, and had shown no, sexual interest in anyone - not even my hand. Therefore, of course, in the ever so logical eyes of the morons with whom I attended school: I must be a faggot.

But, *that* was high school - back in the dark days of Reagan's first term. *This* was 1996.



- After the Revolutionary War, when the founding fathers got together to decide what language the United States was going to use, English won over German by ONE vote!
- In a recent city council election (1995), Liz Lara made the runoff against Felix Fraga over her opponent by 23 votes. She probably would not have made the runoff if 25 people who supported her had stayed home on election day with that "My vote doesn't count" attitude!

Our enemies in the Religious Reich understand this ladies and gentlemen, and as an African-American whose ancestors were denied the right to vote through legal and illegal means for over 100 years - until the mid 1960's - I understand how important and how critically vital it is to be politically astute! We have the power through the ballot box to influence what is happening to us and to turn it around, but that is only one part of the hard work required to win the battle of attrition for our rights. Some of us may not have the time or money to personally lobby our senators or congresspersons, but you can e-mail them or pick up a pen to write to them.

Besides, if ladies didn't get involved in politics, we wouldn't have been blessed with Barbara Jordan and Ann Richards for example. Neither the Democratic nor Republican parties could exist without their armies of volunteers who maintain the phone banks, stuff the envelopes and provide the campaign workers. President Clinton has women to thank for the 2-1 margin in votes that gave him his second term last November.

In conclusion, we must do our part to help those who support us and vote out those who oppose us. ICTLEP and Vanessa's recent lobbying efforts on our behalf are wasted if we don't get off of our butts and provide the votes to give their lobbying efforts the added political clout. Politicians tend to listen to groups who can turn out consistent votes - like the Religious Reich - and they have a proven, time-tested ability to get their supporters to the polls in large numbers!

During the 1994 mid-term elections, the Religious Reich targeted Harris County Democratic judges who they deemed "too liberal." Every one of those judges lost their races - so think about that when a right-wing judge turns down your name change and gender change request or rules in favor of your employer in a wrongful termination suit!

Transgenders cannot afford to be apathetic or complacent in regard to political issues, so take the time to read the paper, visit a political web site or watch the news to stay informed about the political world around us - because our future happiness may depend on it!

## **I'll Second That**

**by Katrina C. Rose**

Well, as someone who is known for being a bit overly-political when I'm on-line, I was actually going to avoid politics in my first newsletter. However, Monica made some wonderful points - and, in addition to agreeing with them, I'd like to add a few tidbits.

There are numerous other one-vote decisions that have, and will affect our lives. I'd like to mention two of them:

- In 1948, a relatively unknown Texas congressman was trying to move up the food chain into the Senate. His name? Lyndon Baines Johnson. Well, he was successful. There are varying accounts of exactly what type of shenanigans led up to the final vote count, but these two facts are relatively undisputed: Johnson's margin of victory was 87 votes and there was an extremely controversial



I had the opportunity to spend about half of the summer of 1996 in northern England - attending a study abroad program (and I studied more than one broad - I thought I'd go ahead and get that one out of the way myself so go on and read the rest of this.) I beefed up my flagging GPA. I saw a lot of sights. I took even more photos (if you let me, I *will* bore you with them - *all* of them.) I even got to venture down to London to meet a TG with whom I talk on AOL frequently, Miranda ee. But, I spent most of my time in a relatively small town a few miles south of Newcastle (home of Newcastle Brown Ale and the Newcastle United soccer team - British soccer's marketing equivalent of the Dallas Cowboys.)

One day I grabbed my camera bag and headed to town to catch a train (extraneous comment: public transportation that actually works is WONDERFUL!) - to where, I don't recall. It isn't really important. A shitty little European car (those are all over the place in England - go figure!) pulled up beside me. Two scroungy teenagers were inside. In an accent that seemed to be a horrid mix of low-class English and even lower-class Scottish, the driver asked me for directions to somewhere. Problem: with the accent, I couldn't understand what he actually was asking directions *to*. Still, at this point I'd been in England for a few weeks, and I knew the immediate area enough to possibly be of help. So, stupidly, I leaned closer to try to understand him. He said something else that was nearly unintelligible, though I did make out one word rather clearly - "purse."

I realized something was wrong when both of them started laughing. Had they been snakes, they'd have bitten me - apologies to all snakes of reptilian ancestry everywhere.

These ingenious little thugs had rigged (this, of course, is an assumption on my part - perhaps all shitty little European cars are designed like this) one of the windshield squirters to squirt fluid not on the windshield, but on any idiot that might happen to be standing next to the passenger's side window. You know...an idiot like me. They squirted me twice and drove off laughing. I was so dumbfounded that I just stood there, too paralyzed to even take note of their license plate number.

Luckily, there was only water in the squirters. Apparently, the fad of putting bleach (or other fun substances) in such squirty things hadn't reached northern England at that point, so my really cool Tasmanian Devil English Soccer Team sweatshirt (yes, Warner Bros. characters are EVERYWHERE!) was unharmed. I wandered on up to the train station, unharmed but as pissed off as I could possibly be.

There is, of course, one thing that I didn't mention in any of the above paragraphs - I was dressed male at the time of the attack. *Very* male. In fact, I'd even let my beard grow just to alleviate any possible suspicion among my classmates and professors (most of whom were from Alabama - 'nuff said) if they saw me shopping at the Top Shop (the British equivalent of Lerner's) in town.

And, I was by myself. The bashers, absent some form of ESP, knew *nothing* about me.

But, as I mentioned, I was carrying a camera bag. I've concluded that the thugs thought that it was a purse. My "crime" in the eyes of these total wastes of DNA, apparently was nothing more than carrying a camera bag that looked too much like a purse for their liking. Therefore, I was a faggot - or even worse.

So - why did I write an article for a TS newsletter about being bashed while I was dressed male?

This happened to me in northern England, but it could have happened here - and my guess is that if it had, I would not have fared as well. You have to look hard - even between the lines sometimes, but you do occasionally hear of straight folx being bashed after being erroneously pegged as being gay. Its only logical to assume that the same happens to non-TG's being pegged as being TG. After all, have you ever seen any of the episodes of the Maury Povich Show where he marches a dozen or so individuals out on stage and has the audience guess as to which ones



are male and which ones are female? Invariably on these shows, a GG is pegged as being male for one reason alone: a cheap-looking wig. Who knows what else might cause it?

Uh oh...I'm about to get political again. But, I'll keep it short. I firmly believe that *major* progress will not be made in TG rights until the point is driven home to the straight / non-TG population that incidents like this could happen to them based solely on someone making assumptions about how they are dressed - irrespective of everything else. Seemingly, most people won't do anything unless they have a vested interest in it themselves.

Of course, that's just a thought. I now climb down off of my soapbox. Back to our regularly scheduled newsletter

---

## **In Memory of Carolyn Patek**

**Nov. 26, 1960 - May 14, 1997**

**by Vanessa Edwards**



Longtime TATS member and former president Carolyn Marie Patek, 36, died of as yet undetermined causes on May 14, 1997. She was found in her apartment by her mother on Thursday after repeated telephone calls went unanswered. It was initially thought that Carolyn was suffering from a bout of anemia, but that was reversed by her physician after results of her blood test proved otherwise. She was then prescribed medication pertaining to her thyroid on Tuesday, May 13, and was last seen alive by her mother who delivered the prescription to her that afternoon.

The rosary service was held at Schmidt Funeral Home Sunday evening, and after a funeral mass at St. Bartholomew's Catholic Church in Katy the next morning, she was then laid to rest at the Catholic Cemetery in Sealy, Texas Monday afternoon, May 19, 1997. Her rosary service was attended by a number of current and former TATS and GCTC members.

In December of last year Carolyn returned after having Sexual Reassignment Surgery in Montreal. She looked forward to her surgery, and was equally enthusiastic about getting back to work and getting on with life as a 'new' woman. employment had proved elusive after her SRS recovery as she went nearly five months with no success. She was pleased to finally land her first post-recovery job on May 2: unfortunately it only lasted less than a week.

On Thursday, May 8, she fainted while at work and was treated by paramedics at the scene; but she refused hospitalization and was allowed to return home. On Friday, after realizing she was too weak to work, she paid an initial visit to her physician. Less than a week later she was gone.

It is bitterly ironic that Carolyn worked so long, and paid such an expense, to achieve a goal she'd so strongly desired--only to have that goal of a life as a female end so soon afterwards. Even though she'd had a number of years experience in installing and troubleshooting PC network systems and various software, she was disappointed by the fact that she was having virtually no luck in finding post-surgery employment. While she tended to keep personal problems to herself, she was frustrated at not being able to resume her usual social routines because of her lack of income.



Equally maddening was the craving for companionship, or a mate, but being confined to loneliness as result of her circumstances. It's similar to a child who saves for years to buy a car and once he buys it he cannot afford the fuel to test drive it; but before getting that chance to drive it, it's taken away. Carolyn never had the chance to fully realize her potential as a female; a brand new imago fresh out of the chrysalis, never getting the chance to spread wings and fly.

The sudden nature of Carolyn's death has profoundly stunned me, as I'm sure it did her family and friends. Yet I can't ignore the thought of other tragic ingredients to this mix that likely would go unnoticed. The first thought is of all the plans made that will never be realized. As a result of being one of her closer friends over the past year, I personally know of a number of things we were to do together that will forever remain undone. I'm also acutely aware of the support provided over the last 6 months--spiritually and financially--that she so desperately wanted to repay to both her mother and her brother Gary, never to be repaid.

She was also taking her first tentative steps toward repairing some of the burned bridges after an unceremonious ouster as president of TATS last summer; begun and never to be finished. Another item is her dreams and feelings that will always remain unspoken. Carolyn may have been outspoken, occasionally even brusque; however, she was a shy young girl inside. All she really ever wanted was acceptance. Knowing this, she likely never opened up fully to most of those who knew her. There were a number of folks, she'd confided to me, who she cared for, worried about, and admired. Yet the all too common fear of being misunderstood, rejection, ridicule or embarrassment sealed these thoughts within.

The final ingredient that truly haunts me is her lack of seeking hospitalization in a situation that in hindsight required it. But for the fact that she was financially drained and lacked insurance, she would have agreed to hospitalization...and likely saved her own life. But for the fact that she was chronically unemployed after her surgery, thus low on funds; she would have been able to purchase hospitalization insurance, or had the insurance provided by her employer. But for the fact that she worried that some job prospects were 'reading' her as a transsexual because of her height, and the fact that employers are still legally entitled to have denied her employment based on perception--not work experience; she would have more timely been employed. With her skills and experience, and this current 'economic boom', there should be no reason for her to remain unemployed for four months. This is particularly ironic for me considering the timing--coming on the heels of my return from the second attempt to lobby congress regarding employment non-discrimination--and my personal situation which mirrors the same employment problems she'd also suffered. In one conversation with Carolyn about a month ago, she lamented her extended period of unemployment and questioned her decision to complete the SRS. She'd agonized that by accomplishing her dream--becoming the gender she'd always felt she was--she'd doomed herself to a nightmare of financial ruin.

Sadly, that's the unfortunate case for many a pre-op and post-op TS; a two-edged sword of winning the prized goal, but losing as much, or more than what was gained. It is particularly galling that if one is true to oneself, then they must be punished for not repressing it. Why should transgenders--or any other alternate lifestyle that does no harm to others--be ghettoized or marginalized into illegitimate or 'fringe' professions not pertinent to their professional experience? Why impoverish a viable member of the community, and waste their talents or contributions because of an innocuous change of gender, image or appearance? Carolyn was a generous and very principled lady with a dry, caustic wit; fiercely loyal to her friends, and always willing to help. She had a penchant for computers, and was skillfully quite adept. She also loved her stuffed animal collection; and her family had noted this, thoughtfully seating her favorite--Wile E. Coyote--on a chair next to her as her body lay in state. It thoroughly upsets me that she felt guilt after pursuing her most cherished goal. You shouldn't have to question yourself for being what you want to be. All Carolyn ever wanted to be was Carolyn. But for the want of a job...a life was lost. As I type this I can't forget my last memory of her lying there peacefully with her Wile E. holding vigil, staring out at the mourners. I also can't help but wonder if, other than her family and friends, society really doesn't care.

It should.



Equally maddening was the craving for companionship, or a mate, but being confined to loneliness as result of her circumstances. It's similar to a child who saves for years to buy a car and once he buys it he cannot afford the fuel to test drive it; but before getting that chance to drive it, it's taken away. Carolyn never had the chance to fully realize her potential as a female; a brand new imago fresh out of the chrysalis, never getting the chance to spread wings and fly.

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It should.



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## Michelle's Musings

Just a few short words to let everyone know what transpired at the last **Board Meeting** which we had at Vanessa's pool party!

### Meetings

There will be **no** meeting on the 2nd Saturday at 3 p.m. (14 June) this month. This is because most of us will be at the **Rosenberg Clinic** for the bi-annual (I think that means twice yearly) Open House. **Please note that the doors open at 10:30 a.m. and the meeting starts at 11:00 a.m.** There is a \$5.00 charge for each guest to cover the cost of refreshments.

**Stephanie B.** has graciously volunteered **her apartment** for the 4th Saturday meeting at 7 p.m. (**28 June**) and the 2nd Saturday meeting at 3 p.m. (**12 July**). Sarah C. has plans for June 28th and I intend to be at the 6th Annual International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy on the 12th. I have attached a **map** to Stephanie B's on the reverse side of this note.

### Newsletter

The **Newsletter** is being handled on a rotating basis by several **Assistant Editors**. Special thanks from all of us to **Jessica** for the May Issue and to **Katrina** for the June Issue enclosed. Also, a big thanks to **Carey, Monica** and **Vanessa** for their contributions to these two issue. Just send your **contributions** to the Editor or Assistant Editors and your "musings" will be included also. The schedule for Assistant Editors for the next three months is:

July	Katrina
August	Vanessa
September	Jessica

If you wish to **volunteer** for any of these duties, please contact Sarah, Carey or myself. It is quite simple - like you get to handle the whole job of putting it together (ex folding, stuffing and licking envelopes). I love the ever changing "look" of the Newsletter and the consistent, **on-time issues. Great job!**

### TATS Co-Sponsoring ICTLEP Conference

The membership present at the Board Meeting approved a **donation of \$100.00** to the 6th Annual Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (**ICTLEP**) to be held on Friday, July 11 and Saturday July 12. You all received a **brochure** with last month's Newsletter. I would encourage everyone in TATS to try to attend the free **Friday Evening Keynote Speech** that starts at 6 p.m. with a cash bar and free hors d'oeuvres.

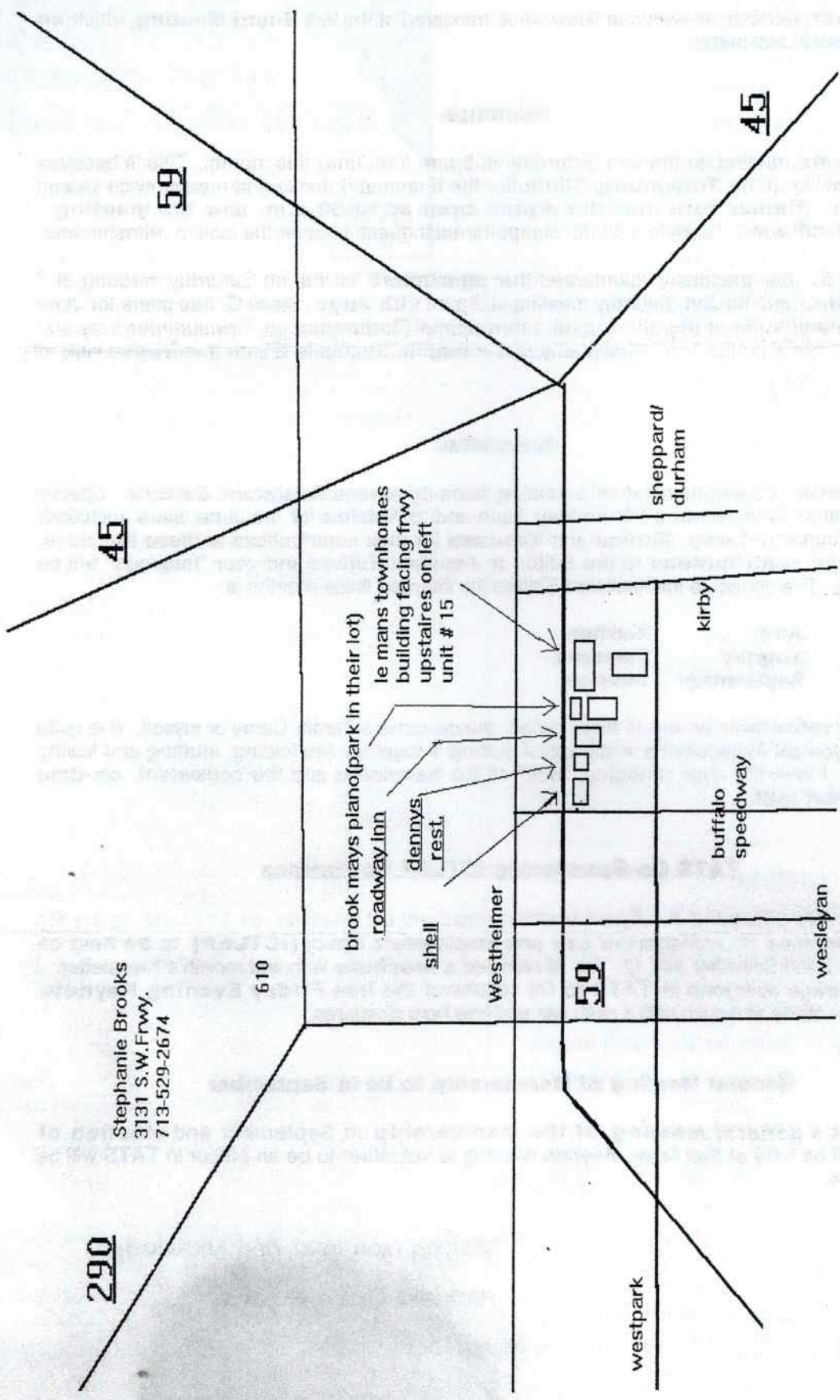
### General Meeting of Membership to be in September

There will be a **general meeting of the membership** in September and **election of officers** will be held at that time. Anyone wishing to volunteer to be an officer in TATS will be very welcome.

Wishing you love and knowledge,

Michelle Claire Myers







# TATS

THE  
TEXAS  
ASSOCIATION  
FOR  
TRANSSEXUAL  
SUPPORT

P.O. Box 142 ☺ Bellaire, Texas 77401  
Volume 5, Issue 7

(713) 827-5913  
JULY 1997

## WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE'RE ABOUT, ETC...

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.



But...are they genetic or TS?

## MEETING SCHEDULE:

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| JULY 12   | • SOCIAL MEETING AT STEPHANIE B's - 3:00 P.M.                |
|           | • ICTLEP AT RAMADA ASTRODOME (FRIDAY 7/11 AND SATURDAY 7/12) |
| JULY 26   | UN-MEETING AT SARAH C'S 7:00 P.M.                            |
| AUGUST 9  | SOCIAL MEETING AT MICHELLE M'S 3:00 P.M.                     |
| AUGUST 23 | UN-MEETING AT SARAH C'S 7:00 P.M.                            |

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| GENERAL RAMBLINGS OF THE EDITRIX | 2 |
| FUN AND GAMES IN WASHINGTON      | 2 |
| -VANESSA EDWARDS                 |   |
| D.C. LOBBYING PART II            | 5 |
| -VANESSA EDWARDS                 |   |
| PRIDE, DAMMIT!                   | 6 |
| -KATRINA C. ROSE                 |   |

## 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 (713) 827-5913 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, a number and the best time to call.

You can also contact us by e-mail. Send items for the newsletter to Sarah Caffee at [scaffee@accesscomm.net](mailto:scaffee@accesscomm.net). To contact the TATS board members, send messages to [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org), which will reach all board members. Visit our WWW page at <http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/>



## **General Ramblings of the Editrix:** **(or Katrina's unabashed plug for ICTLEP VI)**

Ramble. Ramble. Ramble.

Actually, I just wanted to take one last opportunity to encourage everyone to attend the upcoming International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (a.k.a. ICTLEP.) It is Friday, July 11th and Saturday, July 12th at the Ramada Astrodome. It is NOT just for lawyers and lawyers-to-be. If you are transgendered and employed (and want to stay that way) or unemployed (and want that to change), or if you simply know or love someone who is transgendered (be they employed or unemployed) I encourage you to attend - if for nothing else to show our numbers.

The price for full attendance is a bit more than going to see a movie but even if you are on a budget even tighter than mine, there is something for you. Perhaps the biggest attraction at this year's conference is an open-door event (translated: free.) Friday night's speaker is Reginald Jones - one of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioners (does EEOC ring a bell?) - no small-timer as Washington, D.C. folks go. It is of the utmost importance for as many people as possible to attend his speech. If this is the only part of the conference that you can attend, then by all means do so. Even if you have to come as the gender that you are trying to leave behind, still come and fill up a seat. It is free - though if you get the urge to make a donation to defray the cost of the munchies, I have a feeling that it will not be rejected. Remember: strength in numbers.

For more info call 713-777-8452 or e-mail to [ICTLEP@aol.com](mailto:ICTLEP@aol.com).

Meow for now - Katrina.

---

## **Fun and Games in Washington** **(or Getting Lost With Some G@d D@mn@d Fascists)** by Vanessa Edwards

Lobbying in Washington is more than just lobbying. It is renewing old acquaintances, making new ones, getting lost...again and again, photo opportunities in Washington's finest dives, discovering George Washington's balls, touring the White House in drag.... Just basic tourist stuff! Maybe some explanation is in order....

Obviously knowing myself, like many of you do, I just couldn't pass up an opportunity to be the social butterfly. I always enjoy renewing old friendships, especially when removed by distance. Getting to touch base with folks like Alison from PA, Dr. Buis from San Diego, Anne from Louisville KY, Michelle, Gayle & Denise from FL, and especially Mariette from New York after 13+ years, really makes the trip worthwhile. Meeting new folks and making new friends is more than just a hobby for me...it's a lifestyle! Particularly for my femme-self!

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I've always loved meeting people, and especially those from different regions, different cultures, etc.; if for nothing else to at least compare notes. Events such as this are veritable treasure troves of new contacts from various cities and states; and surely enough I had to indulge myself. Needless to say, exchanging numerous address and telephone numbers was the order of the day; not only for me, but virtually everyone there. (Apparently we all suffer from the same affliction: social disease!...wait a minute, not that kind of social disease, the other kind. No, wait, let me just rename it--sociable disease! Hmmm, that's still too close.... How about if I re-rename it...socialitis! Oh well, I've digressed once again. Let's get out of these parentheses)

Aaah! Much better...it was getting a bit crowded in there. Getting back to the friendships, six of us girls decided to go see the nightlife in D.C. on Monday night and proceeded to the Dupont Circle area and immediately got lost looking for a nightclub that we never found. It turns out the club we searched for was on the opposite side of town. However, we poked our heads into a number of establishments, but found none to our liking. Later--after losing half of our group to fatigue--Angela Bridgman of PA, Anne and I continued our quest for a nightspot more to our liking. After driving over half of Washington, and getting lost yet again, we saw a couple of bars on the way back to Dupont Circle, one appearing halfway decent, the other not very decent. The halfway decent looking bar turned out to be closed. So we made our way instead to the seamier pub just two doors down: Mr. Eagan's Bar. Walking inside, we stopped at the entry and appraised our choice: this was obviously a neighborhood bar, vaguely menacing...sort of a Cheers cum Skid Row. The atmosphere was, well, pungent. When you can smell the ambience of a bar, you know you're not at one of the finer drinking establishments! After assessing the situation--it was already past midnight, there was only one 60ish looking patron and a barmaid, and all we wanted was a quick beer before returning to the motel--we decided to try it out. Upon our entry the sole customer left, and we had the place to ourselves. The barmaid, Ginny, immediately became intrigued by us. We explained about our lobbying, gave a quick education on transgenderism, and made fast friends with her. A couple more patrons drifted in later and also joined in the conversation; and before we knew it we had closed down the bar, enlightened three 'straight' individuals that we were really not anomalies after all, gained their acceptance, and received an enthusiastic invitation from Ginny to return any time.

Tuesday night Sarah Fox PhD, neurobiologist and vice-president of the Crystal Club of Columbus, Ohio, Shannon Ware, Anne and I returned to La Panetteria--the fabulous Italian restaurant in Bethesda, MD that we'd eaten at on our previous lobbying excursion. After another excellent meal, Anne decided that we should take our uninitiated sisters Shannon and Sarah back to Mr. Eagan's Bar for a quick beer before heading out for a night on the town. Well, we ended up closing down the bar again! We received a very warm and enthusiastic welcome from Ginny who was working the basement bar, which was closed the previous night. Since it was the dart team's practice night, there was a more numerous and lively crowd than the night before. We met most of the bar's regulars that night, had quite a few laughs together, threw a few darts together, sipped a brew or two, and once again told our stories of where we were from and why we were there, etc. And again, we gained acceptance from everyone there and left them viewing us in a different light; not stereotypes, just real people. Sarah found a very avid admirer in Howard (I was too tall for him) who monopolized her the entire evening. I found a kindred spirit in Carl Garvey, a half Sioux & Chippewa, half German & Irish fellow with a wry sense of humor. We all genuinely enjoyed ourselves--including the regulars. If nothing else, we managed to liven up an otherwise mundane Tuesday night at their favorite watering hole. We even managed to get a group photo of us and the gang at the bar, and promised a picture or two for their wall of photos. They'll truly never forget us, and we'll never forget them!

Going to a bar like Mr. Eagan's is much more fun than going to a typical gay or drag show bar, where you come away with nothing more than a buzz after a few drinks. At Mr. Eagan's, or any similar straight pub - especially with a small or more intimate setting, you come away with not only a buzz, but a sense of accomplishment by educating the unknowing about transgenders. In general, we humanize the transgendered community to the conventional world. We often tend to think that by convincing legislators to pass laws that favor equal rights for transgenders, we will have won the entire war. Keep in mind though that these legislators all vote constituentially,



and therefore are loathe to do anything to upset the voters' support. Regardless of what laws ever become enacted, we still need to familiarize the general public about transgenders. This is most effectively done by meeting with people personally. Movies, documentaries or (gag, **\*\*hurl\*\***) talk shows do very little, if anything, to win over public opinion. The only way we can demystify ourselves to most of the public is face-to-face, let them see us in action. It's not necessary that you do this in a bar; restaurants and stores you patronize, and even libraries are also perfect opportunities. You may want to do this when out of town, where you can be relatively anonymous. I would also suggest for safety's sake that you attempt this with at least a couple of other TGs willing to do the same (heaven forbid you should out yourself and leave your unaware friends recoiling in fear and looking for a quick exit), or at least a couple of true, understanding 'straight' friends. It will take some initial courage and some self-confidence. But as evidenced, it can be done...even in the most unlikely of places.

Long after last call at Mr. Eagan's was announced, we said our goodbyes to everyone, promised to stop in again next time we were in town, and stumbled our way back up to Anne's car. Not wanting to let an evening like this end so soon, we headed for some photos in front of the various memorials lit up at night. Our first stop was easy enough to find: the Washington Monument. Once there we began to notice how similar the monument is to say...a phallic symbol. This started us giggling. Then an observation that that symbol was appropriate seeing as how he was the father of our country. (Uncontrollable giggling) Inexplicably, Sarah then muttered to us something that sounded absurdly like, "you goddam fascists!" (Gut-splitting laughter now) We then piled back into the car, and Anne somehow managed to drive us into Virginia, where we found our next photo target: three huge, rust-colored, metal balls. There was no indication as to what these sculptures represented until Shannon proffered, "Look! It's George Washington's balls!" to which I replied, "That had to hurt! They kicked him so hard they landed across the river!" (More uncontrolled laughter) We had to return to investigate further. When we pulled up for a second look, I noticed a hole in one ball and mentioned, "Ooh, they shot his balls off!", and Shannon added, "Must've been an angry husband," to which Sarah then retorted, "Well he did sleep in a lot of places...."

After a few more quips about George, and more extreme laughter, we set out to take a photo in front of the White House. However, we drove and drove over the area the map indicated for the White House and never found it. Ironically, we passed in front of the White House over a half dozen times, but never saw it because it was not lit up at night! And with Anne at the wheel, we eventually got lost once again. After getting lost trying to find our way back, we finally gave in to fatigue and went back to the motel...the long way. The next morning I hooked up with Sarah once more, and the two of us did more sightseeing and picture taking...though much more sedately than the night before. (Sarah did manage one more shot of George's monument with a tree strategically placed, rather bush-like, at the base of the pe-...uh, monument. Naughty thing!) Needless to say, we walked ourselves sore going from the White House to the Lincoln Memorial, then back the length of the mall past the Capitol to Union Station. We also made plans to take more night photos in front of the Jefferson Memorial, the Capitol, and the Supreme Court. Also planned was a morning tour through the White House for photos, and also so Sarah could fulfill her dream: using the ladies' room in the White House as a transgender. The good news was that we did get to tour the White House with nary a second glance. The bad news is that taking pictures is not allowed inside the White House, only outside of the back entrance; and you cannot use any of the facilities in the White House! Woe be to anyone with a weak bladder or a case of the Aztec two-step. It wouldn't be pretty! Sarah was somewhat crestfallen, so we did what naturally cheers up any girl...browsed through the sales racks at Hecht's Dept. Store. Afterwards, we stopped and split a delicious pizza and, sufficiently cheered up, headed to the airport just in time to see my rescheduled flight fly away. Being resourceful girls, we just sat and talked for the next two hours until the next available flight was scheduled to depart. It was a good talk, too! I already miss Sarah, and also all of the other friends made, especially Anne & Shannon.

A special thanks goes out to both Sarah Fox and most importantly Anne Casebeer, for picking up and delivering me to the airport; and for allowing me to room with them. Your kindness is very much appreciated! Without these two special ladies, my time in D.C. wouldn't have been a reality...and this newsletter would be two (rather voluminous) columns shorter!



## **D.C. Lobbying - Part II** **(or How Did I End Up Here Again?)**

by Vanessa Edwards

Apologies are in order. Obviously I misspoke on my last column when I assumed that the previous lobbying event would be a one-time affair; thus the title 'Erstwhile Lobbyist's Report,' as in "been there, done that, no plans to go back." In other words, it was history...or so I thought. Not even three months later I find myself back in Washington with apparently very little recollection of what I'd originally planned: do this once and get back to my life. So much for history. I must say that this go-round was much less stressful than the first, though not necessarily much easier...except for finding my way around the city and the senate buildings. We did, however, manage to get lost on one of the three treks traversing the maze of tunnels under the Capitol building, never taking the same route twice. But I digress.

An invitation was extended to attend the May lobbying event by Anne Casebeer of the Bluegrass Belles, with offers to share costs if I would accept. Anne, you may remember, was a very sweet lady whom I'd met on the first lobby event a couple months back; and before I really knew what was happening, I accepted her offer. This particular event occurred May 5 & 6, 1997 and was sponsored by GenderPAC, headed by Riki Anne Wilchins of New York. It was a well-attended event with between 50 and 60 individuals from states too numerous to mention. Many recognized names, especially of the East Coast transgendered community, were present for the affair: attorney Dana Priesing; Nancy Nangeroni; Alison Laing, head of IFGE; Anne Lawrence; Jessica Xavier, national president of It's Time America; and Tony Barreto-Neto, founder of TOPS--the transgendered police officers' association. Along to document the event in photos was Mariette Pathy-Allen, author of the book 'Transformations' and an old friend of mine whom I hadn't seen in over 13 years. We had a wonderful reunion! There were five repeat attendees from the February lobby days: Denise, her S.O. Gayle, and Michelle Hubert all from the Florida panhandle's Pantra group; Anne from the Bluegrass Belles, and of course yours truly. (Guess we're just gluttons for punishment) We also had about half a dozen intersexed (hermaphrodite) individuals among our group, and just as many F2M's. Also along to help us on our initial day of lobbying were representatives from Bi-Net, the Human Rights Campaign, and the Lesbian & Gay Task Force. It was heartening to see so numerous and so diverse a group coalesced on such an occasion.

Our approach on for this foray on Capitol Hill focused primarily on gaining support for adding a 'transgendered' category to the Hate Crimes Statistics Act (HCSA). For those of you unfamiliar with the HCSA, it designates violence against those of a different race, different gender, different religious belief, or a different sexual identity as a hate crime: the FBI then compiles said hate crimes into the various categorical statistics. As it currently stands, the HCSA does not record violence against transgenders as a hate crime; or, if at all, it records them incorrectly as a gay, or sexual identity hate crime. With so many in the transgendered community who identify themselves as heterosexual crossdressers, as well as the many pre-and post-operative transsexuals who do not identify themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual, it is necessary to have a separate category for those of us who fall through the statistical cracks--especially considering the severity of those crimes. Some of the most notorious hate crimes included: Brandon Teena, an F2M rape case and subsequent murder victim who received no help from the police in her Nebraska town after reporting the initial rape; Christian Paige, a beautiful M2F from Chicago who was savagely beaten, strangled, and deeply stabbed multiple times by a man who then set fire to her apartment to cover up the crime; and Chanell Pickett, an M2F from the Boston area, strangled to death by her former lover who was only found guilty of assault and battery! These and other instances of violence were alluded to in a drafted letter carried by our various groups to both senate and house offices. The letters addressed to Atty. General Janet Reno asking for inclusion of the transgender category to the HCSA, were to be signed by the supporting legislators in both houses of Congress, and then forwarded to Janet Reno's office. We were able to enlist the support of Rep. Barney Frank, who will draft the letter on the House side; as well as Sen. Kennedy and Sen. Kerrey who will draft the



Senate version. Based upon reactions from the various staffers we met with, we came away with an absolute victory. The reason for the easy win was that the members did not have to take a congressional vote to support this, only a signature on a letter to amend an existing act through the Dept. of Justice. For obvious reasons, this garnered us support from members who denied our requests for support on the ENDA bill; thus, the apparently easy victory.

Personally I think that a victory like this, albeit a lesser one, will serve to galvanize self-confidence in the transgendered community, especially for future lobbying attempts. Kudos go out to the various individuals I personally teamed up with. Kris Pratt, a policy advocate with the HRC, and Rosalyne (Roz) Blumenstein, a flawlessly beautiful 17-year post-op TS and director of the Gender Identity Project in New York, accompanied me on my earliest visits to the Texas House members Bentsen, Brady, Archer and Jackson-Lee. Personally this team was my favorite as we were a complement to one another and worked together smoothly. Most all of my remaining appointments were with Dr. Kurt Buis, a therapist who works extensively with transgenders in San Diego. Dr. Buis and I sat in on a meeting at Sen. Specter's office with IFGE's Alison Laing, Valerie Harvey Ph.D, Shannon Ware of It's Time Missouri, and Angela Bridgman. Also accompanying Dr. Buis and me on some of the later visits were Anne Casebeer from Louisville, and again Shannon Ware from the St. Louis area.

To a person, I was very impressed with everyone I worked with; and we also appeared to leave an equally good impression on all the staffers we visited. Once again, this goes to show that there are tangible goals that can be attained for the transgendered community; and other goals that must be attained if we are to ever enfranchise ourselves. However, it can't be done if we allow ourselves to rely on a tenacious few to do it for us all. At the risk of sounding ardently activist, we need all the support we can get. Regardless of whether it's monetary, or more importantly warm bodies up on Capitol Hill--or whichever level of government--telling their stories and making their voices heard, we can always use more support. Obviously ICTLEP and GenderPAC will welcome any contributions you can spare--and both are non-profit organizations. Lobbying in person, however, is something that can't be described fully unless one experiences it for themselves. At the risk of sounding trite, it is very empowering--you come away with a real sense of accomplishment. It gets into your blood. Lord knows I never had the desire for being politically active, and yet I still feel the pull. However, I will try to keep my most strident activist rantings contained to the newsletter articles, lest I appear preachy. Keep in mind, these excursions are not always 'all work and no fun,' as my next article will indicate. Consider taking a crack at lobbying for yourself...and for the rest of the transgendered community.

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## **Pride, Dammit!**

**(or Just How Much Energy Does Vanessa Have?)**

by Katrina C. Rose

I'm not sure that I can adequately describe this year's Houston Pride Parade - but I'm damn sure gonna try. Here we go . . .

What was the funniest thing that I saw during the whole experience? Well, I can think of two things:

First - the bathroom situation. No, I'm not saying that the dearth of porta-potties was funny. In fact, one friend of mine missed the TG folk while she was searching for a place to do her bizzness. However, it was rather humorous to hear all of the (as Phyllis put it) "city kids" complaining about the smell of the one porta-can that was readily available in the line-up area (in someone's yard on the street where we were lining up.) As Phyllis and I were walking in that general direction, we heard comments that were preparing me for a scent worse than that of a



thousand stockyards. But the thing just smelled like an old country outhouse - not exactly a fragrant smell to be sure, but nothing abnormal if you have ever been on a pre-indoor-plumbing farm or a construction site (or the ladies room at Cousins for that matter.)

Second - also on the street where we were lining up. The group immediately behind us were in Priscilla Queen of the Desert-ish outfits replete with headdress. While they were preparing, one of the gals sat her headdress on a fire hydrant. It was a perfect fit. I walked over to them and said that all the hydrants in Montrose need to be decorated like that. One appreciated the comment - another either didn't get it or didn't like it.

The saddest thing I saw?

Without a doubt it was the group of protesters who gathered early on at the corner of Westheimer and Mandell. They were sad for two reasons. First is the obvious one - its really pitiful for anyone to be that ignorant, bigoted, etc. Lovely little signs were in abundance ("god hates fags", etc.) But, there weren't all that many of them - maybe two dozen. We were looking forward to giving them a big "Dating Game" style kiss as we turned the corner for real. But, by then, they were gone. This is the other sad thing. Not only were they totally ignorant, but they were so cowardly that they didn't want to stay when the crowds of real people gathered. Its sad to see folx who are so impotent in their beliefs - whatever those beliefs are.

The overall, bestest thing I saw?

Us!

I wasn't holding a sign - I was lil' miss photo journalist so I was bobbing back and forth from one side of the street to the other - consciously of course, but occasionally forgetting about the other side of the street and staying with one side for a bit too long. Vanessa, on the other hand, carrying a sign that read "TGs are Human Tool!" seemingly covered both sides of the street at once - constantly darting back and forth from side to side and back again. If anyone at the parade didn't see that sign - and up close at that - it was because they were off looking for a portapottie when we marched by (sorry, Sage - maybe next year; but I did take pictures!). I have no idea how anyone could have that much energy - but I'm glad she did. Attagirl 'Ness!

Our turnout was great as was that of the overall crowd. This was directly attributable to the nighttime start. It was hot and muggy as it was - but, all other things being equal, I don't think anyone (either marchers or watchers) would have been able to make it had it been a daytime affair. After the parade I overheard Annise Parker say something about a possible crowd count of 25,000 - but I think that's a bit low. The sidewalks were packed from Mandell up to the Curve - and after that the parking lots were packed as far back as I could see.

It was a great parade (and I'm willing to bet that no one there got an ear bitten off during the entire thing.) TGs made a great showing. Was HRC watching? Only time will tell.

This was my first Pride Parade. I was tired beyond belief on Sunday morning. But, Saturday night, I was so pumped that I could have marched on to Beaumont (or at least to downtown.) If anyone is like me - and doesn't want to wait an entire year for another one - the small but enthusiastic contingent from New Orleans' GGA cordially invited Texas folx to the New Orleans parade in October.

I'm planning to be there. I want some company.





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# TATS Newsletter

★ the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

Volume 5, Issue 8

Houston, Texas

August, 1997

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.

## ELECTION TIME IS NEAR!

By Vanessa Edwards

**E**lections are coming up soon! The August 9 meeting at Michelle Myers' will be a precursor to the actual elections in September. As there are numerous proposed changes to the structure, duties, and tenure of the group, as well as the nominations for the individuals running for a place on the board, it is very important that you attend. One proposal of note is changing the election structure to where TATS members elect members to the board only, and then board members alone will elect amongst themselves the officer positions. Another proposal to be brought forth will be a reassigning of duties on a revolving voluntary basis. (e.g. one month treasurer, one month newsletter editor, etc.) The remaining proposal to be introduced is for the tenure of office to be reduced from a two-year term to a one-year term (a proposal I strongly recommend as evidenced by problems in the previous two-year term). If you want your voice to be heard and to have any influence over where your group is going, it is imperative that you attend!

The September 13 meeting will be the actual TATS elections for the next officers or board members to serve our group. Once again, it's incumbent upon you all to attend and cast your votes. Moreover, keep in mind the responsibility of the positions to be filled: these duties are vital to the successful functioning of the group. These are not issues and duties to be taken carelessly. Voting in this country seems to be viewed as an inconvenience and a waste of time. These same people who find no incentive in voting, will usually complain about how poorly they think things are run, how dimly they view the elected officials, and how nobody ever listens to what they have to say. So let your voice be heard--participate and vote!

## THE ICTLEP LAW CONFERENCE 1997: HOUSTON



Phyllis Frye gives Reginald Jones 'The Cup'  
**HOUSTON'S LAST HURRAH**  
By Vanessa Edwards

**T**he sixth annual Law Conference held July 11 & 12 at the Ramada-Astrodome (not the Marriott, as reported by someone else who inhabited my body last month \*Weekly rental rates available\*) has come and gone. As past conferences go, it was both unremarkable and notable. The planning and coordinating wasn't without its struggles, and yet the event came off without a hitch--with exception taken for mechanical failure at the venue. Yes, another law conference is done, and with it fades a little bit of history.

The conference, sponsored by the International Conference for Transgender Law & Employment Practices (ICTLEP) was devised initially by Phyllis Frye, and over the years Phyllis has continuously coordinated this event. The coordination, though seemingly simple, is actually a very arduous and somewhat complicated effort; not only for Phyllis, but for all who sit on the ICTLEP Board and the volunteer committees. Just lining up the speakers

(Continued on Page 3)

## ON THE WEEKEND !

By Daniell Christian McCleney

**W**hat a weekend July 11, 12 and 13 turned out to be. It seems like I packed a weeks worth of activities into just two days. Now I'm trying to sort it all out--there was a lot going on so bear with me!

Actually, first I'd like to take the opportunity to say that I've been very impressed with the last few newsletters. Katrina Rose, Monica Roberts and Vanessa Edwards especially deserve recognition for the writing they've done. This old rag has never been better!

Well, back to my anecdote. I'll start with the award/speaker event at the ICTLEP conference on Friday evening. I arrived early, so I made a beeline for the few people I actually knew who were hanging out in the lounge. Gradually people started to arrive, and I got to

(Continued on Page 3)

### MEETING SCHEDULE:

August 9	Social Meeting at: Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM
August 23	Un-Meeting (Pool Party) at Vanessa Edwards' @ 2:00 PM
September 13	Social Meeting at: Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM
September 27	Un-Meeting at Vanessa Edwards' @ 7:00 PM

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## EDITOR'S TIDBITS

By Vanessa Edwards

Hello! Yours truly is the editor for this month's issue, so please bear with me while I slog through this--my first attempt at a newsletter. You've probably noticed a change once again in the format. I suppose this is to be expected with the duties being revolved between various members, and their divergent approaches to laying out a newsletter. Hopefully this issue won't be too hard to follow. And if it is...hey, that's what you get for hiring amateurs to do this stuff!

No, actually if you do have any suggestions or comments, let us know. Keep in mind though, we are only humans...unless of course you're the 'religious reich', in which case we're only *sub*-humans. Then again, that's a variance of opinion. Also remember: we do like articles, so by all means submit them! That's right, see **YOUR NAME** in print! Rave to all your friends! Be the first TS on the block to have one!!! Impress all the girls!!! Enlarge it to super-size and affix it permanently to your wall, then stand back and say, "Why the hell did I ruin my wall with that &@#£\$\* thing!!!"



**Your editor: In an ugly moment!**

### 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 (713) 827-5913 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.

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**"GOIN' TO MONTANA SOON..."**  
(Or Why You STILL Have to Go to Another Time Zone to Avoid Sodomy Laws, But Now You Can Go Somewhere That is Smog-free and Speed Limit-free)

By Katrina C. Rose

Kat is about to rant - so bury your head in the sand if you wish. But you'd be wise not to.

Here are some words of which all lesbigrats should be working to make all states take heed: "[W]hile legislative enactments may reflect the will of the majority, and, arguably, may even respond to perceived societal notions of what is acceptable conduct in a moral sense, there are certain rights so fundamental that they will not be denied to a minority no matter how despised by society. In Montana, the right of privacy is such a right. While nothing in this opinion should be construed to countenance nonconsensual [sic] sexual activity, sexual contact with a minor, or any form of sexual conduct for commercial purposes, Montana's constitutional right of privacy -- this right of personal autonomy and right to be let alone -- includes the right of consenting adults, regardless of gender, to engage in non-commercial, private, sexual relations free of governmental interference, intrusion and condemnation."

No, this quote (and the case as a whole) does not specifically address TG issues. But, as long as homosexuals can be persecuted, so can we; and the elimination of state-sanctioned persecution of homosexuals can only help us in the long run.

I'm quoting this big chunk of the opinion (the name of the case is *Gryczan v. State of Montana*) here so all of us, not just the legal beagles, can have the exact language to throw in the faces of the bible-bangin' bigots who will shout to the far winds that the State of Montana now sanctions rape, pedophilia and prostitution. Quote this language *exactly*. Fight their dementia with the truth.

Unfortunately there is a downside to the good truth of this opinion: it *only* applies to Montana. The Montana Supreme Court was NOT interpreting the U.S. Constitution; it was interpreting the Montana Constitution - which has an explicit right of privacy. The rights of privacy that we enjoy under the U.S. Constitution have been inferred by courageous Justices (such as William Brennan, who just died this month) who have been willing to stand up to the crypto-fascists who believe that, as far as the Constitution is concerned, we still live in the year 1789.

Such crypto-fascists see no problem with the law that the Montana Supreme Court dispensed with here and would uphold it by



**Katrina Rose & TCF's Gwendolyn 'OnQGwen' Smith at KPFT After Hours**

shouting a "state's rights" mantra - the same stupidity that was used to justify Jim Crow laws. The Montana law punished "deviate sexual conduct" (defined as "sexual contact or intercourse between two persons of the same sex or any form of intercourse with an animal.") by up to 10 years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$50,000. Fun, huh?

The U.S. Supreme Court has not had a good enough of an opportunity recently to explicitly overturn *Bowers v. Hardwick* (the 1986 case that said states could keep on enforcing laws just like this one) and will not as a result of this Montana case. Because the plaintiffs won based *entirely* on Montana law the case ends at the Montana Supreme Court - kind of like a low-powered radio station that plays really cool music - good content, but not a lot of coverage.

This case is nothing to sneeze at - but there's no reason to take a vacation from the struggle yet. Unless, of course, it's a quickie out to Montana. There's a LOT of open space in Montana. Maybe Disney will open a new park there!

I'll be first in line if they do. Montana is nice this time of year. Meow!



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

\* **Daniell McCleney** for her article of humor and insight on the Law Conference, and help on the newsletter!

\* **Dee McKellar** for her piece of fiction...and

**Sarah Eris Caffee** for forwarding it!

\* **Katrina C. Rose** for the great photos, article and the humorous net offerings, a *great big thanks!!!*





## ON THE WEEKEND!

(continued from Page 1)

renew some acquaintances as well as make new ones. Everybody chatted until it was time to troop upstairs for the event itself.

I really had no expectations. I looked around the room at a sea of unfamiliar faces, thinking how important this event must be to draw so many out-of-towners. Why did I assume the unfamiliar faces were non-Houstonians? Well, I figured if they were locals, I would certainly know them, I know everybody! (wink). Anyway, things got started with Phyllis Frye saying a few words, welcoming everyone to the event, and telling everyone that she was stepping down as coordinator of the Law Conference. Melinda Whiteway, an ICTLEP board member, will take the helm. After these announcements, Phyllis presented an award to Nancy Sharp, for her work in getting transgender inclusion in the city charter of New Orleans. After that, an award was presented to Phyllis herself, for all the work she's done making these conferences happen. Phyllis seemed quite touched by this gesture. Following the awards was a speech by Reginald Jones, of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He talked about how he first became aware of transgender issues, and how he met Phyllis. He also gave his views on the current state of transgender law, or lack thereof. I was dismayed by his statement that we had absolutely no legal recourse should we be discriminated against due to our transgender status. He stated that any complaints brought before the EEOC due to discrimination on the basis of being transgendered are summarily dismissed, as this falls outside the scope of currently protected groups. Why wasn't I already aware of that? Because I'm from another planet. Saturn, in fact. (No, I'm not serious. Have I ever been?) But I thought that he gave a good speech. It also made me reassess my impression of Phyllis Frye. I've never actually spoken with Phyllis, so my view of her is based solely on what I've heard said by and about her, and what little I've seen of her. I always thought she was aloof, brisk, and somewhat overzealous. But the events of Friday evening, as well as her visit to Dr. Coles the previous month, caused me to revise that image, and gain a little more insight about the whole issue of transgender rights.

All in all it was a great weekend, mostly because I got to meet so many new people. Okay, the people themselves are not new, just newly met. Glad we cleared that up. Anyway, I got to briefly trade quips with Martine Rothblatt, who joked that she'd seen me on the cover of *Vogue*. That's a laugh, if I was on any magazine cover, it would be *Vague*! :) Katrina introduced me to Gwendolyn Smith, a.k.a. On Q Gwen, Area Coordinator of the Transgender Community Forum of America Online. I'd chatted with her online before, and it was great



**NGLTF exec. director Kerri Lobel (left) speaking at Saturday's luncheon, Stephen Whittle PhD (right) sitting in on one of the conference presentations.**



to meet her in person. Did you know that the On Q Area, which includes the Transgender Community Forum, is the largest area (in terms of number of visitors daily) on America Online? And considering that AOL is the largest online community in the country, that's saying something significant! I'm glad I got to meet someone who is helping to make a difference in so many peoples' lives. Vanessa introduced me to Jamison Green, who was very nice, not to mention way cute! (Hey, so I'm hetero, sue me!) I also got to meet Dr. Stephen Whittle, who was extremely friendly, even showing me pictures of his new twins! He was also way cuter than his picture in *Body Alchemy*. I met Andrea Senechal, representing transgenders in Canada, and Tony Barreto-Neto, of TOPS, who I'm sure thought I was a complete ditzhead! (Why do people always think that of me?) I also spoke with Melinda Whiteway, though briefly. Gosh, the number of people I met that night is higher than I can count! But then, as Barbie says, Math is Hard! Saturday I got a chance to gab with Gwen again, as well as talk to Nancy Sharp, plus Katrina, Michelle and Vanessa, of course, while hamming it up on Sarah's radio show. (I love hamming it up on the radio, or couldn't you tell?) Jessica Xavier even performed a song on that broadcast. How come Sarah never let's me sing? Sunday I met Denise Brogan, Michelle Hubert and Dana Turner, and Tony again, at a barbecue/pool party. I got the chance to talk to them at length, and get to know them a little. They were a lot of fun. Dana thought I was Vanessa's daughter! Can you believe that? What a hoot! We all got a big laugh out of that one--especially Vanessa! I won't be forgetting any of these people anytime soon, nor they me, I'm sure! (After all, we are talking about me here, I'm a legend in my own mind!) To quote the anthropomorphic plastic goddess again, it was Great! On the Weekend!



## HOUSTON'S LAST HURRAH ....

(continued from Page 1)

themselves--who represent some of the more notable names in the transgender / queer community--is no easy feat. Additionally, planning for venue and accommodations, synchronizing program schedules, arranging the meals, notifying the media and the trans community, are just a few of the many tasks going on behind the scenes each year. But over the course of the past six years it's been Phyllis' baby to birth and nurture. As the host coordinator it stood to reason that she would host it in her own home: Houston.

This year, however, was different in the fact that Phyllis would be stepping down as the primary coordinator of the event after this conference. As a result, the Law Conference will no longer require being held in Houston, and future affairs will be held in various sites based on a consensus vote by the board. Personally I don't feel it's as bad for Houston as it is good for the conference itself. The various locales will prevent a perceived 'regionalism', as mentioned by attendee and presenter Dana Turner. Of course, there is always the hope that the new location might also spur attendance at future events (we all know how daunting the July heat can be in Houston...even for the locals).

Speaking of daunting heat...those attending this year noticed one remarkable difference between this year's conference and those past: the Friday session found us with no air conditioning in the hotel! Not exactly the best way to impress the out-of-town visitors! Needless to say, the old Chamber of Commerce slogan "Houston's Hot!" would not have received a warm reception with that day's participants. Hot (as in irate) maybe, but warm...I'm likely taking my life in my hands making such horribly punny light of what--at the time--was not a very funny situation. Now I know why the city decided to can that particular slogan.

As for the program itself, there was a slight variation of itinerary from the previous year, but overall it followed the same tack of simultaneously multi-tracked conferences. Many of the presenters from last year also attended this year; including author Martine Rothblatt, legal specialists Stephen Whittle from the U.K. and Jameson Green from San Francisco, and Colorado activist Dianna Ciccotello. The various programs and presenters this year provided no news of gains for transgenders on the global front, as compared to last years' announcements of TG employment non-discrimination enacted in the European partnership and in South Africa.

(continued on Page 5)



## STANDING UP FOR SITTING DOWN

By Vanessa Edwards

**B**athrooms...you can't live without them, and you certainly don't want to live *within* them! Bathrooms are surely a necessity for us all; at least if we don't want to live unhygienically, or be arrested for urination or defecation in public. (Not exactly something that we'd like to be known by.) Most everyone in the transgendered community by now is aware of etiquette regarding 'the bathroom situation.' There are, unfortunately, a few holdouts; and an incident at the Law Conference prevailed upon me to grab a soapbox (though not one from the bathroom--not good etiquette) and preach.

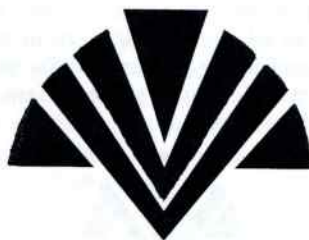
As I emerged from a rather sultry visit to the ladies' stall, (which had nothing to do with me...there was no air conditioning in there! Honest!) I heard the unmistakable sound of a stream of fluid splashily hitting a pool of water. In other words, some slob was standing in the women's room peeing like a sailor--though hopefully not like a drunken one! Sure enough, I turned around to look and there were a pair of shoes pointed towards the toilet, in opposition to the shoes in the adjacent stalls. A wonderful visual emerged of a genetic female in the stall next to this person, suddenly wide-eyed at the realization that someone in the next stall was standing while letting loose the juice (and praying that it wouldn't splatter!)

About this time a mother--with elementary school-aged child in tow--rounded the corner into the bathroom and immediately gave a vaguely disgusted and dismayed look in the direction of the offender. She then turned to give the two of us 'gals' at the mirror a scrutinizing once-over. I returned her glance with a shoulder-shrug and a faint shake of the head. She hurried her daughter--who by now was quizzically looking for explanation--and herself into the farthest stall--against the farthest wall and curtly closed the stall door. Mommy was *not* a happy camper! Even though I saw the fountainsque 'humorist' (and I mean that in the sense of 'humor'...as in body fluid excretions, not humorous as in comedic) emerge from the stall, I deemed it inappropriate to take this person to task and thusly embarrass and shame the individual in front of peers and strangers. (Though I'm certain the strangers--the genetic women in there--thought *we* were the stranger strangers, being in their environ and all...but I digress.) Instead I just finished my business and hurried out; and since the offender was from out-of-town, I'll never get a chance for this to be addressed. Now I wish I had.

We are not at a point where we can feel free to walk into any bathroom in the country and use it as blithely as we would at home. Obviously there are laws against males in female facilities and vice-versa. Even where there are legal loopholes, there are still socially accepted rules to be abided by while in the lavatory contrary to your genetic sex. Failure to follow the expected etiquette in the powder room results, at the very least, in offending women with your brazen behavioral disregard. At worst, they can complain to management and have you ejected, or worse yet...arrested for creating a disturbance in the restroom.

Therefore, regarding urination, the solution is clear: if you feel it necessary to use the ladies' room, use it as a lady would. In other words, when in Rome do as the Romans...drink a lot of wine and pinch every cute butt in sight! No, honestly, don't do that! Just tinkle like Romans...uh, Womans...Womens. (You know what I mean.) If you want to be able to use the ladies' facilities, don't go in there and do something to piss them off! (sorry, crude but on target!) And while in the ladies' lounge, don't spend an inordinate amount of time dallying at the mirror, or chatting and joking with your TG friends in your basso profundo voice. Remember, it's not some exciting excursion! It's just a tiled room with toilets, and urgent genetic females with small bladders...sometimes with small children with big curiosities, even smaller bladders, and an even greater sense of urgency.

Women have to deal with a lot of male intrusion in their lives. The powder room is their last bastion of sanctity, and the last place they want to have to fight over whether the seat is left up or left moistened! Humor them. (and this time I *don't* mean bodily fluids--indulge their desires!) Act like a lady when in a woman's restroom. Otherwise you jeopardize the privilege for all transgenders; and lord knows that for those of us who want or need to sit, the men's room isn't very sanitary. Something to do with hand / eye coordination: the hand can't steer the one-eyed sna--...well, I think I'd better just let that one hang. Keep in mind, the ladies room is a privilege to be earned by correct behavior--not a right to be demanded by those who would behave rudely. So do the right thing, take a stand for the privilege to sit down



## God's Gift to Man and Woman (Submitted off of the net by Katrina Rose...thanks Kat!)

God was finished with the basic structure on humanity and now it was time for the extras, the perqs. So God says to Adam and Eve, "Ok, you've got the basic stuff, now who wants to be able to pee standing up?" Adam leaps to his feet and says, "Me! Oh please, I want to be able to pee standing up!" So God says, "Tis granted." And Adam goes off happy.

Then She turns to Eve and says, "Looks like all I have left are the multiple orgasms...."



## Uncle Mike (a fiction)

**D**amn! This is going to be hard. But she's right; I've put it off too long. And it's a quiet Saturday afternoon at the office, just the two of us. "Hey, Net Nerd!"

"Yeah, Dad?"

"You anywhere near a stopping place? We need to have a talk."

"Sure. Give me a minute or two to close down and log off."

Soon he shambles in, this 14-year-old boy-man who is so in love with the technical side of my business. Will he ever develop the business sense that will let me retire? Does anything on the Web teach about business, about people? He flops into the customer chair, with a "what's-up?" look on his face.

I lean back and put my feet on a half-open drawer. "John, you're growing up, and there's something we should talk about, just you and me."

"It's about girls, right? Don't worry, Dad, they taught us all that in school. Can I go back to my web page?"

"No, this is something else. You might call it a family secret. And I don't, er, your mother and I don't think your sister is old enough yet to learn about it, so please keep it to yourself."

"Uh, okay." He doesn't change his position, but the beanbag posture is gone.

"Do you remember your Uncle Mike? He hasn't been here since you were eight or nine, but do you remember anything about him?"

"Not really. I mean, I know the name; he's your older brother, right? But I don't think he ever did anything to make a kid notice him. Even Uncle Scott was more fun. Is this about Uncle Mike? What'd he do?" I guess there's no easy way.

"Yes, it's about him. Five years ago, right after his last visit here, he changed his name to Michelle."

"You mean Uncle Mike is now Aunt Michelle? Cool! What's she look like?"

Kids. Just when you think you know them, they surprise you. I reach for the copy of Esquire; it opens by itself to the right page. "She's the one standing up on the left side. I suppose you can read the article, too, even though she's not mentioned. And here's a snapshot of her giving a speech somewhere."

"Not too pretty. But for a guy, not bad. Does this mean she dates men now?"

"We talked a little about that, and I don't think so. John, your uncle is a lesbian."

(From "Your Uncle Is a Lesbian, and Other Fairy Tales," by Dee McKellar)



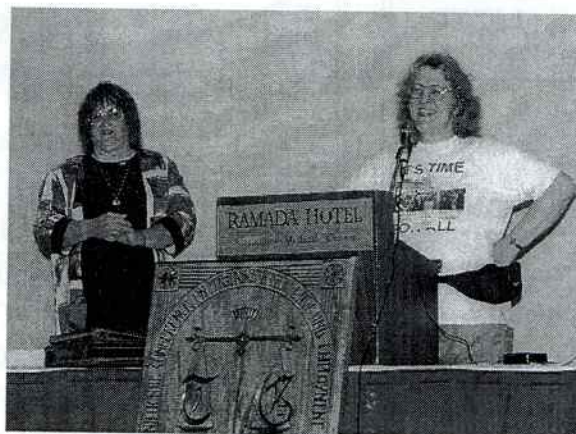
## HOUSTON'S LAST HURRAH.... (Continued from Page 3)

Thus, from a legislative or legal standpoint, there were no headlines of note.

There were, however, quite notable first-time presenters and speakers at this year's conference. Presenters of note featured the founder of TOPS (Transgendered Officers Protect & Serve) Tony Barreto-Neto, and Nancy Buermeyer, policy advocate with the Human Rights Campaign (!) both of whom co-chaired a meeting on ENDA and the HRC.

Speakers of note included the Friday luncheon orator Dan Shea, a local attorney & former theology student at Luvergne. Saturday's luncheon featured Kerri Lobel, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) who did make one announcement of note in her speech: beyond just supporting transgendered inclusion into the ENDA bill, the NGLTF is literally changing their name to be inclusive of both bisexual and transgendered peoples! Trouble is, now they have to come up with a moniker (or acronym) to rename the organization that doesn't take up half of the alphabet! (Progress comes at a price!) Most noteworthy, the featured Friday night keynote speaker was one of the four commissioners from the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), Reginald E. Jones. His speech was quite entertaining; however, there were no pronouncements that indicate change in the near future regarding employment discrimination of transgendered. Rather it was a more reserved speech indicating his personal support, and empathy with our predicaments, yet nothing forthcoming legislatively. This is not exactly devastating revelations! While it may not have been what we wished to hear, we're also aware that this is our reality regardless.

For those of y'all who attended, there were the obvious benefits of meeting folks and making new friends from around the country, and the world! Once again, I hosted a little after-conference pool party / barbecue with some of the out-of-towners: Dana Turner from New York City, and Michelle Hubert, Denise Brogan, and Tony Barreto-Neto--all TOPS members from Florida. Special thanks go out to my local co-hosts Jenifer Rene and Daniell McCleney for keeping my guests entertained while I prepared and served. Dana even mentioned that when Daniell opened the door after we arrived, she thought Daniell was my daughter! Thanks Dana! After that, and hitting the big 4-0 July 21, I guess it's official...I'm middle-aged! How frumpy.... Anyway, the guests remarked on how well they enjoyed the relaxing afternoon--the



**Dianna Ciccotello and Phyllis Frye at keynote.**

swimming and eating...and the company! Personally it's something I like to do to show off some 'Houston hospitality'. Of course, events like this in our back yard are golden opportunities to do just that.

Unfortunately for those of y'all who were unable to attend, the conference will not be held here in the immediate future. With it goes the opportunity to showcase Houston to a large group of trans-folk, and additionally the chance to meet such a varied and impressive array of people from all walks of the TG / Queer community and beyond. I've got to admit that I will miss the Law Conference not being here at home. However, the Law Conference will continue as usual in the appointed locations, and I urge you to attend if possible. You'll never know what you'll see, who you'll meet...or what you'll learn.



**Melinda Whiteway at Saturday luncheon**

**Windows: Just another pain in the glass**  
(submitted off the net by Katrina Rose)

- \* Double your drive-space: delete Windows!
- \* Ever noticed how fast Windows runs? Neither did I!
- \* Windows: Turn your Pentium into an XT ...
- \* Windows: XT emulator for an AT
- \* Windows is for fun, OS/2 is for getting things done
- \* OS/2 VirusScan -- "Windows found: Remove it? [Y,N]"
- \* Windows'95: New look, same multicrashing
- \* Windows isn't a virus, viruses do something
- \* Time on your hands? Get Windows!
- \* "Fer sail cheep, Windows spel chekcer, wurks grate"
- \* Microsoft Windows ... a virus with mouse support
- \* Microsoft gives you Windows ... OS/2 gives you the whole house
- \* Newsflash: Microsoft announces Visual Edlin for Windows
- \* Sorry, this virus requires MicroSoft Windows 3.x
- \* Are you using Windows or is that just an XT?
- \* Bang on the LEFT side of your computer to restart Windows
- \* Beat me, whip me, make me use Windows!
- \* Breaking Windows isn't just for kids anymore ...
- \* Bugs come in through open Windows
- \* DOS 6.0 and Windows 3.1 - A turtle and its shell
- \* Difference between a virus and windows? Viruses rarely fail
- \* Error #152 - Windows not found: (C)heer (P)arty (D)ance
- \* Error 005: Windows loading - come back tomorrow
- \* Have you crashed your Windows today?
- \* I'll never forget the 1st time I ran Windows, but I'm trying ...
- \* If Windows is user-friendly, why do you need a 678-page manual?
- \* Masochist: Windows programmer with a smile!
- \* My latest screen saver: Curtains for Windows
- \* New from McAfee: WinScan - Removes all Windows programs
- \* OS/2 ... Opens up Windows, shuts up Gates
- \* Out of disk space - Delete Windows? [Y]es [N]aturally yes!
- \* Relax ... you are entering a windows free zone
- \* Some windows were made to be broken
- \* Windows - so intuitive you only need a meg of help files!
- \* Windows 3.1 - The best \$89 solitaire game you can buy
- \* Windows 3.1 vs OS/2 = Michael Jackson vs Mike Tyson
- \* Windows95 will be released as soon as Windows 3.1 finishes loading
- \* Windows Multitasking: messing up several things at once
- \* Windows NT: Nice Try
- \* Windows NT: Insert wallet into Drive A: and press any key to empty....

Thanks to Sanju Sahayam for this contribution



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# Texas Association for Transsexual Support

P.O. Box 142.-) Bellaire, Texas 77401

(713) 827-5913

Volume 5 Issue 9

Sept, 1997

## Who We Are

Texas Association for Transsexual Support is a volunteer-led peer support group devoted to helping Transsexual persons, their partners, families, and friends accept life, and experience it to the fullest.

### In This Issue

#### Meetings Schedule

Sept 13	3:00pm	Social meeting at: Michelle Myers
Sept 27	7:00pm	Unmeeting at : Vanessa Edwards
Oct. 11	3:00pm	Social meeting at: Michelle Myers
Oct. 25	7:00pm	Unmeeting at: Vanessa Edwards

#### How to Reach Us

If you need directions to a meeting, or any other information about TATS, you may call our voice mail phone number at (713) 827-5913 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.

You can also contact us by Electronic Mail. Send items for the news letter to Sarah Caffee at [scaffee@accesscomm.net](mailto:scaffee@accesscomm.net). To contact the TATS board members, send messages to [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org), which will reach all board members. Visit our WWW page at <http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/>.

### Table of contents:

1. IN THIS ISSUE	PAGE 1
2. HOW TO REACH US	PAGE 1
3. EDITORS MUSINGS	PAGE 1
4. Breaking News	PAGE 2
5. Friends	PAGE 4
6. Do we Value our Friends?	PAGE 5
7. Elections This Month	Page 6
8. In Memoriam	Page 7

#### Editor's musings

This month's editor: Jessica Wicks.



### ATTENTION: BEFORE READING HERE, GO TO PAGE 2 FOR LATE BREAKING NEWS!

Gee, its Jess' time again. My chance to edit and play TATS goddess for awhile. Wow what a rush:-) But this does promise to be a good issue. If I were to try to come up with a theme for this month's newsletter, it would have to be the FRIENDSHIP ISSUE. It seems to be what is on a lot of people's minds, judging from the articles that have been submitted to date. And it certainly is foremost in my mind right now with the events that have transpired over the last few months. This month we will gather to elect new officers .CONT.PAGE 3:



PAGE 2:

**LATE BREAKING NEWS:**

**Sad news:**

**NATIONAL TRANSGENDER  
LEADER, HONORED IN DEATH**



(Houston) National transgender community leader, Dee Skene McKellar, died on Saturday evening, September 6th, as she and her friends were being assigned their rounds with the Q-Patrol, a neighborhood watch group. She was felled by a massive heart attack and died before reaching the hospital. CPR was begun and Houston's EMS arrived within minutes of the attack. They treated McKellar, a well-know, non-surgical transsexual, with the utmost of professionalism and respect.

During the next day, many of her friends gathered along with Dee's daughter and planned for the activist's remembrance. The service will be an open casket, gravesite service on Saturday, September 13th, at 11AM, at the Woodlawn Cemetery, I-10 West, exit at Antoine. Everyone that knew and loved Dee (or David, as she was known in the NASA area prior to 1991) is invited. The Q-Patrol will serve as honor guard and all transgendered activists are encouraged to wear whatever activist t-shirt they may possess to the service. Anyone wishing to visit with Dee prior to Saturday may do so at the funeral home chapel: Cremation Service International, 5601 Arlington, Houston (near Tidwell and I-45 North) 713-692-5555 on Thursday and Friday from 10AM to 9PM.

Dee McKellar was a national leader in the transgender community. In 1991, she was one of the founding

committee members for what has become the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP) now in its seventh year. She served as a Director and as its Secretary for several years. With Dee's assistance and push, ICTLEP has been in the foreground of transgender re-intergration within the lesbian/gay/bisexual community. Dee assisted in organizing, and attended, both the 2nd National Transgender Event in Washington DC in October 1995 and the 3rd National Transgender Event in Washington DC in February 1997. She spoke to countless people needing help who called, wrote or e-mailed the ICTLEP office.

While serving as a Director of the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association, Dee served on the NLGLA committee responsible for the unanimous NLGLA Board vote in August 1997 that brought bisexuals and transgenders fully within the bylaws of that organization. Dee also served as a Director of Gender PAC for a short time assisting with organizational and bylaw procedures.

At the state level, Dee was one of four who planned, and one of twelve who participated in the transgender protest of the 1995 Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby's March on Austin in the spring of 1995 in Austin. This LGRL event was to call attention of Legislators to violence and hate crimes against gays and lesbians. The transgenders who were with Dee resented being purposefully left out of the LGRL push. As a result of the protest, most of the LGRL marchers were persuaded that the TG protest was right and proper and that TG issues of violence and hate crimes were the same issues as the gay and lesbian folks. Also, in that same legislative session, Dee assisted in the planning, and attended the hearings for transgender legislation dealing with document changes.

On the local level, Dee hosted two Transgender Employment Day events. She was a Director of Spectrum, a member of Q-Patrol, a member of Lesbians in Business (LiB), a volunteer with both the Houston READ Commission and Annise Parker's Campaign for City Council, co-moderator of the local Helping Cross-dressers Anonymous (HCDA) chapter, and an instructor on transgender issues for classes of the Houston Police Academy. Dee is known to many others in Houston. **Cont.page 3:**



PAGE 3:

She worked for the League of Women Voters several years ago and was a beloved member of the Houston Writers League.

Ms. McKellar attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology and completed three years of engineering studies. She worked for Boeing in Seattle and later for contractors in the NASA - Clear Lake City area in computer flight simulation design for many of the early astronauts. She had a private pilots license and loved the skies. She was also an avid photographer. So when you look up at the clouds, smile in case she is about to snap the shutter.

Dee is survived by her proud and loving daughter, her mother and two brothers, and a very large community of friends. Anyone wishing to send cards may do so. Send a separate card to daughter (Deborah Donaldson) and to mother (Elizabeth McKellar) in card of me at 5707 Firenza, Houston 77035 and I will forward.

For more information, call Phyllis Frye at 713-723-8368.

**Editor's comments continued from page 1:**

So be sure and be there for the important meeting on the thirteenth at Michelle's home. Everyone's input and vote is encouraged and welcomed! Also, congratulations to Vanessa for providing a sunny day for a most successful pool party. It was a resounding success.

Now to the "meat" of what I want to talk about with the membership. We call ourselves TATS. The "S" in that acronym stands for support. Support as members of a small minority who are transcending our gender of birth, but also support as in friendship. Our common journey by its very nature fosters a common camaraderie that is uncommon in the world at large. It is nice, but also I think essential in the journey that we have elected to take. It is that Support that we, individually and collectively have to offer each other to make a very difficult journey a little bit easier.

In TATS our membership faces a myriad of difficulties and hurdles. There are the steps in transition, HRT, RLT, SRS, Life after SRS, electrolysis, therapists, on and on.

Often it is a society that does not understand the journey we must take, we face estrangement from friends and family, or job loss, and grief from people who just don't get it. And while we shuffle these obstacles, life keeps marching forward. With the problems mentioned above, there are the usual living problems that all people, gender gifted or not has to deal with. Sometimes it just gets to be too much for one person to handle. That is why we look to each other for the strength to take that next step and move forward. It is this support that strengthens and nourishes.

As you all know, I lost my husband on the tenth of August as a result of viral encephalitis. He had been in critical condition in the hospital since the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July. We were very close and very much in love. His death brought to an abrupt end three years four months and ten days of the most intense and caring relationship I had ever known. Skip was also part of the "S" in TATS, always encouraging me and letting me know in his own special way that I was "ok". He came to our meetings, trying to learn as much as he could about what it was I had to do, and be a part of that journey. We shared everything, and transition was no exception. Then suddenly he was ill, and then as suddenly he died. My life as I knew it had come to an end, our dreams and plans shattered. His sudden departure left a giant space, an emptiness I had never known with such intensity!

This is when you, my dear brothers and sisters, proceeded to show me what support, what TATS, is really all about. While he was in the hospital, you came to visit him, and me, offering encouragement, hugs, and open ears and hearts. And after his death you were still here, one or several of you, bringing consolation, and a physical presence that reminded me continuously that this journey is not being taken alone. I write this on August 31, yet rare indeed is the day that one of our own does not call, or come by to just say hi, and be a friend. The spray of flowers sent by the group was beautiful, and was so very much appreciated by this writer. At the Rosary and funeral, our members were out in force, standing with one of their own. THANK YOU ALL SO VERY MUCH! Thank you for being the most beautiful group of human beings it has ever been my pleasure to know.

CONT. ON PAGE 4:



**PAGE 4:**

Thank you for helping me to take those steps forward when I needed you the most. I did, and do not have the strength to go alone.

My pain is real, and it is not over. Others in the group face their own ordeals, times when it just is too much to handle alone. Just as you have supported me during this difficult time, so it is my responsibility as part of this special community, to be ready to step forward to show that same love and community that was so admirably demonstrated to me. I have learned from you actions the true meaning of the "S" in TATS. Thank you all for such a lovely lesson. I will always be grateful to every one of you. May your kindness and love be revisited upon each and every one of you many fold!

**addendum:**

Since I wrote this article, Dee McKellar left this life. Marie Gallagher, Michelle Myers, Sara Caffee, and I helped with immediate assistance, along with another member of Qpatrol who was up to date on CPR. Probably the last words she heard from Marie and myself were, "We love you hon!" And we do! She was with friends and that is important. All the TATS team were both supportive and behaved absolutely appropriately in the situation, each doing their part to insure that Dee got the very best love and care while waiting for EMT. Another member of Q Patrol remarked later that he was impressed with our teamwork and cooperation when dealing with the situation at hand. He also noted the love and compassion with each other in this most difficult situation.

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**FRIENDS**

By Monica Katrice Roberts

Back in June I flew to Portland, Oregon to watch a TS friend graduate from college. I had 4 hours to think during that plane ride and as I looked out my window and watched the Rockies slowly pass by I began reflecting upon friendships past and present.

A friendship in some ways is like a marriage or relationship. Two people with similar interests meet, talk, spend time together, etc. The trick, however, is to keep it alive over time, without the friendship breaking up due to misunderstandings or as a result of miscommunication.

Friends are vitally important to transgendered folks. A friend, whether they are male or female, gay or straight, or transgendered / non-transgendered, can help you through those rough times in life we inevitably have, be there to help celebrate those memorable occasions, and act as a constructive critic when you need a swift kick in the butt! They can also act as surrogate family members when your biological family refuses to speak to you because of your gender change.

I have been blessed to have such friends in my life, and if it were not for non-TG female friends who helped me unravel the mysteries of femininity, and other people who had my best interests and happiness at heart, I would not be the well-rounded person I am today.

It is nice to come home after a rotten day at work and listen to the answering machine messages from friends in New York, Atlanta, and Los Angeles, or check my mailbox and see postcards or letters with Rayville, Louisiana or Portland, Oregon postmarks.

Just the idea that someone took the time out of their busy schedule to call or write makes one feel loved, wanted, and needed. It is a positive ego boost that is sorely needed when society's message toward transgenders is primarily negative.

One of the things I have noticed in TATS, and I am guilty of this too, is that we barely socialize with or talk to each other except on meeting days. I think its not intentional, we all have this lone wolf in us that we used to develop our TG personas, combined with the demands of surviving in the real world, that cause us not to be more social with each other. **CONT ON PAGE 5:**



**PAGE 5:**

Life is short and precious, ladies and gentlemen, and so is a friend. That point got driven home when Carolyn passed away and I have regretted the fact that I did not get the chance to get to know her and potentially make a lifelong friend. I am not going to let that happen ever again! I am going to close this with quotes from Susan L. Taylor, the editor of *Essence* magazine, who writes a column called *In the Spirit*. Here is what she has to say in one column about friendship: "We need to be our truest selves in our friendships. We need to feel the freedom to be who we are. Free to be lighthearted and silly if the mood strikes us." (Did she meet Daniell somewhere?) "Free to dance and play and jump at the sun if the spirit moves us. We need to feel free to contradict ourselves, talk about our insecurities, or not to talk at all. In being our down to earth natural selves, we build bridges that connect us. We are at our best when surrounded by happy, healthy people, people who hold a positive vision and who show by their actions that they sincerely like us. People who tell us the truth."

**Amen, Ms. Taylor, Amen!**

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## DO WE VALUE OUR FRIENDS

By Vanessa Edwards

How many of us value our friends? There are various types of friendships, with varying levels of closeness. The closer the friend-ship, the more value they accrue. Sometimes spouses and even relatives, by virtue of their closeness, can also be one's best friend. Do we fully acknowledge the friends we admire? Telling someone that we look up to our regard for them is often awkward without a proper situation to initiate it. Many times we avoid such comments altogether for fear of them appearing contrived.

Do we fully appreciate the intimacy of those who are the closest? Friendship is like a car in our transportation-based society: while they are there we tend

to take them for granted. But once we are without them, only then do we fully realize the impact they had on our lives. How many of us truly value our friendships?

Personal circumstances have forced me to reexamine my own feelings on this subject. In a six week span from late April through the first days of June, I lost three of the four closest people in my life. At the time it occurred, I was unable to digest it completely; being interspersed between a lobbying trip to Washington, a long-planned TATS party I had hosted, the sale of my mother's house resulting in my closest sibling's sudden move to Hawaii, and the complete move of my mother's belongings from her home on short notice. The first loss was my grandma--the one person in my life who loved me unconditionally. Less than three weeks later I lost my confidant and closest transgendered friend, Carolyn Patek. Then, less than three weeks had passed before I suffered yet another loss, my very best friend Rolando Munguia. Not to minimize the other losses, but his death devastated me the most.

The loss of my grandmother was not totally unexpected--it was her second massive heart attack in six months. Even though she was family, she was also my friend. Unlike family, there were never any expectations, any feelings of disappointment, or anything short of absolute pride and love from her. She also understood what I was going through while growing up; and was the one person who would stand up to my parents for me. She knew what was going on, much better than I understood at the time, and would risk the consequences to stand up for fairness. Only later did I realize the full impact of what she did. She was also the most generous person on the planet and would give you her last dime just to make you happy. Most importantly though, she was unconditional in her love. Though I never got a chance to tell her, I'm sure my transition would not have wavered her support.

Carolyn's death was a shock. It was difficult to get myself to accept it. She was there to listen when I was going through a turbulent period at a job during the early months of this year. Even though she had reservations about my taking the job, she never mentioned it for fear of raining on my parade. She let time take its course. When I called her on those nights, she knew by the tone of my voice I was hurting. Yet she took great care in not saying, "I knew it wouldn't work...! Instead she gently consoled me, and boosted my psyche...letting me know I was better than that. **CONT. PAGE 6**



**PAGE 6:**

She was always there to help with my PC problems, teaching me some trick about my own computer; and spent entire weekend nights introducing me to the Internet. She was generous, not only materi-ally but with her time as well.

By far the loss of my best friend was the worst. He was non-TG, and very heterosexual; and from all appearances would be the least likely to be understanding of transgenderism. He grew up in a low-income black enclave in the shadows of the refineries. His macho Hispanic roots, his "what-the-f\*ck's-your-problem" attitude, and his bouncer's physique belied the fact that he was not only accepting of my "second self", but was my most ardent and encouraging supporter! He was so supportive he proudly showed off my photos to his family, and explained my situation to them. Even more so, he did such a good job telling them, that to this day his family still considers me a son (daughter), and a brother (sister)! Regardless of how we grew to know each other previously, my new transformation meant virtually no difference to our friendship...with the exception that he now called and visited more frequently. My new persona was intriguing and exciting to him--distinctive to his own traditional life. It also inspired him to dream up ideas to utilize my new persona...a cable-access talk show, and radio DJ team were planned. His dreams in turn also inspired me to dream larger than I had before. It was also comforting to know that in a fight, he would back me up 100%. Most important, as a straight friend from my previous incarnation, he lent a level of reassurance, stability, and credibility to my transition simply by virtue of his enthusiastically genuine acceptance. He was a calming influence in my life, just by being there. Sadly, I took it for granted these--and all--friendships would be there indefinitely. However, I recognized only too late the transitory and precious quality of life.

Friends are an asset in our lives--the closer they are, the more precious and valuable. Friends contribute greatly to our lives, though much of it is sublime and likely goes unnoticed.

There are always intangibles in friendships. The strength of having some-one who encourages you, who admires you and thus aids in building your esteem. The knowledge of having someone who can give lessons by their example,

who can mentor you and affect you, and inspire you to achieve at least a smidgen more than was possible before. The comfort of having someone there when you need them, someone to lend a needed item or a dollar, or a strong arm...or to lend a sympathetic ear or a shoulder for solace. The understanding of acceptance and of loyalty; and knowing that albeit unspoken, the feelings were understood...and the bond remained intact. It's paradoxical that only when we're bereft of something--or someone--do we then fully appreciate their value. How many of us indeed truly value our friends?

**ELECTIONS THIS MONTH**

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

Election time is upon us. The elections for the annual terms for officers and board members take place on September 13, 1997 at Michelle Myers' place. For those who missed the August meeting at Michelle's, the elections will be for a one-year term, as opposed to the old two-year term of office, effective with the new term. There is quite a crop of nominees for the various office positions and board seats, as the officer and board positions have expanded. All but one of the nominees will be running unopposed with vice-president being the only race with two nominees vying for that position. The ballot positions and nominees break down as follows:

President .....	Michelle Myers
Vice-President (contested) ..	Daniell McCleney Stephanie Brooks
Treasurer .....	Arwen Schiesler
Secretary .....	Alexandra DeLerma
Newsletter Editor .....	Vanessa Edwards-Foster
Board Position 1 .....	Monica Roberts
Board Position 2 .....	Jessica Wicks
Board Position 3 .....	Katrina Corday Rose

Please make a point of attending and casting your vote for the next election year.



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# TATS Newsletter



the Texas Association for Transsexual Support



Volume 5, Issue 10

Houston, Texas

October, 1997

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.

## DEE SKENE McKELLAR 1942 - 1997



### FINAL MEMORIES OF DEE ... FROM A FRIEND ....

By Sarah DePalma

Entering the doors of KPFT on the day we buried Dee was one of the strangest experiences I can recall. She had a habit of attending the GCTC meeting and then waiting for me to arrive at the station. I'd walk in the door, look to my right, and find Dee grinning from ear to ear saying, "It's about time!" Walking in the door and not finding her there caused me the worst pain of the entire day. That was the moment when I knew as a certainty, Dee was gone.

I can hardly remember a time when Lori and I didn't think of Dee as part of our little family.

Going to the beach, fireworks, or a trip to see the spring flowers? Let's call Dee and see if she wants to go. (She always came.)

Planning to rent some old videos, lounge around the house and do nothing? Let's call Dee and see if she wants to come over. (She always did.)

Twice since her passing I've caught myself saying to Lori, "Let's call Dee and see if...." Dee was part of us. Her loss hurts more than I can describe.

On Thanksgiving we could always count on Dee to bring fresh bread, sharp knives, and a talk on the proper way to carve a turkey. (Naturally she did the carving.)

Anytime we had a bar-b-que we always knew she would give us her talk on the correct way to build a fire and how to determine if the coals were ready for use. (Of course *she* did the cooking, and since it was our grill and back yard we did the clean up.)

At the funeral service many people spoke of her dry (I mean *really* dry) sense of humor. Once we were at a protest sponsored by It's Time, Texas! and as we looked down Capitol Avenue at ten thousand people, their flags and

colors unfurled in the April sun and marching directly at us, I commented to Dee that I understood how the people at the Alamo must have felt. To which she replied, "Ten thousand queers marching on twelve even more brave queers and we hold the high ground...that's about right."

It wasn't until the *next day* I realized that since we had literally taken the "high ground," and had figuratively taken the high moral ground, her comment had more than one meaning.

On a show she did about transgenders and the jail system, Ray Hill asked her a question about the hours she spent in jail and her response was, "It's like dealing with the Borg on Star Trek. Resistance is futile. You will be assimilated."

She also told a story on the air about someone who said, "I didn't know you used to be a guy. Can you say something in guy?" Dee's response? "So I burped."

Dee also had quite a temper if she was provoked.

We met Diane Hardy Garcia, the director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby, for lunch and heard her explanation of why transgenders were not going to be included in hate crimes legislation. After five or six minutes of this crap I looked over and saw Dee was nearly ready to explode. She slammed her fist on the table and said, "I'll tell you what Dianne. We'll build our own hate crimes bill, tell

(Continued on Page 3)



Dee McKellar (L), and Melinda Whiteway (R) take a moment to chat at the ICTLEP Law Conference.

#### MEETING SCHEDULE:

October 11	Social Meeting at: Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM
October 25	Un-Meeting at Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM
November 8	Social Meeting at: Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM
November 22	Un-Meeting at Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM

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## EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

Hi y'all! I'm back at the helm to stay this time. As the elections are now official, I am happy to announce my assuming the TATS editorship for the next term year.



My sincere desire is for this newsletter to remain appealing, vital, and to always strive for improvement over the status quo.

On a somber note, as reported in the obituary last month, local TG activist Dee McKellar passed away. Initially I'd thought of doing an article but instead decided to step aside, deferring to those closer to her. Her loss will be felt throughout the local and national TG community.

I'm not sure that this will help anyone in this time of loss, but I'll finish by simply submitting this quote from a poem entitled, "The Friar of Orders Gray."

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



### 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 (713) 827-5913 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 Email address is:

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To contact the board members, send a message to:

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

## DEALING WITH CHANGE - FROM THE DAUGHTER OF A TRANSGENDER FATHER

By Debbie McKellar Donaldson

When I was growing up, there were good times and conflicts as in any other family I knew. We were living the average middle-class American life and everything seemed fine. It was not until I was nine years old that I was told about our family secret. My father was a cross-dresser and had been for all of my life. This admission shocked me, of course, but I was really too young to understand what was going on. Over the next four or five years the cross-dressing continued with my knowledge. However, our encounters at home were infrequent enough when he was 'dressed' that I was able to block out the feeling that I thought my father was a freak. Things changed, however, when I was thirteen or fourteen years old. He actually started wearing these clothes in front of me on a regular basis! It became a routine. When he came home from work he would check the mail and proceed to go change. Other than the clothes, the evenings went on as always. During my teen years, I spent a lot of time in my room to get away. I also kept very busy with school, a job, and spending time with my friends. I did anything I could to distance myself from the freak. Needless to say, there was a lot of discord in the house and animosity between us.

Things finally came to a head when I was eighteen. I found my own place and moved out. Things were tough, but there was no way that I was going back. Shortly thereafter, my parents separated and filed for divorce. In a period of approximately seven or eight months my father had effectively erased his family from his life.

Over the next two years or so, I would occasionally visit my father and share small talk to catch up. A close friend of mine likened these visits to business meetings because of our demeanor. Over time, however, I began to notice changes. His hair was getting longer and he seemed to be developing -- dare I say it -- breasts! Finally, my father put me out of my questioning misery and gave me a letter. This was his way of coming out of the closet to publicly



**Dee at home with her cat, Faith.**

live his life as a woman. The letter explained the steps that would follow; such as name change, changing the sex on the driver's license, and everything else that goes with becoming a new person. When I read that letter I felt as though I would fall over. This piece of paper was telling me that my father was essentially dead. After this revelation, I saw my father even less than ever. Suddenly, about three years ago, I grew up. Visits became more frequent and conversations were longer and more enlightening.

Now, I am twenty-eight years old. I am proud of who my father has become and the person that she is. She is not ashamed of her identity and does a lot of work in the community. She is also a major force in the transgender community. She is working nationally and internationally to help make things better for other people who are having trouble adjusting to their identity.

I still have problems getting my pronouns straight and on occasion I still accidentally call her Dad in public. She is patient though, and tells me that it will just take time. She tells me that she is thankful that we are talking because there are kids that sometimes turn completely away from their parents. I sometimes apace my visits apart, but I could never lose complete contact. After all, deep down inside is the person that raised me. She is my father.

*Debbie Donaldson is the only child of noted transgender activist, Dee McKellar. She wrote this article just days before Dee passed away suddenly on Sept. 6, 1997.*







## MICHELLE'S MUSINGS - THIS IS MY DESK

By Michelle Myers

This is my first monthly article covering what it is I think of TATS, past, present and future. It will also be a way for you to understand where I think TATS should be going and, as a result, you should be able to influence that path.

I consider it an honor and an important responsibility to serve as president of TATS and I will try to do the best that I can in the upcoming year.

I have read the TATS brochure more times than almost anyone else in TATS and consider it the summary of what we are about and how we work together. It is the first thing that I go over with prospective members, I have personally made over a thousand copies of it, and I recommend that whenever we have an organizational problem we should all go back to the brochure to see what it is we say we should be doing. After rereading the brochure prior to our recent elections, I decided that during the next year I intend to concentrate my efforts in two areas: the support and educational needs of the membership and outreach to the community for our future membership. There will be other things that also will have to be done, but my personal efforts will be concentrated in these two core areas.

As far as the support and educational needs of the membership are concerned, I will need the help of the entire membership and feel I can only get that by being willing to listen to what you have to say. It is important that every member get the opportunity to have their say, but more important that we also take the time and make the effort to listen and try to understand each other's concerns. That is why I believe that our business meeting need to be open to everyone and that we use the consensus method for arriving at decisions. My function will be to act as the meeting facilitator to see that everyone has the opportunity to participate. I would also like to mention that the TATS library is now at my apartment and if anyone needs information or wants to know what is in the library, just give me a call at home at (713) 524-6349.

I also believe that we need to increase our efforts in outreach. There are a lot of

things that we can all do in this regard and a lot of them are happening now. An example that comes to mind is our recent increased visibility via KPFT (90.1 FM) radio where many of our members (and particularly our VP and spokes-model Daniell) have appeared on a frequent, regular basis. Another example, that is dear to my heart since that is where I found out about TATS and met Carey, is the presence of TATS at the GCTC ULTRA meetings. I will be working with GCTC to make this a regular, joint arrangement. The TS community could be called the "fringe of the fringe". Even though we are a minority group, we have minority members within our group. They are important and could benefit from TATS. We will be increasing our efforts with the minorities and also with the FTM community.

I had a long discussion with Vanessa about the newsletter and would like to share with you some of our thoughts, particularly those that relate to what I have been discussing. The newsletter is an integral part of the support and outreach effort. It is a "window" that we look out of to the rest of the community and it is a "window" that others can look into to understand TATS. It should make us proud to give the newsletter to someone and it should leave the reader wanting to see another. It should be a quality newsletter, represent TATS and be dependable. I think we are there today! The membership has taken ownership of the newsletter over the past 6 months and that is how we got to where we are today. A great effort! Everyone still needs to participate in this effort if we are to continue with a quality newsletter and make improvements. Vanessa is the editor, but she can not do it without our help! Write an article, make comments, volunteer your time, do something every once in a while to help her!

Next month: less philosophy, more specifics!

Wishing you love and knowledge,  
Michelle



Who is General Failure and  
why is he reading my hard  
disk?

## FINAL MEMORIES OF DEE....

(Continued from Page 1)

everyone gays and lesbians deserve their beatings as a punishment for perversion and leave you out of our bill. Are you happy now?"

In all the time I've known her I've never seen Hardy-Garcia so speechless. It is in memory of this incident and also in memory of her victimization as a hate crime victim that It's Time, Texas! will call its hate crimes legislation the Dee McKellar bill.

Despite all her activism and all the battles we were in together, it's her smile and total belief in the word 'community' that I'll miss the most. If Lori is my right hand then Dee was my left hand. (I don't think she would approve of this analogy but I'm just returning some of her humor.) I give Dee the highest praise I can say about anyone. No matter what happened I always knew that Dee believed deeply, would fight to the finish, and would stand by her friends to the bitter end. I've lost a friend, the community has lost a valiant defender, and we have all lost someone special.

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

#### for articles submitted:

Sarah De Palma, co-host 'After Hours' on KPFT  
Debbie McKellar Donaldson, Dee's only child.  
Gwendolyn (OnQGwen) Smith, coord. of TCF  
Annise Parker, Houston city council candidate  
Marie Denise Gallagher  
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THANKS!!!



## Thoughts On The Loss Of A Friend....

By Marie Denise Gallagher

On 6 Sept 97, Houston, and the entire TG community, lost a great person. I was fortunate to have known her as a friend since 1995.

I first met Dee McKellar at the 3rd ICTLEP Law Conference. At first, I thought of her as aloof and distant. But since my "Aunt Cissy", Cissy Conley, thought of her as a friend, I did not let this bother me. Besides, I was just so happy to be able to spend a continuous period of time as ME, I wasn't too concerned about other things. This was also the conference that Cissy received the 1st TG Pioneer Award and that sort of took what little focus I had left.

My next meeting with Dee was after I moved to Houston, upon leaving the USAF. Yes, I was once a defender of this country's liberty, aka: warmonger, and after moving to Houston I vowed to put those things behind me and concentrate on my "new" life as a pre-op TS. Houston was chosen as the site for this "transformation" more because of where my new employer was than any other reason, although having an active TG community was no small consideration either.

The first group meeting I went to was with the Gulf Coast Transgender Community (GCTC). I am still a member of this group and plan to always remain one, as I have maintained my association with the New Orleans, Gulf Gender Alliance (GGA). But Dee was not attending the GCTC meetings at that time, and since I had made that contact at the Law Conference, I really wanted to make contact again. I found out from Jackie Thorne that Dee was attending the local Helping CrossDressers Anonymous (HCDA) meetings, and this is where we met again.

As I came into the meeting, the first person I saw was Dee, and when I said, "hi," she got that small little smile I've seen her have so many times since, that I've learned means, "I know you". We sat and talked and spent most of that meeting just talking about what I was planning and what things I should be aware of in the local area.

I spent the next few months showing up at the weekly meetings whenever I could get away from work. I'm a computer consultant, so my schedule can be a bit crazy at times. Shortly thereafter, Dee began working for ICTLEP on a permanent basis, I believe that this was just after she had some problems with some thugs at her apartment. In any case, I began to get to know her better, through our mutual interest in ICTLEP. By the end of '96, when it became obvious that I had to transition, Dee was there to help

me plan how to do it, discuss options on what may or may not work and what to do to help make things work. But mostly she was there just to chat when I needed it.

The way in which I told my employers about my Transsexualism, was hammered out in the ICTLEP house over many nights of gabbing in her living room. But that wasn't all we talked about. We talked about the TG community in general. Her position in ICTLEP made her a valuable conduit of information about what was happening. I found out just how involved this unassuming woman was in Human Rights, not just TG rights.

We talked about my previous service in the USAF and why I shouldn't ever be ashamed of who I was and what I had done. This is one of the reasons that my USAF awards still hang on the walls in my home office area, even though they have the 'wrong' name on them. We also talked about her old jobs working with USAF 'Occifers' and 'Sillyvilians'. We had much to talk about as we had both run into the same 'dead from the neck up' kind of people in our careers and had not let that stop us from excelling.

I firmly believe that without Dee's support, my transition would not be going as smoothly as it is. Yes, I am a competent and intelligent person, but I'm also fallible as are all humans, and being able to talk out what I was going to do and what I might expect to happen, allowed me to do what was best for both me and my employer. This attitude, to find a win-win solution, has been commented on by my bosses as one of the reasons they are so happy with me. Dee provided the "wall" for me to bounce all of these ideas off. That wall is no longer there.

Dee had gone through some rough times of late. Her friends were very worried about her, and both Katrina Rose and myself took to calling her, checking for her online, and if needed, wandering by her place, to make sure she was OK. She was just beginning to turn things around and find happiness again when we lost her. I am very sad for the loss of one of the best friends that I have ever had, but I am also happy that she can now look after all of us and not just those of within her (electronic) arms reach. Goodbye my friend, you will never be forgotten.

Peace and hope be with you all.



## Remembering Dee

By Gwendolyn Ann Smith

Here in California, the color of the trees, the stillness of the night, and the slight chill to the breeze tell me that autumn is fast approaching.

And whenever the feeling of autumn approaches, I think of a dear friend of mine who died this time of year, three short years ago. That invariably leads to me thinking of others I have known who have passed into my life, and have since moved on. Gloria and Angela, Mandie, Kelly, and Connie, and even Skip, who I only met last July in Houston.

The seasons turn, and we remember the loss of another great transgender individual from the fold: Dee McKellar.

I met Dee initially through the electronic medium, first encountering her name on the myriad of ICTLEP-related e-mails that I receive. After time, we took to some small correspondence, and she began to attend the Sunday Gender Conference very regularly, always adding that point that made even the most cynical think in a new way. Seeing her name show up on Sunday became a joy for me, as it told me that it wasn't going to just be another chat night: something worthwhile was going on.

In late June, Dee took to 'hounding' me in an attempt to get me to attend the 1997 Transgender Law Conference. Her dogged attempts worked, and I found myself in Texas. We got few moments during the conference to talk, but did manage to get a good deal of time the evening after the conference and into the next day. I will cherish those moments, and the discussions her and I shared.

Somewhere in that mythical part of cyberspace called the Gazebo, I know that another tree fills the grove, a remembering of another pioneer lost, one not quickly forgotten.

Gender Luck and Gender Evolution," to you, Dee. I'm gonna miss you.





## MEMORIES OF DEE AND THE POLICE ACADEMY

By Annise Parker

I met Dee McKellar about the time she got involved with ICTLEP. I got to spend a good bit of time with her over the past few years.

I have been a community activist here in Houston for about 20 years -- in fact, I first met Phyllis Frye about that long ago. In that time I have been supportive of, and been supported by, the transgender community. Transgender volunteers have been a key element of my political campaigns, and Dee was one of the most dedicated.

About five years ago I started teaching classes at the Houston Police Department cadet academy. One class is a 3 hour segment, presented to each cadet class, on the gay/lesbian/transgender communities of Houston. The first hour is demographics, facts and figures. The second hour is on specific policing issues, with about 20 minutes of a video and discussion on gay bashing. And the last hour is a wrap up of dangling issues and an open question and answer session. I believe in presenting some of the diversity of our communities, and so use a panel format to give a variety of viewpoints, although the class is very focused on specific policing concerns. I would always discuss transgender issues myself.

One day the lightbulb finally went on in my head and I decided that transgenders should speak for themselves. The academy was not thrilled with the idea, to say the least. Nor was the non-gay police sergeant, Mark Marsolais, who is part of my panel. I guess they envisioned an ultra-liberal, six-foot tall drag queen in 5 inch heels and a feather boa! Instead, they got Dee.

I thought a lot about who might be an appropriate lecturer. That person had to be self-confident, articulate, dependable, and knowledgeable on transgender issues. I briefly considered my old friend Phyllis, knowing she's spoken to lots of classes over the years. But, no. The person also had to have no attitude about the police department or police officers in general, and the ability to smilingly answer stupid questions and totally ignore insensitive comments. Dee proved to be a good choice.

We did have to iron out some wrinkles after the first class, however. The first problem we encountered was that Dee was a complete ham! She loved being the center of attention of 75 or so people. She didn't want to stop talking! I explained later that I was giving her 20 minutes of time and that meant she had to hone her remarks to fit that amount of time. (Sarah DePalma has said that when she and Dee first met they spent



15 minutes sitting side by side not talking. I find this totally unbelievable, about both of them.)

The other issue was that among such topics as Dee's personal transformation, "his and her" ID cards and which jail a transgender prisoner should be transported to, the cadets have always been allowed to ask panelists personal questions. In fact, that is an important part of the third hour of class. Dee had answered some and not others, and was somewhat defensive about her surgical status and sexual orientation. I explained that the cadets needed information. She was there to increase their comfort level, not her own. She was perfectly free to not answer any inappropriate questions, but it had to be from a position of being completely comfortable where she was. Dee got the message.

Finally, instructors must insure that advice we give to cadets is in line with department policy. Their rules say that, except in an emergency, men are searched by male officers and women by female officers. Dee regularly misstated the suggested language on how to determine this by saying officers should ask prisoners "who they would prefer to be searched by", rather than "who is appropriate to search them". Over time, Dee and Sergeant Marsolais (whose wife's maiden name was McKellar -- a fact Dee rubbed in at every opportunity) developed a good give and take as he would correct her.

I trust that Dee genuinely enjoyed her time in class. I believe she has made a difference in the way transgendered men and women are treated by the police. I know that she has made our world a better, safer place by her efforts.



## I DON'T LIKE RE-RUNS (An Overly-Long Epistle On Di, Dee And Departure)

by Katrina C. Rose

Dee McKellar was one of my closest friends in the Transgender community. Princess Diana was not. However, they died rather close together on the grand timeline, so my thoughts concerning the chunk o' time describable as 'Labor Day Weekend 1997 and the two weeks thereafter' involve both of them. If you start to nod off - please don't. Go grab some caffeine and trudge onward. If you are transgendered or care about someone who is, Dee McKellar is worthy of your interest - even at the expense of the time it will take to trudge through my verbosity.

Saturday night - Labor Day weekend.

I'd spent the day attempting to clean up my living room. As anyone who has seen it will acknowledge - this was a hopeless from the start, but I gave it a go anyway. And, of course, I'd all but given up by 10:30 or so - I was online. Just as I finally decided to call it a night, I noticed a news bulletin saying that Princess Diana had been in a car wreck in Paris. Just another news story. No big deal.

At 4:30 a.m. my cat informed me that I should dispense with this thing called sleep and should get up and play with her. As usual, she was rather insistent. And, as usual, she won the argument. I got up. Instead of doing anything about the living room, I hopped back online. The first thing that I noticed was the AOL news-blurb: Princess Di was dead.

\*\*\* on soapbox \*\*\*

Please understand this - I make no apologies: I have an intense dislike for royalty. My journey to England last summer, on which I saw up close the class division of royals vs. non-royals, only fueled this opinion. I see absolutely NO reason for such an institution in this era. Now, I don't care if folk call themselves Duke, Duchess, or whatever. That's just a relic of the past and, if you subscribe to it, it's a bad reflection upon you. Ultimately, it doesn't really hurt anyone. However, a government pouring an almost endless stream of money into the hands of a bunch of pompous, inbred morons while there is even one homeless person under the jurisdiction of that government offends me beyond belief.

Princess Diana was different though. She actually tried to do something with the privileged position that she married into. I believe that, ultimately, that is why she was treated as badly as she was by the rest of the castle bunch - she was making them look bad.

(Continued on Page 6)





## I DON'T LIKE RE-RUNS

(Continued from Page 5)

\*\*\* Off soapbox \*\*\*

Saturday night - the next weekend. Same Kat-time, same Kat-channel.

I had taped the CBS coverage of Di's funeral. I would have just watched it live, but I had gone out on Q-Patrol on Friday night. (I'll explain this here as it is relevant in following paragraphs: Q-Patrol is a neighborhood watch group in the Montrose area of Houston, Texas. The group grew out of an effort by Queer Nation to patrol the streets of the neighborhood following a vicious gay-bashing murder several years ago that was perpetrated by yuppie teenagers from a particular Houston suburb.) On Fridays the patrol goes from 11 to 2 - so I got back home REALLY late and was in no mood for a funeral at that time of morning.

Consequently, I didn't see Elton John's song until later when I watched the tape. It was quite moving. I then fast-forwarded the tape to almost the end. I wanted to tape both of Jewel's performances that were going to be on the re-run of Saturday Night Live that evening (okay - this was a re-run that I was going to like.) However, inadvertently, I saw a re-run that really destroyed my mood that evening. I hit stop at an arbitrary point near the end of the tape. Then I hit 'play' just to see what was on the tape at that point. CBS's coverage was still going on - but in a split-screen format: the top left had a re-run of Di's funeral and the bottom right was showing the hearse going down the freeway (okay - motorway - just to be proper) to her final resting place. Well, the re-run at this point was showing the Elton John performance. The juxtaposition of his song and seeing the hearse going down the road caused me to totally lose it.

After a few minutes, I regained my composure.

Fast-forward a few minutes - on toward midnight.

I got an IM from JessicaW3 telling me that I needed to get in touch with MarieDeniG immediately. Despite my insistence, Jess wouldn't elaborate on what was up. Still, I obliged - but was unable to connect with Marie (she wasn't home - yet, as I would find out.) I was becoming distraught. I was afraid that something had happened to Marie and/or her spouse. However, I finally found Jess via phone and she gave me the bad news.

Dee McKellar was dead. She was preparing to go out on Q-Patrol on Saturday night, but before the patrol ever got started she collapsed and died. Devastated would not have adequately described how I felt. I'm not sure that any word really would. Earlier, I referred to Dee as a friend. That is certainly true. But, she was more.

\*\*\* Back on the soapbox \*\*\*

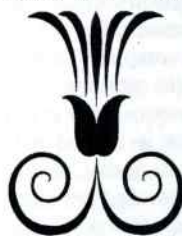
I don't have much use for the phrase 'family values.' I often say that I don't have a 'family'; instead, I have 'relatives.' Believe me, the two are bowel-shatteringly different concepts. Few, if any, of the people who happen to be genetically linked to me have any use for me - and this was true prior to my beginning to deal with my Transgender issues (and, to be fair, that isn't just a slam directed at the religionists among them; I have some relatives who I'm sure do not fall into that category although, through no fault of either myself or themselves, I either have never met or have simply never gotten to know and probably never will.) Those people are NOT my family. The people who I care about and who care about me are my family.

\*\*\* Off of the soapbox again \*\*\*

Dee McKellar was family in the first degree.

Dee was activist to the core and made no apologies for it. Yes, this occasionally would unnerve some people to some extent. In fact, once upon a time I was one of those people. I first encountered Dee online in the Gazebo in the Sunday Gender Chat in early 1996. I'd heard folx refer to her as being from Houston, so when I 'saw' her I IM'd her. Her response: "Not now - I'm conferencing" - or something like that. I saw her in the flesh a few weeks later at the Texas T Party in Dallas. I passed her in the hallway and she looked, um.... intense - in activist mode again I'm sure.

Meek TG2B that I was at the time, I was severely frightened at the prospect of getting involved with the activist folx. I even entertained thoughts of trying to do a stealth transition



without the aid of any of the activists from Houston or anywhere else - I was going to simply slip out of town as the old me and set up shop somewhere far away as the real me. By the summer of 1996 I'd begun sending out e-mail feelers about trying to do this. Well, one got bounced into the in-basket of Phyllis Frye. She encouraged me, in her special way, (1) not to try what I was contemplating, and (2) to come to a Labor Day Bar B Q at the ICTLEP offices - and that I should contact Dee McKellar for directions.

And so I did.

I had heard of ICTLEP but assumed that anything even remotely related to the gay community HAD to be down in the Montrose area. Much to my amazement, the ICTLEP offices were not only out on my general end of town,

but they were almost in my actual neighborhood. And, much to my amazement, Dee McKellar - this activist-type-person - was beyond friendly. She, Phyllis, and the rest of the folx I met at this get-together did encourage me to come out but understood why I was not out and was planning not to come out until I get out of law school.

It was a wonderful afternoon.

About a month later I got an e-mail from Dee asking if I as interested in going to a fundraiser Bar B Q for Congressman Gene Green. Phyllis had a pair of tickets but couldn't go but wanted a TG presence. Dee wanted to go but had no transportation. I was eager to go snarf Bar B Q but I was two steps beyond terrified at the thought of going to something SO public. Still, I said I'd go. As we were leaving the ICTLEP office to go, I was so worried about how my makeup looked that I was making Dee nervous (after all, she was the passenger and I was driving.) But, she was genuinely concerned about me. She said if I needed to talk about this to go ahead and pull off the road and that we could talk. I confessed my fear: I was afraid of being recognized. This was a Democratic fundraiser and there would DEFINITELY be people there who knew the male me. Dee said that would be impossible: I looked totally different as the real me. That was the first time that anyone really emphasized that to me. Yeah, some folx had said I looked nice but I just assumed that I looked like 'the old me' in makeup and a dress (deep down, I assumed that folx who were complimenting me were either exaggerating or flat-out lying.) Dee also said not to worry about my makeup not being perfect - no one would care. Well, thanks to her reassurance and hand-holding, I not only made it through the Bar B Q but got to meet Rep. Green (I also got to see the man who wrote 'The Orange Blossom Special' do the Macarena - but that's a story better suited for the next revival of 'The Twilight Zone.') As I told the crowd at Dee's funeral - six months prior to that Bar B Q, had anyone told me that I would, after only a few months as being the real me, be shaking hands with a U.S. Congressman - as the real me - I'd have laughed such prognosticators out of the room.

But, it happened. And I have Dee to thank. I still have bouts of non-confidence about various things - primarily my voice - but nothing like I had prior to that breakthrough event. In December I accompanied Dee to an Xmas party at Suzanne Anderson's. In February, I took a roadtrip to New Orleans and Biloxi, MS with my dear friend Marie - who I also met for the first time at that ICTLEP Bar B Q on Labor Day 1996. Ultimately, I marched in the 1997 Houston 'Glowing With Pride' parade - one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life.

(Continued on Page 8)



## In Memoriam: Some Final Thoughts On Dee McKellar

"Dee was a champion and a sweetheart; she worked hard, and she cared. I'm glad I knew her, even slightly, and glad that she was part of our movement, our community. I will miss her smile, her humor, and her intellect. Loss is always difficult to bear. Thank you, Dee, for sharing yourself with us."

*James Green, head of FTM International, and ICTLEP board member*

"Dee, you were there when I first started trying to come out of my closet. You were there when I saw you at the Town Meeting, and at the Book signing by Kate Bornstien[sic]. You showed me it was okay to be transsexual and out. You were there at nearly every gender related event I went to, smiling and encouraging. You were there to let me know I was okay. You were there at the Pride Parade each year, organizing and celebrating our lives. You were there at this last parade when my husband and I got to lead the transgender group, proclaiming out loud our community and our pride. You were there at the law conference, working without a break ensuring everything worked the way it should. It did. You were there on Q-Patrol, quietly enjoying the company, and serving our neighborhood. You and I were talking and laughing the night it came time for you to leave us. You never asked for anything. We were there to tell you that we love you. We love you Dee McKellar! This is our gift to you."

*Jessica Wicks, member TATS & GCTC*

"I know that I would not be with my best friend and the love of my life if Dee McKellar[sic] had not have been their[sic] for us. We love her and will miss her very deeply. I know that she is in Heaven and I know she still has that wonderful smile."

*Julie Jordan, member GCTC & HCDA*

"Dee helped us save our marriage and for that I say thank you Dee for giving me the love of my life back and helping us to blend in this wonderful aspect of our lives. I will always be thankful for your life. I love you"

*Stephanie Jordan, spouse of Julie Jordan of GCTC & HCDA*

"...We had more of a problem with her being Republican than we did with her being Transsexual!"

*Robert McKellar, Dee's brother*

"Dee was a wonderful person. She exemplified the saying that there is no limit what a person can accomplish if they don't bother claiming credit for it. I always will remember her beautiful ICTLEP wood carving, which is like ICTLEP's tabernacle. I also remember her report from the ILGA meeting in Helsinki Finland. And her pride in being Phyllis' Seargent-at-Arms. We didn't know each other hardly at all, but I will miss you Dee McKellar."

*Martine Rothblatt, author of 'The Apartheid of Sex', noted MTF lecturer & activist.*

"While I had known of Dee McKellar for about four years, mostly via our paths crossing as we each pursued our various activities within the L/G/T/B community, this July was the first opportunity I had to work directly with her. She was a dedicated and hardworking volunteer--a real asset to the campaign. We were becoming friends and I am so sorry to have lost her. Even in her death, she was able to bring community together. We are all lucky to have had her as part of our lives. Those familiar with 'The Low Road' from *The Moon is Always Female* by Marge Piercy will understand when I say: We all have one less."

*Deborah Bell, Field Director, Annise Parker for Houston City Council Campaign*

"Dee...was not a celebrity. But her impact on our community was almost as great. The night she died, Dee was on her way to render service to the community by participating in the Q-Patrol. Dee was a very private person; hard to get to know as she did not talk about her personal problems or involvement. But Dee was a member of a substantial number of diverse groups; not just a member, but actively participating. A very wise 'drag queen' friend of mine had a personal philosophy that I have taken for my own.... 'It is nice to be important, but it is more important to be nice....'"

*Jackie Thorne, member GCTC & candidate for empress, RS Imperial Court of the Single Star.*

"On behalf of all of us here at NGLTF, I wanted to extend our deepest sympathies to all of those that knew and loved Dee McKellar. We considered Dee as a trusted friend and ally and an important member of our community.

As you know, I last saw Dee at the ICTLEP conference this summer. When I arrived on the scene, she said, "I have to talk with you right now!" No how are you, no drink of water, only getting directly to the point. Dee knew that NGLTF had recently made two new programmatic hires and wanted to be sure that both of my new colleagues, shared our common commitment[sic] to building a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement. Once she had the commitment and was reassured, then there was time for visiting and greeting."

Dee worked hard, and at least publicly, was always fearless in advancing a social change agenda. NGLTF mourns a tireless advocate and I'll miss a valued colleague."

*Kerrl Lobel, Executive Director, NGLTF*

"As I rode my bicycle back to Annise's campaign office after Dee's funeral, I realized how she has given me strength to stand up a little taller. I am challenged by mental illness in the form of depression, and for many years viewed myself as a 'bad, dirty thing'...not even a person. In the two years that I have known Dee she has shown me that it is okay to be who you are, even if people around you try to put you down. You are the one who is responsible for your own sense of self worth, and once you start to get it, it only continues to grow and get stronger. It is through Dee's sense of self worth that she gave strength to me. I will never forget Dee and I will always strive to help all people improve their own personal image. Dee, thank you so much for being a part of my positive life."

*Patrick McElvane, Volunteer Coordinator, Annise Parker for City Council Campaign*

The grave...is but a covered bridge  
Leading from light to light, through a  
brief darkness.  
*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*



## I DON'T LIKE RE-RUNS

*(Continued from Page 6)*

These may seem like little things, but to someone who was a homebody as a male and even more so as my real self they were major accomplishments.

The last month or so of Dee's life was a bit strained not just for her but for those who interacted with her frequently. What happened regarding her position with ICTLEP and the underlying cause of it is not all that important. Shit happened - as it does in everyone's life. However, in this case both persons involved were people who everyone in the TG community cared about.

During that month I was worried about Dee. When I would bump into her online she really didn't 'sound' like herself. I wasn't the only one worried about her. I took to making note of each time I'd see her online, regardless of whether I actually had an IM conversation with her - and passing such 'sightings' along to Marie and Vanessa just to let them know that she was doing okay enough to be online.

After a few weeks, things seemed to begin to turn around for her - she apparently had a job lined up and she was getting into volunteer gear with the Annise Parker for City Council Campaign. I was extremely happy to hear that she had found a place to live. I had volunteered to help with the move but, due to a cold that I had in late August, I wasn't actually able to help. She called me on the Friday before Labor Day to see if I could help. When I told her about the cold, she understood. But, instead of getting all down-in-the-dumpsy, as she had been apt to do of late, she immediately turned to other things: she asked me what I was taking in law school this semester and we bantered about that for a few minutes. That was more like the Dee I'd known for the majority of the past year. And I'm glad - because that was the last phone conversation that I had with her.

I did have a cyber-conversation with her after that, and it ended on a somewhat bizarre note. No - nothing bad, just bizarre (for Dee, anyway.) It was a very brief "Hi. How ya be doin'?" IM. But, after I went off to other stuff, she had sent one more line: she was expressing surprise at the impending purchase of the Los Angeles Dodgers by Rupert Murdoch. This might not be bizarre for most folk, but I didn't expect Dee to give a flip about it. Dee didn't devote much time to sports. In fact, just after I met her, ICTLEP had a "mail-out" session (envelope-stuffing, etc.). This occurred over several evenings, one of which was a Monday night - DURING football season. She said that she would make arrangements for Monday Night Football to be 'available' if that's what it would take for folk to show up and work. Sports was NOT on her list of priorities. In the days following her death I was introduced to some as-

pects of Dee's life that I hadn't known about. I don't think she deliberately covered this up - she was just always so busy with her numerous group activities that she didn't have time to show off her accomplishments from years past. Dee was a heckuva photographer. I was amazed when I started looking at the of slides that were in her apartment. I could not handle the thought of these wonderful pieces of art being lost forever. Dee's wonderful daughter Debbie has entrusted custody of a ton of these photos to me for the time being. My goal is to see a book of Dee's photos published. Perhaps, one of these daze - after I get my law degree and re-enter the world of the employed - I can accomplish this. But, I hope it can happen before then. Dee did a lot for a lot of folk. This is something that folk can do for her. Stay tuned - there will be updates on this. I doubt that the activist Dee will ever be forgotten - but I don't want the non-activist Dee to be forgotten either.

Dee was a wonderful human being.

Dee was my friend.

Dee was family.

I love you, Dee. I'm gonna miss you.

## TATS ELECTS OFFICIALS

*By Vanessa Edwards-Foster*

The TATS (Texas Association for Transsexual Support) elections were held at the September 13, 1997 meeting. As most seats were uncontested there were few, if any, surprises. The one seat which was contested -- the race for vice-president -- was conceded to Daniell McCleney by Stephanie Brooks. The only other issue of note in the election was approving of a term reduction from the current two years to one year. The term issue unanimously passed. The elected officers for the 1997-1998 term are: President, Michelle Myers; Vice-President, Daniell Christian McCleney; Treasurer, Arwen Schiesler; Secretary, Alexandra DeLerma; and Newsletter Editor, Vanessa Edwards-Foster. The board members elected for the upcoming term are: Monica Roberts, Katrina C. Rose, and Jessica Wicks.

## The Microsoft Slogan

Apparently Microsoft made a minor mistake in translating its "where do you want to go today?" marketing slogan into Japanese.

Roughly translated back into English, it became: "If you don't know where you want to go, we'll make sure you get taken."



## PCOS A Threat To FTM Population

*By Vanessa Edwards-Foster*

*(excerpted from article by James Green)*

According to gynecologist Sheila Kirk, M.D., one to five percent of genetically born females are afflicted with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS). Reported in an article to *FTM newsletter* (issue #38) by James Green, the situation is of particular concern to the FTM population. An estimated 25% of FTM individuals have or will will develop PCOS<sup>1</sup>.

PCOS is characterized by a rise in the androgen levels released by the adrenal glands. It's noted that 70% of the cases register increased levels of dehydroepiandrosterone, and in 50% of the cases 11 beta hydroxy androstenedione is elevated. Alone, these increased androgen levels can lead to hypertension and a higher risk of heart disease. However, with prescribed testosterone for those in RLT, the aforementioned risks increase, along with increased risks of ovarian, uterine and breast cancers. Symptoms of PCOS include obesity, and irregular, prolonged, or heavy menses, and some masculinization (voice pitch changes, balding, facial hair growth, altered hair growth on the body trunk, genitalia and extremities, and distinct clitoral growth); however, many people show no obvious symptoms at all.

At the recommendation of Dr. Kirk, all FTM individuals should have thorough pelvic and/or transvaginal ultrasound tests of the ovaries, and a blood test to monitor the level of the androgens mentioned earlier. It was further advised that all transitioning FTM persons consider removing the uterus and ovaries, even if surgical reassignment is not planned, to reduce the risk of contracting the disease. In non-transitioned individuals (those not on testosterone therapy), once PCOS is diagnosed, it is possible to treat it with estrogen.

Oftentimes many FTMs are reluctant to seek treatment. For those individuals who have successfully transitioned, the discovery of a trip to the hospital to remedy a 'female' condition by friends, employers, or their insurance who were previously unaware of their former identity is looked upon adversely. Ironically FTM individuals whose doctors are aware of their previous status have difficulty receiving needed treatment. Many of these physicians are reluctant to perform hysterectomies on them, presuming they might change their mind about having children. Other physicians will view the procedure as aiding the masculinization process.

*(Continued on Page 10)*

<sup>1</sup> *FTM Newsletter* #36, March 1997, pg. 5



## **A Biological Component to Transsexuality?**

Transsexuals often report having strong feelings since childhood of having been born the wrong sex, but etiology of this phenomenon is uncertain. This study from the Free University Hospital and the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research supports the hypothesis that gender identity develops as a result of an interaction between the developing brain and sex hormones, and is the first study to show a female brain structure in genetically male transsexuals.

Researchers compared brain measurements of six male-to-female transsexuals with that of heterosexual men and women. The volume of the central division of the bed nucleus of the stria terminalis, a brain area essential for sexual behavior, was 44% larger in heterosexual men than in heterosexual women, and statistically similar in heterosexual and homosexual men. However, the volume of the bed nucleus was strikingly small in the male-to-female transsexuals; it was only 52% of the volume of heterosexual males, 46% of the volume of homosexual males, and statistically similar to the volume found in women. The size of this brain area was not influenced by sex hormone levels in adulthood, was independent of sexual orientation, and was not altered by AIDS.

**Comment:** Because the bed nucleus of the stria terminalis plays an essential role in masculine sexual behavior and in the regulation of gonadotropin release, these findings are consistent with a pathological change in the brains of male-to-female transsexuals. The authors hypothesize that the small size of the central division of the bed nucleus of the stria terminalis in male-to-female transsexuals cannot be explained by differences in adult sex hormone levels, but, in contrast, is likely established during development by the organizing action of sex hormones on the developing brain. Therefore, there may well be a biological basis for this relatively rare behavioral syndrome.

*Zhou J-N; et al. "A sex difference in the human brain and its relation to transsexuality." **Nature**, Nov. 2 1995; 378:68-70.*

## **N.O.W. Passes Transgender Inclusion Resolution**

(Memphis, TN: 6 Jul 97) After three years of ongoing debate and a final four days of intense dialog, the National Organization for Women (NOW) passed a transgender inclusion resolution at its National Conference here today. The measure's success owed a great deal to the personal support of NOW President Patricia Ireland -- who had arranged for GenderPAC's Executive Director, Riki Anne Wilchins, to address NOW's National Board the preceding Thursday -- as well as to intensive consensus-building effort by NOW Lesbian Rights Coordinator, Kimberlee Ward, and NOW-NJ State President, Bear Atwood.

"This was a landmark resolution whose time has clearly come... It's not just the resolution, but the acknowledgment that the transgender community is today's cutting edge. Transgender people are now doing the pioneering work in exposing artificial constructs of gender and breaking down the stereotypes and barriers which divide us all," declared NOW Action Vice-President and long-time activist Rosemary Dempsey.

Agreed GenderPAC's Terri McCorcal, who had helped steer the resolution over three years, "In its own way, this was as historic a moment as NOW's affirmation of lesbian inclusion over 25 years ago. After all the debate, seven amendments, and scores of small compromises and dialogs, it was a truly emotional moment when nearly every hand in the Convention went up in support. Women who had worked on this for years were crying and hugging in the aisles."

The resolution had been originally introduced and unanimously passed at NOW-NJ's State Conference in 1994. The next year, a dozen activists from the Transsexual Menace showed up at the NOW's 1995 National Conference in Columbus, OH and gathered hundreds of signatures on petitions. The resolution was introduced from the Conference floor, only to be tabled to the National Board, where it languished in spite of apparently overwhelming support. The breakthrough came when NOW-NJ's Bear Atwood was able to arrange an invitation for representatives from GenderPAC and allied groups to address NOW's state presidents at their annual State Coordinators Conference in San Francisco last Janu-

ary. As a result, a number of State Presidents came out in support of the measure. In addition, Ms. Ireland herself was present at the presentation, and an invitation to address the full National Board came shortly thereafter.

[Text of Resolution passed at NOW National Conference]

### **OPPRESSION OF TRANSGENDERED PEOPLE**

**WHEREAS**, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has worked for the elimination of all forms of oppression in our society targeted at groups who are systematically mistreated; and

**WHEREAS**, the transgendered and transsexual communities confront oppression daily and are systematically mistreated because of artificial gender constructs in our society; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a lack of understanding and information on issues affecting transgendered and transsexual people; and

**WHEREAS**, one of NOW's goals is to eliminate all sex stereotypes including so-called gender roles; and

**WHEREAS**, NOW affirms and honors the right of people to self-identify;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that NOW and its sub-units encourage education and dialogue within NOW and other organizations on gender and sex stereotypes including those who are transgendered and transsexual people.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NOW reaffirm its commitment to end all sex and gender stereotypes.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that we acknowledge that gender is a patriarchal social construct used to oppress women.



## TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

- A note from (OnQ)Gwen Smith of TCF ... In the TCF, we have opened up a collection of memorials to Dee McKellar, located off of the TCF Main Screen and the Chat area. These materials will be part of the TCF's permanent online archives. Included within the collection is a link to our "Gender Issues" message board, and a thread on Dee has, likewise, been opened.

- At Dee McKellar's funeral, many of us were surprised to find that Dee -- the political TG activist -- was a card carrying Republican. Her brother, Robert McKellar, remarked at the funeral, "...[that] we had more of a problem with her being Republican than we did with her being Transsexual!" But being Republican does not preclude one from being either transgendered or activist, much less the two combined. In fact I lobbied with another TG Republican in Washington: Anne Casebeer of Kentucky's Bluegrass Belles. Don't presume all transgenders to be liberal. It's just another testimony of the diversity within our own community....

- Passed along by Kerri Lobel from the Natl. Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) ... One of the founding members of the conservative religious group Focus on Family (FOF), Gil Alexander-Moegerle, formally apologized to the Queer Community for things said previously, as well as for the direction the group itself had taken.

FOF, founded in 1977 and based in Colorado Springs CO, has over the years focused on opposing gay-friendly legislation, and initiating legislation to deny rights to the queer community -- including the Anti-Gay Initiative passed in Colorado before being struck down by the Supreme Court. They've become a Christian media empire producing periodicals, books, radio shows, and television programs. They also have sponsored other like-minded organizations outside their umbrella including Promise Keepers.

Alexander-Moegerle went on to say, "I apologize to lesbian and gay Americans who are demeaned and dehumanized...by the false, irresponsible and inflammatory rhetoric of James Dobson...." He also went on to say that the group's focus itself changed from being initially concerned with protecting families and children's rights, to a more personal agenda by Dobson aimed at attacking gays and potentially furthering his political career aspirations. Alexander-Moegerle called for Dobson to step down from political activism and called his continued misuse of his position as "Un-American" and "Un-Christian."

- A little something plucked from the Houston Chronicle ... J.T.Hayes, a former midget and sprint-car racer, underwent a sex change and is now Terri O'Connell. Said Hayes / O'Connell: "You see, I not only wanted to be A.J.Foyt, I wanted to be Marilyn Monroe...."

- As this newsletter goes to print, Phyllis Frye will be attending a conference in Washington DC with the heads of the various GLBT national organizations. Among those scheduled to this conference will be Phyllis, Riki Anne Wilchins of GenderPAC, and Jessica Xavier, national president of It's Time America (ITA) for the MTF contingent. Representing the FTM group will be FTM International vice-president, Yoseñio Lewis (in place of president, James Green), Gary Bowen of American Boys, and Tony Barreto-Neto, founder of TOPS.

Also attending for the Gay/Lesbian Groups will be Elizabeth Burch, head of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), and Kerri Lobel, executive director of the National Gay Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) among other groups which include the Bisexual community as well.

- From Marie Denise Gallagher a note ... I am going to be traveling to New Orleans to participate in the Pride Fest on the 11th of Oct. with the Gulf Gender Alliance (GGA).

Anyone who would like to travel with me may do so, provided I have room. The first 7 people to respond will get priority. (My van will hold 8 so long as someone doesn't mind sitting on the floor) If additional people would like to go and can provide transportation, we can certainly caravan.

We will be leaving Houston at 6PM sharp on 10 Oct and driving to Lafayette LA, to spend the night. We will then be leaving at 6:30AM the next morning to drive to New Orleans to get organized for the Parade and to help out our Sisters in the GGA to get their float ready.

The festivities begin at 11am with the parade groups gathering at the park located in near the French Qtr at Elysian Fields and Royal St. Then at noon, the parade steps off to wander through the French Quarter. At 2, we end up back at the Park to party until 7:30pm or so, then we can go hit the quarter or go to the GGA meeting and then hit the quarter.

We will be crashing at the GGA President's house, FOR FREE!!! No motel money, but it will be a bit crowded, so bring a sleeping bag or blankets/pillows with you. Most of us will end up sleeping

on the floor of her living room. Other baggage should be kept to a minimum as space will be limited in the Van, especially if we end up with 8 or more people. If anyone would like to stay in the GGA's meeting room, they may, but it will be a \$15 charge and squatters rights on a bed or sofa. (I'm going to claim Crystal's sofa, since I'm going to have to be awake to drive back) ::giggle:: We will be leaving around noon on Sunday to come back, we should arrive back in Houston around 7ish.

Everyone must pay for their own share of the rooms (about \$25 per night max) in Lafayette and their own food. Donations towards gas will be accepted but ARE NOT REQUIRED.

Anyone who wants to go should E-mail ASAP [MarieDeniG@aol.com]. I already have one person (Jessica Wicks) reserved, so that leaves 6 more spots in my van and whatever other vehicles join in.

- Approved at the last meeting: Newsletter subscriptions and advertisements will run from November through October. We will prorate it in this upcoming year, and making it uniform as of Nov. 1, 1998.

## PCOS A Threat to FTM Population

(Continued from Page 8)

in FTM transition and, viewing it as a psychiatric condition, avoid any medical involvement. Moreover, since most insurance carriers will consider a hysterectomy in FTM persons part of sexual reassignment, and since the vast majority of insurance companies do not cover sexual reassignment; the entire expense will most likely be borne by the individual.

On the final point, I concur totally with Mr. Green. From his article, I quote: "Trans-positive health care reform must include the acknowledgement that our bodies deserve medical care regardless of our gender identity. PCOS is not a psychiatric condition, and just because an FTM person has the disease does not mean he should not be treated for it with every consideration given to relieving both the physical distress caused or threatened by the disease, and the emotional distress caused by being male-identified and living in a female body. Until such reforms are in place, each FTM person must negotiate his own solution to the PCOS problem. With the help of understanding and supportive physicians, we may someday win the battle for trans-inclusive health care. Please let us know how you have fared in getting necessary medical attention for 'female problems' so we can keep a data-base that may be helpful someday in resolving our health care dilemma<sup>1</sup>."



<sup>1</sup> FTM Newsletter #38, August 1997, pg. 4; article quote by author, James Green



## Where Now, Activism?

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

The death of Dee McKellar was a tragedy for the transgender community...but will it be a hollow tragedy? When losing one of the stalwarts of any movement, those who benefit from their efforts usually start questioning "where do we go from here?" For those who feel disaffected from it, the status of the transgendered rights movement will continue along as usual. But for those who look to winning rights as the road to a successful future, the passing of someone like Dee causes concern and transition.

After losing a warrior it is natural for others to wonder who will step up to take their place in battle. Similarly, those of us concerned with the ongoing struggle for our rights tend to look around at each other...wondering who step in and fill the void. I'd thought this myself about a year ago when hearing of Sarah DePalma's retirement from activism. Asking Sarah who would take her place and who would continue the efforts, her reply was, "I don't know. It'll have to be someone...but it won't be me!" It was not an answer I wanted to hear. I'd wanted to know specifically who would continue the struggle for rights in Sarah's stead, and expected to look around and see someone stand up and take over -- someone else.... After some soul-searching, I stood in front of the mirror and saw who was going to take over the fight. That someone was me. It was selfish of me to rely on someone else to win my rights without any efforts on my part. Thus I became involved.

With the passing of Dee -- admittedly a permanent and much more public loss -- there has been a noticeable concern about where to pick up the slack left by her death. Sure enough, there has been an earnest effort to become involved community-wise. The real test will be

how long these individuals will continue to be involved. Similar to the deaths of charitable activists Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, there is a bell curve of greatly increased activity followed by a gradual drop-off to previous levels. Will this time be different? Will activism and charity continue at increased levels, or will we lose the initial verve and reduce it to a special occurrence? Only time will tell....

In the meantime, activism is the beneficiary; and will take all of the help it can get while it can. Locally there's been a noticeable stir of activity, from Q-Patrol to volunteering on the Annise Parker city council campaign. Especially encouraging is the amount of volunteering on Parker's run for city council. Besides myself, TATS members Daniell McCleney, Sarah DePalma, Katrina Rose, Sarah Caffee and Carey Porter have lent their time to support the campaign. Fully one half -- or more -- of the volunteer staff on most nights at the campaign headquarters are transgendered!

Why would we expend so much energy for a political race? For those who aren't aware, Annise Parker -- a graduate of Rice, small-business owner and member of the Mensa Society -- is the first avowed lesbian to run for city council in Houston. Not only that, Parker is running -- not for the district seat covering the Montrose -- but the At-Large city council seat, Position 1 (of which she's an early front runner in an admittedly tough race.) Most importantly, she is strongly pro-transgendered and has always been a staunch ally of the TG community. Lastly, it also sends a strong message out to the GLBT community that we are indeed binding tighter the ties to the community, especially to the conservative gay element who would deny our inclusion into the community. They certainly couldn't argue that we don't participate.

Beyond our admitted 'vested interest' in seeing Parker elected, she is (at least in the author's opinion) the best person for the job. It helps to work for something, or someone, you believe in. Activism does not always equal protesting, or picketing. It does equal getting involved in whatever community-oriented activity you

choose. Participating in whatever cause you believe in, or feel strongly about, will naturally increase your frequency, and your level of participation. It can be anything from walking the beat on Q-Patrol, to lobbying in Austin on specific rights legislation, to volunteering for a non-GLBT cause.

For those who think volunteering for something not pertinent to the GLBT community is not activism -- think again! True, it doesn't give specific benefits to our community...at least not immediately. But by helping organizations outside of our community, we give a sterling example of ourselves to the straight community. It's precisely these examples that will break down the misconceptions and stereotypes so commonly held by society at large. It won't be immediate, but the continued examples of what we are and what we can be will have an osmotic effect. By influencing these folks with our positive aspects, we stand to gain the support of straight society -- at least those currently ambivalent towards transgendered. Dee herself was a volunteer with the Houston Read Commission, spending numerous hours reading to children...children of straight parents. Let's we forget, without a good portion of support from straight society, we'll likely never gain equality through legislation alone.

Not everyone is inclined to activism, and there is nothing wrong with that decision. Some folks eschew anything even remotely political. Another problem (especially for those of us who blend in well, i.e. pass) is that some forms of activism require you to 'out' yourself -- especially dealing with straight folks. This is something extremely unpalatable to some, flying in the face of their *raison d'être*: to quietly assimilate into society. However, for those who are of a mind to become active -- or for those who are still ambivalent -- pick your target, be persistent, and move towards your goal. The benefits will come slowly, but the eventual rewards will be great.



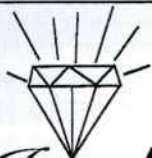
*Scenes from the Pre-Labor  
Day pool party!  
Be active!*

*Participate in your group!!!  
Our 'Bathing Beauty' Daniell McCleney  
at left...at right, Kristin Ingram (seated  
on left) and Vanessa Edwards-Foster  
chillin' on the patio.*





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**NOTICE OF  
CHANGE:**

Effective as of November 1, 1998, all subscriptions and advertisement rates will run from fiscal year November 1 through October 31. This, being a recent decision, will be phased in pro-rata through the course of the upcoming year. The rates will remain the same through the upcoming year. Please excuse any confusion brought up by the new decision. If you need more information on this, feel free to call our voice-mail at: **(713) 827-5913** or Email us at either [tats@GenderWeb.org](mailto:tats@GenderWeb.org), or the editor's Email address at [MoonFlowrr@aol.com](mailto:MoonFlowrr@aol.com). Thank you.

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# TATS Newsletter



the Texas Association for Transsexual Support



Volume 5, Issue 11

Houston, Texas

November, 1997

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.

## GOING NUTS ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

Political campaigns are usually good media attention grabbers, and sometimes there are good stories to go along with them.

Beyond the expected political rhetoric, or the sensationalistic or scandalous stories, are the occasional stories of human interest. Usually these will involve the candidate or the staff overcoming personal adversities, or their contributions to charities, or both. Fewer still are the campaigns that have a human interest story regarding animals; unless, again, it's in a charitable context. But how many campaigns can say they've raised baby squirrels?

This is what distinguishes the Annise Parker campaign from any other, the hand-raising of two baby squirrels -- one male and one female -- named Big Boy & Dozer (Dozer named for her propensity to sleep, and Big Boy named for being, ahem, 'well endowed'). In early September, after a nasty little thunderstorm, a branch from the pecan tree shading the headquarters parking lot crashed to the ground. The next day campaign volunteer coordinator Patrick McIlvain, and Annise's spouse Kathy Hubbard were clearing the debris from the parking lot when they heard a chirping noise. They tracked down the noise to find an infant female squirrel among the fallen branches. Apparently that pecan branch was residence to a family of squirrels. After searching further they found her brother, and two other infant squirrels who didn't survive the fall.

So what does one do when finding storm-orphaned baby squirrels during the beginning of an intense political campaign? One becomes a surrogate squirrel mommy, of course! Kathy called a friend with the wildlife dept. to learn

(Continued on Page 4)

## PARKER CAMPAIGN MAKES FINAL PUSH

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

With the elections rapidly approaching, the Annise Parker campaign is in full swing. Early voting began on October 18, and the election itself is November 4. The campaign is very optimistic about the early numbers from the polls; however, there is still concern for the Parker camp.

The race for the At-Large seat, Position 1 is very competitive to say the least. Six candidates vie for the position vacated by Gracie Saenz, who is a current candidate for Mayor. Early polls have indicated that Parker is the front runner, with local political analyst Richard Murray even going as far as predicting a Parker victory. But the polls sometimes don't tell the entire story.

This race, in fact all councilmember races, is not getting similar press coverage as the hotly contested mayoral race. The print media in town is devoting all of the coverage strictly to the mayoral race up until the final week before election; leaving many voters without a pre-race favorite remaining unknowing and undecided. Additionally, most town meeting affairs are leaving precious little time for the individual councilmembers, devoting the bulk of time to the mayoral candidates. As a result -- as one poll indicated -- an estimated 80% of voters are firmly undecided. Even though Parker still leads the poll, she leads with a mere 5%.

This finding is the greatest concern of the Parker campaign: the vast potential of the undecided voter. The undecided vote is the single most important factor in any race; having, in essence, the potential to swing an election. With its unpredictability, there is no

(Continued on Page 4)



Showing campaign spirit at the Parker election headquarters (from Left to Right) Vanessa Edwards-Foster, Sarah DePalma and Sarah Fox. As always, the campaign can use your help!

### MEETING SCHEDULE:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| November 8  | Social Meeting at:<br>Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM |
| November 22 | Un-Meeting at<br>Vanessa Edwards' @ 7:00 PM     |
| December 13 | Social Meeting at:<br>Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM |
| December 27 | Un-Meeting at<br>Vanessa Edwards' @ 7:00 PM     |

**ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 4<sup>th</sup> ...  
REMEMBER TO GET OUT AND VOTE!!!!**

T. A. T. S.  
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### **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 (713) 827-5913 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**

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:  
**http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/**

## **MICHELLE'S MUSINGS - THIS IS MY DESK**

**By Michelle Myers**

**B**ack in June of this year, I had the honor of participating in "Glowing with Pride"...The Pride Parade of Houston. I had a great location in the line of march. I was on the "banner", on the far left hand side. The "banner" reads *We're Transgendered and We Vote*. This is the time of year that we get to do just that. Tuesday, November 4th is election day. It is the opportunity of a life time that comes quite frequently if we make the simple effort of getting out and voting. If you do not vote, you have very little to complain about when laws are or are not passed that affect your life. In the short run, not being able to complain will make things simpler; in the long run it may make all our lives extremely complicated. Please, get out and VOTE!

In terms of outreach, we seem to be getting a few prospective new members each month. I find this very encouraging. In the past month we have added two or three people to our roles. TATS is a bit more visible in the community and we have a presence on Jimmy Carper's and Sarah DePalma's *Afterhours* transgender weekend. This can be heard on KPFT - 90.1 FM - on the second Saturday of each month from midnight to 3 a.m. I know that it late but it is a good program covering our needs. In addition, each week on *Afterhours*, we are getting mentioned around 1:30 a.m. on the news segment with Big Roy. Roy usually talks about our upcoming meetings and gives our TATS Line number. Most weekend I also try to be there with Roy to add a bit of flavor to the announcements. During the "time change" program on October 25th, we also had an opportunity to talk about most of the transgender organizations that are out there for people in the Houston area.

I would also like to mention the TATS Library again. I have gone through most of the material and made some minor changes in the appearance of the Library, hopefully making it more accessible to our members. The TATS Library is now at my apartment and if anyone needs information or wants to know what is in the library, just give me a call at home at (713) 524-6349. I have also put together what I call the "Portable TATS Library". This is a single binder with most of the latest correspondence, newsletters, medical and legal information, etc. It will be available to the membership at each of the meetings. If you would like to volunteer some of your time to TATS, I need some help in trying to formulate a plan of where we want to go with the Library. We should be adding books, videos and other materials in addition to finishing up the cata-

loguing of the present contents. I am asking for help because I believe this is a good and needed resource for the membership. It is a way that we can help each other get information that we need. Please let me know if you can help.

In conjunction with the officers and board members, I have been trying to get down on paper just what it is we do and how we go about it. Our intention is to make sure we all know what is happening and who is doing it. In addition, it provides a good way for the officers and board for this year, to pass on their learnings and practices to the next group. The policy statements on meetings format and Newsletter have been completed, and we are now working on the financial policy and guidelines. This information is available in the "Portable TATS Library".

And in closing, we will have published eleven out of a possible twelve newsletters this year by the beginning of December. More importantly, the participation of the membership (yes, you the readership) has steadily increased and, as a result, so has the quality. Those of you who are not paid up on the newsletter fee will be receiving the newsletter through the end of the year. We have instituted a two month grace period. After that time, you will no longer receive the Newsletter in the mail. It should be worth the \$10 per year to continue receiving your publication...The TATS Newsletter.



## **THE TENNESSEE HILLBILLIES**

(sung to the tune of 'The Beverly Hillbillies')

**By Monica Roberts**

Now listen to the story of a man named Bud,  
Wants a new stadium, says the Astrodome is crud.  
While looking for a new city that he could screw,  
He called up a guy by the name of Tagliabue  
Paul that is...NFL commissioner...legal eagle!

Mayor Bob told Bud, "leave Houston if you dare!"  
Tagliabue told Bud, "move the Oilers out of there!"  
"Nashville is the place that we really want to be,"  
So Bud loaded up the vans and moved to Tennessee!  
Guaranteed sellouts...new stadium...ticked off Houstonians.

So now it's time to say goodbye to Bud and all his kin,  
He's played some games in Memphis and is not packing them in!  
They're the laughing stock of the NFL, that is plain to see,  
Of Bud's pissed off the governor and the state of Tennessee!  
We warned them...they can have him...don't come back Bud, you hear?



## EDITOR'S RANT

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

Fall is usually a season known for it's flurry of activity, and this month has been an exceptionally active one -- especially for me! The beginning of the month was consumed by printing and mailing out an unusually large newsletter (by TATS standards) and establishing new contacts for newsletter exchanges. We also re-established some contacts broken during the previous years, and received some positive feedback from groups who had assumed up 'til now that we'd suffered an untimely demise. It took a bit of correspondence along with the newsletters, but we've successfully linked up quite a few more newsletter exchanges. Look for them in the months to come.



Beyond the newsletter, there were tons of things to do. There were visits from out of town friends Didi Strano from Philadelphia, PA and Sarah Fox PhD. from Columbus, OH, volunteering at the Annise Parker campaign four or five days a week (even managing to conscript our out-of-town guests into some campaign volunteer work!), spending a day speaking with faculty at Rice University, and meeting two U.S. Representatives, a State Representative, a city controller candidate, freelance writer (and El Franco Lee's brother) Bob Lee, and Clyde Drexler's mom!

Early in the month Katrina brought Didi Strano over to both the TATS & GCTC meetings. She was well received at both, and came away duly impressed with the groups and the community here in Houston. After the meetings, and a brief visit to the drag show at Chances, Katrina, Didi & I gravitated to the monthly After Hours radio show featuring a panel of FTM's: Justin Alexander, Chris Crochet, R. J. Schoubroek, and Bobby Calamaco. As usual, everyone got home and to bed well after 3:00 AM. After a couple hours sleep, I was up at the Parker headquarters at 8:30 helping Patrick McIlvain and Deborah Bell coordinate a massive campaign mailout. Jenifer was a big help in the envelope stuffing, and really hung in there despite the mass confusion. Later in the morning, Katrina showed up with Didi and they joined right into the envelope stuffing as well.

The following Friday, Daniell, Katrina and I (as well as Jackie Thorne of GCTC) attended U.S. Rep. Gene Green's Annual Barbecue -- which this year coincided with his 50th birthday. We met Rep. Green and briefly politicked on transgendered rights. The next day a group of us -- Sarah Caffee, Daniell, Justin, Arwen, R.J., Chris, Kristin, Alison and I -- spent a day at the Renaissance Fair (my first), then spent the night

in Justin's mother's time-share in Walden on Lake Conroe having a post-RenFair slumber party. The next morning I rushed back to coordinate a volunteer packet pickup for the campaign, grabbed a packet myself, and spent the rest of the day at the Westheimer Street Festival with Kristin signing up folks for the Parker campaign's 'Get-Out-The-Vote' operation.

After a long weekend, it was time to clean up my house for my house guest, Sarah Fox's impending arrival. Besides four straight days of campaign work with Sarah, I also tagged along with her for a lecture before a Psychology 101 class at Rice University. After the lecture Sarah showed me around her alma mater, giving me a bit of a history lesson as well as visiting some of her old haunts. We also had conversations with a couple of the psychology professors and her former college (dorm) master. We spent a good deal of time educating the faculty members on transsexualism and relating our own personal experiences. Without exception the conversations were lively, and there was a genuine interest in our stories. The meetings were most productive as I was able to form contacts for future lectures on transgenders, as well as an administrative contact who will direct me to the GALOR (Gays And Lesbians Of Rice) group. In the months to come I plan on trying to establish a transgender contingent within the group, and hopefully to have them act as a clearinghouse for student information on transgenderism and the local support groups.

The following weekend began early with a joint campaign blockwalk for Annise Parker, mayoral candidate George Greanias, and candidate for controller Sylvia Garcia. Both Annise and Sylvia were on hand to personally exhort the volunteers. The event's coordinator, State Rep. Debra Danburg and I briefly chatted before the walk, and I thanked her for her work on behalf of the GLBT community. Sadly though, I was the only transgender attending the blockwalk. Along with the other blockwalkers, I spent a humidity-drenched morning sweating through my clothes while dropping off campaign literature. Immediately after was the Volunteer Appreciation Party, highlighted by Daniell signing Happy Birthday to campaign manager Grant Martin.

After the volunteer party, and a bit of volunteer time making signs, I dropped in on the fund raiser at Drexler's Barbecue. Even though I didn't meet her son Clyde 'the Glide,' I was able to chat with the owner, Mrs. Drexler. Even more important, I got to meet and speak with U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee who impressed me by taking initiative and drawing some serious support for Annise's campaign. I'd mentioned to her my May lobbying visit with Rep. Lee's staff, and again briefly politicked her on transgender rights. (As Kristin would say, I'm 'hardcore!') After our conversation, I spoke

with Kerry Stockton who'd informed me of Rep. Lee's appearance at Crockett Elementary for Net Day 2000 -- a program by Houston I.S.D. to install computers in the city's schools and connect them to the internet. Another valuable contact was made with aide J. Michael Marks with Rep. Lee's local office. He expressed interest in our organization and in receiving the newsletter, as well as working with us on national legislative issues.

After the Drexler's fundraiser, it was a quick run home to prepare for the TATS meeting Halloween party. We had an average meeting attendance, but only Sarah Caffee, Daniell and I turned out in costume. After the meeting, I wandered upstairs to prepare the November newsletter...and the beat goes on.

If all of this weren't enough, an early portion of this month was taken up with frequent trips to my doctor's office to complete paperwork needed for my impending name change. The court date for that is October 30, after which I hope to be employed soon. The day after the name change is Halloween Friday and, needless to say, more potential for fun. After a month like this, there's only one thing I can say, "WHEW!"

### EVERYONE HAS A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY. SOME DON'T HAVE FILM.

*If you choke a smurf, what color does it turn?*

### Energizer Bunny arrested, charged with battery.

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

#### for submitting articles

Crystal Club Vice President & editor,

**Sarah Fox, PhD.**

**Michelle Myers**

#### for forwarding articles

**Phyllis Frye**

#### for story submission from the net

**Marie Denise Gallagher**

#### for humorous submissions

**Kristin Ingram**

**Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV**

**Lauren Robison, suburban Baltimore MD**

**Mary Ann Harris, Columbus OH**

#### for submitted photos

**Christine Fusco of Hubbard Financial Serv.**

#### for illustration and for scanning photos

**Daniell Christian McCleney, a great big thanks!!!**





## GOING NUTS....

(Continued from Page 1)

all that was needed, and she and Annise set forth raising the babies. They didn't look like much at the time, resembling oversized, hairless baby rats. But they had a face only a (surrogate) mommy could love.

In those early days Kathy and Annise took turns feeding 'Thunder' and 'Lightning' -- as they were originally named -- by syringe with a small nipple on the end. Initially their diet was simply scalded milk, but was later juiced up to include banana baby food or yogurt. As per instructions, their hamster cage home was kept a constantly toasty 94°.

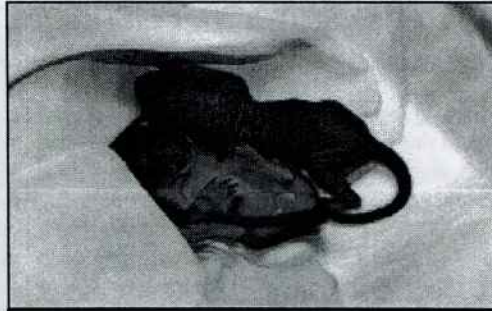
Also per instructions, they were faithfully peed & pooped after each feeding. I don't mean they just did it, I mean they had to be coaxed into it. Apparently squirrels can die from constipation and, while young, their mother will usually lick their genitalia to induce their 'natural functions.' Obviously, licking genitalia is not an option for a 'surrogate' mommy. Moistened cotton balls rubbing the right spots helped initiate 'nature's call.'

Because of campaigning schedules, the squirrels have adopted a few surrogate 'aunts' to help with the feeding and pooping; Daniell, and especially Kathy's secretary Christine Fusco and myself among other volunteers. I've spent a noticeable amount of time with the 'babies' during my volunteer stint; so much so that it was commented on by campaign field director Deborah Bell who asked, "Is feeding the squirrels helping get Annise elected?" My response?: "Yes! It frees up the candidate and the candidate's spouse to attend campaign functions instead of doing this dirty work here!"

Occasionally it can be a little dirty (and no, I don't mean the campaign!) The 'babies' have recently learned to pee and poop on their own --



Surrogate mommy Kathy Hubbard feeding Dozer just before her eyes had opened.



Dozer (top) & Big Boy in the early days.

sometimes during feeding. Not long ago, Dozer even developed a case of the 'squirrel runs,' and christened me right before the Westheimer Street Fest campaigning. On October 10 & 11, Dozer and Big Boy finally opened their eyes, and are now much more impatient at feedings; causing even more messes while eating.

But with the eye openings and the addition of their fur growth over the last month, they've finally started resembling the cute little rodents they were meant to be. No more hairless rats! They've also become quite an attraction with the volunteers. I've noticed that as the squirrels have grown and thrived, so has the campaign. The babies survived their initial critical period, and the campaign started garnering its first endorsements and began attracting attention from the community. Their fur sprouted, squirrels' health grew more robust, and more notable endorsements from the Houston Police Officers' Union and a division of the local Southern Baptists inspired more attention and grassroots donations. Now the babies are more than mere survivors, they're legitimate gamers; and the Parker campaign is rolling along at full speed. Recent surveys and endorsements from the Houston Chronicle have inspired volunteers, who are participating in larger numbers, and donations, which have surpassed all other city council campaigns more than two to one. Now with Parker campaign advertisements hitting television, and notable leaders such as U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee personally helping to raise donations -- as occurred at the Drexler's Barbecue fund-raiser, both the campaign and the squirrels are in excellent health.

The squirrel babies have become an interesting parallel to the election effort itself. Dozer and Big Boy couldn't have picked a better place to have been raised. It's highly unlikely that any other human surrogate would've had the know-how or the stamina to care for them so well. Even though the squirrels provide quite a side-story with an undoubted 'Awwwww' factor, there'll never be mention of it in the general media. One obvious reason would be leaving the campaign open to opportunistic comments

like 'being a little squirrelly' or 'a campaign

(Continued on Page 7)

## PARKER CAMPAIGN....

(Continued from Page 1)

real way to gauge support among undecideds. Affirming this point, the volunteers of the campaign staff have encountered voters who are staunchly committed to making their decisions the week before the election. Therefore the focus of the Parker campaign is two-pronged: continue running on her message in the hopes of garnering the 'undecided' vote, and ensure that her committed supporters get out and vote.

A trait of the Parker campaign has been the grassroots support she has won. Annise's track record on city issues has been her most distinguishing feature. "There is no more qualified candidate on the ballot," said Parker. "No other candidate has the range of experience," which is reflected, "in the diversity of [her] endorsements and supporters." The most recent endorsement from Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, added to that of the Houston Chronicle, the Houston Police Officer's Union, the Houston Gay Lesbian Political Caucus, a local division of the Southern Baptist, the Log Cabin Republicans, and the Houston Assn. of Realtors is ample evidence of her wide-ranging support.

Her campaign effort is reflective of that support. The aforementioned poll indicated she had built up the largest election 'war chest' in her race; in fact, out-collecting all other city council races in campaign donations. She has collected over \$85,000 in contributions, compared to the next largest campaign in her race -- Browning-Ferris executive, Don Fitch -- which has collected less than a third of that amount. Findings indicated Fitch's contributions were derived primarily from PAC (Political Action Committee) money, whereas Parker's donations were from individual contributors. When asked about that fact, Parker's response was, "PACs don't vote!" When asked about her early success she added, "I started earlier, have worked harder, and run a more focused and professional campaign."

Another important factor of the undecided vote, is the 'stealth' potential of undetected arch-conservatives who vote the 'straight slate' and swing an election. Elections with small turnouts, or unusually large absentee voting

(Continued on Page 5)



Campaign volunteers Daniell McCleney (L) & Vanessa Edwards-Foster stuffing letters.



## I Was a Transsexual Sweatshop Slave!

by Sarah Fox

When I came here to Houston to visit my sis, Vanessa, little did I know what experiences lay before me. I left Columbus a neurobiologist, headed to the annual Society for Neuroscience conference in New Orleans, and I thought this an opportune time to get in a quick visit with Vanessa, as well as a couple of my Houston cousins. What I didn't know was that I would be enslaved and made to work in a campaign sweatshop for Annise Parker.

OK, in truth, it's been rather fun getting to know all the local politicians. Of course I had to start at the bottom -- stuffing envelopes. (Don't I do enough of that as editor for my newsletter??) The office was a very spirited place, with Annise having moved into front-runner status and having captured the endorsement of the *Houston Chronicle*, the local Southern Baptists (!!) and most importantly the *other Chronicle* -- the *Crystal Chronicle* (the newsletter of my support group). Hey, the *Crystal Chronicle* supports Annise so strongly that it's *entire* editorial staff flew down from Ohio to lend a hand! What more remains to be said?

During my time here, I also had the opportunity to meet, like, Daniell. What a character! It was, like, really kewl running around with her for the short time we had together, particularly when we were roving about, pounding Parker campaign signs into the fire ant mounds outside of the various polling places. It makes a girl feel, like, really bitchin' to be hangin' with such awesome babes! We even got a few honks from passing drivers. Rude? Yes. Uncool? No. Sometimes it's fun to get a bit of attention from horny honkers! Daniell captured the moment with this sketch of me pounding one of the Parker signs with a hammer. Of course the face isn't visible, and Vanessa claims Daniell was drawing her, but *her* hair is curly, not wavy, and I was the one doing the hammering, not she!. Anyway, I'm really impressed with Daniell's ability to capture an image so incredibly realistically. She is truly talented, both in her drawing abilities and in her knack for recognizing great subject matter when she sees it.

I suppose Vanessa felt pretty guilty having looped me into a sweatshop environment, so she took me to the Galleria. What better place to take my mind off of the little matter of my enslavement? Mostly we

walked around, but we did hit a pretty good sale at Wet Seal. They had some Summer things selling for 75% off. The shop was a bit... um... *youngish*, but we found some really bitchin' white cotton halter tops for around \$4. OK, I know that's socially irresponsible of us -- particularly of Vanessa. (Some poor guy is going to get a coronary or run his car into a telephone pole!) Still, the sale tags spoke to us, we listened, and we bought. Feeling a bit guilty about the breach of social responsibility, though, we felt it only our duty to try to expand ourselves just a wee bit in the middle, so we hit the Godiva chocolate stand. I guess Vanessa and I are a pretty bad influence on each other.

The next day we both felt very ashamed of ourselves. Yes, we felt it was time to do our part for TG outreach and public education. We both dressed in our nicest business suits (having reluctantly decided against the halter tops) and buzzed into the Rice University campus, where I was scheduled to give a talk to my undergraduate mentor's Introductory Psychology class. My timing was great, as they had just hit the part of the course concerning gender identity disorders. The talk went quite well, and Vanessa and I had a great talk with my mentor afterwards. It was a very warm experience. We also talked to another Psychology professor and to my college master, establishing lots of communication links along the way.

We of course couldn't end our day at my alma mater without first making a trip to Willy's Pub for lunch. Their pizza isn't as good as it used to be, but other than that the place hadn't really changed much. On our way out, I stopped into the gift shop, where I found a great pair of hooters for only \$10! (No, not that kind of hooters! I mean two little stuffed toy owls for my boys.)

Getting the chance to visit my alma mater as my "new" self was quite a good experience, so much so that I didn't even mind being dragged straight from there *back* to the Parker campaign headquarters, where they made me staple more yard signs together in my high heels and fine wool Evan Picone suit! She appeased me, anyway, by taking lots of pictures of me. I think she was just amused at the saw dust all over my suit and wanted to remember the image for years to come. I guess she was pretty intent on ruining my suit, because she took me for barbecue right afterwards.

The next morning Vanessa and I had no commitments and could mess around for a while. (*Get your mind out of the gutter!*) I finally had the chance to

try on one of my halter tops without a bra, and it looked... um... Mmmmmmmmm. Well, of course I *had* to wear it! It was getting pretty close to lunch time, and I think Vanessa sensed that I was getting pretty hungry. She told me that we could go an eat, provided I write this article for her first. OK, so I *WROTE* the @#\$%ed article, and she finally consented to take me for some food -- and she made *ME* pay!! (Ahem.... Well, I suppose I *did* offer....) Anyway, after we got back home, she looked at the article again and said it wouldn't do -- that I had to *EXPAND* it some more! So here I am typing *again*!!

To make matters worse, Vanessa wanted me to pretend to be writing it "tonight," so that I could make tonight's activities sound like they had already been done. I'm sorry, but as Editor in Chief of the *Crystal Chronicle*, I adhere to the highest standards of journalistic integrity, and that's where I draw the line! It suffices to say that Vanessa will drag me *once again* to the Parker headquarters, where I will be forced to call people on the phone (having been promoted from envelope stuffing and sign stapling). After they've used me for that purpose, I *think* they will finally keep by their word and release me from my indentured servitude, delivering me at long last to the love and care of my cousins across town. Tomorrow I'll be flying out to New Orleans for the conference. What fates await me *there*? I'm not sure I want to know....

## PARKER CAMPAIGN....

(Continued from Page 5)

turnouts, tend to play into the arch-conservative hands. Therefore it's extremely important to not only identify Parker supporters, but to get them to the voting booth on election day. This is especially true should there be a runoff, which will require an even more critical need for votes. Once the field is winnowed down to two candidates, it's sure the arch-conservative element will be organized and ready to move. Thus should the race end in a runoff, there will be an even greater push to encourage voters to participate en masse to procure a Parker victory.

What are Parker's first priorities once she is elected? Beyond hiring a consummate "insider" and a bilingual staff, her main focus will be the issues that have gotten her to this point: Police and crime control, neighborhood revitalization, and pursuing a first class regional transit system. What does this mean for transgenders? "I think a primary role of government is to balance the competing needs of its citizens--and that includes insuring that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of our society are available to all," responded Parker. "Transgenders are part of the whole." Let me take this opportunity to endorse Parker to all of the transgendered community. Again I implore you to get out and vote!





## TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

• WASHINGTON, DC---September 19, 1997 ... The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) today announced the adoption of a new mission and vision statement. At a September 13 meeting, the board adopted new language for its mission and vision statements. The newly approved mission statement reads: "The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force works to eliminate prejudice, violence and injustice against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people at the local, state and national level." The language in the new vision statement reads: "As part of a broader social justice movement for freedom, justice and equality, we are creating a world that respects and celebrates the diversity of human expression and identity and where all people may fully participate in society."

"Our revised mission statement is the result of discussions by our board and staff to add clarity to our work," said Kerry Lobel, executive director of the NGLTF. "As gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, our future is closely linked to other movements for social justice. We have recommitted ourselves to that important work."

• On November 5, 1997 at 7:00 PM, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) will sponsor an open forum regarding hate crimes. The local event being held at the Lovett Inn, 501 Lovett Blvd. in the Montrose, will be cosponsored by the Houston Gay Lesbian Political Caucus (HGLPC), NOW, and It's Time Texas! In addition to local speakers, these forums will feature Task Force executive director Kerri Lobel who will address the state of anti-gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) motivated violence throughout the country and the status of related federal laws and legislation.

NGLTF is hosting a series of town forums on violence against the GLBT community as a precursor to a national summit hosted by President Clinton. At each town meeting, the Task Force will provide petitions for participants to record their own experiences of hate violence. The Task Force will later deliver these petitions to President Clinton. On November 10th, President Clinton will host a national hate crimes summit in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with this event. Contact Clarence Bagby at 713-861-8238 for details.

• This sent in by Gary Bowen, Coordinator-in-Chief of American Boyz ... We are looking for a person who is willing to serve as a Texas contact for the American Boyz, the largest grassroots organization serving FTMs in the United States with affiliates in 23 states east of the Mississippi River. We are now expanding into the Western United States, and are trying to get the word out and find people willing to serve as local contacts in the Plains States, and also trying to find somebody to serve as Plains Coordinator for the American Boyz.

Currently that position is being covered by Lee Smith, our Midsouth Coordinator, and a swell person. Anybody interested in knowing more about the American Boyz can reach our web sites at: [www.netgsi.com/~listwrangler](http://www.netgsi.com/~listwrangler), or send email to [majordomo@netgsi.com](mailto:majordomo@netgsi.com) with the command 'info am-boyz' in the body of the message. Or they can contact me or Lee ([alphavamp@aol.com](mailto:alphavamp@aol.com)).

• Did you know...that the creator of Laverne & Shirley once wrote jokes for Christine Jorgensen? According to Tom Snyder from *The Late Late Show*, comedy writer and sitcom creator Garry Marshall wrote routines for the very first transsexual back before he made a name for himself. Apparently, Ms. Jorgensen supported herself after her surgery by doing a nightclub comedy act. "Have you heard the one about the priest, the rabbi and the transsexual?..."

• California Governor, Pete Wilson, vetoed a bill passed by the legislature that gave state bar association the power to collect dues from attorneys in the state. The action puts the California Bar Assn. effectively out of business. The reason this is of interest is that in support of the veto, Gov. Wilson issued a statement of his reasons for wanting to put the California bar out of existence. Among the reasons stated was his displeasure with California attorneys for voting at a recent bar conference to support "same sex marriages" and laws forbidding "discrimination against transsexuals."

• From Phyllis Frye: a call to join the League of Women Voters ... "This group is very open to us and a great way to mainstream and meet intelligent and dedicated people. I have been a member since 1978 and was elected to their Board and elected to a Vice-Presidency. I believe that if I had not gotten immersed in ICTLEP work, that I could have been elected as President. Dee was their paid office secretary for a while and they defended her against a landlord who got pushy about the restroom issue. I suggest that you phone or e-mail them and ask for information at 713-784-2923 or [lwv@neosoft.com](mailto:lwv@neosoft.com). Dues are only \$50.

• On the subject of the League of Women Voters ... Friday, Nov 21 from 11:30AM to 1:30PM, they will host a luncheon at Rice Memorial Center, Rice University. Many Houston area legislators and elected officials will be present. This is a golden opportunity to do some grassroots interface between elected officials and open transgender folks. Call the League for information.

• Brazil to offer free Sexual Reassignment Surgery ... according to AP reports, Brazil's Federal Medical Council announced guidelines that allow individuals at least 21 years old who have been in therapy for at least 2 years to receive the surgery free of charge. Gender reassignment was previously illegal in Brazil, and surgeons performing it could be imprisoned. "With this decision we are saying that transsexuality is not against the law," stated Medical Council president Dr. Waldir Mesquita. 'A chicken in every pot, a vagina for every transsexual....'

• Before you start thinking of South America as paradise, a report from those still in the Dark Ages ... the Int'l. Lesbian and Gay Assn. reports that transgenders in Rosario, Argentina are suffering regular human rights violations at the hands of the local police. At least 150 transgenders are arrested each month, facing up to 20 days in jail for the crime of being transvestite. They suffer verbal and physical violence and sexual assault at the hands of the authorities. They are also forced to take compulsory HIV tests; and if they resist, they are charged with homicide. On one occasion, police and medical personnel refused to treat a transgendered stabbing victim, who later died of the injuries. The agency called for a public plea for assistance because the local government continued to ignore the problem.

## Top Ten Reasons Why Trick or Treating is Better than Sex:

Submitted off the net

by Mary Ann Harris (from Crystal Club)

10. You're guaranteed to get at least a little something in the sack.
9. If you get tired, you can wait ten minutes and go at it again.
8. The uglier you look, the easier it is to get some.
7. You don't have to compliment the person who gave you the candy.
6. It's okay when the person you're with fantasizes you're someone else, because you ARE someone else.
5. 40 years from now, you'll still enjoy candy.
4. If you don't get what you want, you can always go next door.
3. It doesn't matter if the kids hear you moaning and groaning.
2. Less guilt the next morning.
1. You can do the WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD!!!!!!

## Trick or treaters from the TATS neighborhood....:



...Dominatrix Daniell, Homegirl Vanessa and Serving Wench Sarah Caffee.





## GOING NUTS....

(Continued from Page 4)

that's run by nuts," etc. More importantly though, it's against state law for individuals to keep squirrels. The official at the wildlife dept. admitted that it's likely they wouldn't have survived without human intervention, but that the law would rather they die naturally than be held in captivity. But after seeing those precious little faces, how could you allow these spunky little guys to die naturally but legally?

There's been a lot to learn about raising squirrels and participating in a political campaign. Watching both grow and evolve has been something I feel fortunate to have experienced. It's been inspiring to watch everyone rally around the squirrels and the election effort.

Soon the babies will be eating nuts on their own, and their need for human parenting will cease. Being feral by nature, they'll eventually be released back to the pecan tree overhanging the parking lot...back to their first home. But the addition to the campaign of the human interest element, albeit in the guise of squirrels, has really drawn us closer together. Big Boy and Dozer have left an indelible impression on us -- this was obviously a unique event. Similarly, the upcoming election may also prove to be a unique event as well; heralding the election of the first open lesbian to city council. I've got a feeling this may just be the year.... This election campaign has definitely been an experience to remember and to cherish.



A bus stops in Brooklyn and two Italian men get on. They seat themselves, and engage in animated conversation. The lady sitting behind them ignores their conversation at first, but her attention is galvanized when she hears one of the men say: "Emma come first. Denna 'I' come. Two 'asses,' they come together. 'I' come again. Two 'asses,' they come together again. 'I' come again and 'pee' twice. Then 'I' come once-a-more." "You foul-mouthed swine," retorted the lady indignantly. "In this country we don't talk about our sex lives in public." "Hey, cool down lady," said the man. "Imma just tellun my friend howa to spella Mississippi."

(Submitted off the net by Kristin Ingram)

## OREGON RECOGNIZES GLBT COMMUNITY

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

One item passed along from Phyllis Frye was a groundbreaking recognition of the GLBT community by the governor of the state of Oregon. On October 3, Oregon governor John Kitzhaber declared October 1997 to be Lesbian and Gay History Month. The title does not state it, but the text of the proclamation includes transgenders and bisexuals as part of the statewide recognition.

Though Oregon may not rank as high as Minnesota on its anti-discrimination legislation, on two occasions its citizens have voted down statewide initiatives to legalize discrimination against gays and lesbians. Through individual efforts by lobbyists such as attorney Joanne McNamara, and a relatively moderate populace, Oregon has seen some hopeful strides being made towards gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered acceptance. The governor's proclamation is evidence of this. The following is the text of the proclamation:



Surrogate aunt Vanessa & Big Boy with his peepers open.

### OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR / PROCLAMATION / STATE OF OREGON

**WHEREAS:** Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people have made many important contributions to society throughout Oregon history; and

**WHEREAS:** the Oregon Legislature in 1993 made history in preventing local anti-gay initiatives from being implemented, and the Oregon voters rejected similar statewide measures in 1992 and 1994; and in 1996 the State of Oregon filed a brief in the United States Supreme Court against Colorado's Amendment 2; and

**WHEREAS:** there are lesbian, bisexual and gay legislators who are today working hard to legislate on issues to benefit all Oregonians; and

**WHEREAS:** October is the month in which annual recognition of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered history is being coordinated; and

**WHEREAS:** national and statewide commemorations offer the opportunity for positive affirmation of the lives, families, and culture of lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered people and gay men; and

**WHEREAS:** the Kitzhaber administration is committed to activities that promote historical understanding, and uphold dignity, social justice, and equal rights for all persons.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, John A. Kitzhaber, Governor of the State of Oregon, hereby proclaim October 1997 to be **LESBIAN AND GAY HISTORY MONTH** in Oregon and encourage all our citizens to join in this observance.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF,** I hereunto set my hand and cause the Great Seal of the State of Oregon to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Salem in the State of Oregon on this day, October 3, 1997.



## WASHINGTON POST SLAMS TRANSSEXUAL

Forwarded by Marie Denise Gallagher

The following article was discovered in the Washington Post by Marie Gallagher. A portion of the text of it, and a plea by Marie follows:

By Linton Weeks

Washington Post Staff Writer

Friday, October 24, 1997; Page D02

The Washington Post

The Internet is weird, but real life can be even stranger.

Yesterday's Navigator column in this section reported that Robert Pagani wants to trade lives with someone. He has posted a Web page offering to swap everything -- his job, his car, his apartment -- even his girlfriend, Chrissy Hight.

What the page doesn't say: Hight, as it turns out, is a man. Or, as Pagani explained it by phone yesterday, "a pre-operative transsexual." Pagani, 45, said he didn't mean to mislead anyone by withholding information about Hight. "My intent was trying to help her. I'm not trying to play games."

Yesterday Hight, 42, said Pagani had told the truth. "I am his girlfriend." On another Web site, the Theology of Inner Discovery, which is devoted to transgender issues, Hight has written: "Although apparently biologically male, I never felt like a boy at any point in my life."...

The article goes on to mention other "things" that this person Robert had done that was "arrested" for. Implying that somehow having a TS Woman for a "girlfriend" was somehow illegal or fraudulent.

I strongly object to a pre-operative Transsexual who has legally change her gender Identification to female, being called a "man". This fact was confirmed with a conversation I had with Robert Pagani in the Gazebo on AOL, witnessed by more than a dozen other AOL members. I strongly object to associating a TS woman, living her life as the female she is, being conjectured into being some type of fraud or something illegal. I also strongly object to the Washington Post Web site being used to Defame and Insult the Gender Community. This type of petty revenge article should be well below the standards of a paper like the Washington Post.

I am therefore asking that anyone reading this do the following:

1. go to this link and read the article for yourself.
2. if it appears to you, as it did to me, that this so-called reporter is misstating this woman's gender identity for the sole purpose of insulting her and Robert, please send notice of your dissatisfaction to the following e-mail:

webnews@washpost.com

I am also requesting that the Washington Post submit a formal apology to the TransGender community for this blatantly inaccurate and insulting article.

Marie Denise Gallagher.



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# TATS Newsletter



the Texas Association for Transsexual Support

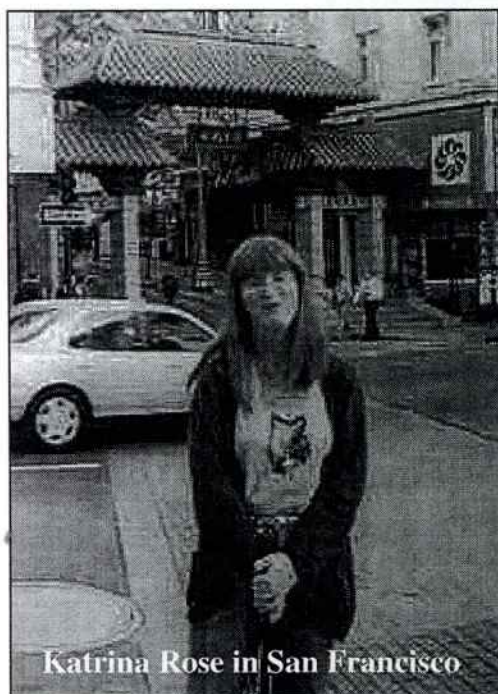


Volume 5, Issue 12

Houston, Texas

December, 1997

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.



Katrina Rose in San Francisco

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA PURPLES

By Katrina C. Rose

In October, Phyllis and I flew out to California for the National Lesbian - Gay Law Association Conference in West Hollywood. The West Coast was not all legalistic drudgery for this kat, though. I spent a day (give or take a few hours) up in the wondrous Bay Area visiting some wonderful friends (some old - some new.) I won't forget about the legal stufph, but the personal stough first:

I flew up to San Jose almost immediately after getting in to LA - there was a three hour lag, just long enough to bop over to the conference hotel to have lunch with Phyllis,  
(Continued on Page 4)

## ANNISE PARKER MAKES RUNOFFS

GARCIA WINS; BROWN AND MOSBACHER VIE FOR MAYOR

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

This may be old news, but the November general elections are over and the results are in. The runoff on Dec. 6 will feature former drug-czar Lee Brown going up against conservative Rob Mosbacher in the mayoral race, and the City Council's At Large, Position 1 race will pit Don Fitch against Annise Parker. For City Controller there will be no runoff as Sylvia Garcia won her race with an outright majority over Lloyd Kelley, whose 'gay-baiting' tactic obviously backfired on him in the polls. In the At-Large, Pos. 1 race (the one the GLBT community was most interested in), Annise did make the runoffs, coming in second to Don Fitch who garnered 68,186 votes (28.8%) to 47,841 votes (20.2%) for Parker.

Making the runoffs was not easy as opponent Alphonso Delaney managed a strong turnout on election day and came in a close third with 44,215 votes, or 18.7% of the final numbers. After his loss, Delaney quickly endorsed Parker for the position. The Parker campaign has made it on to the next level, just one step away from taking office. But the question remains: Will the Parker supporters, and those from Annise's former opponents who have endorsed her in the race, turn out the vote in large numbers? Or will a false sense of security cause complacency to set in, thus giving Fitch what he needs -- no opposing votes and a victory on election day?

It is a continuing bit of history we're witnessing as Annise, being the first open lesbian to make it this far in a city council race, will hopefully go on to a victory as such. However, this is not the time to become

(Continued on Page 4)

**RUNOFF ELECTION IS DEC. 6  
REMEMBER TO VOTE!!**



Annise Parker on the campaign trail, speaking at this year's NOW conference. In Houston.

## MEETING SCHEDULE:

December 13	Social Meeting at: Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM
December 27	Un-Meeting at Stephanie Brooks' @ 7:00 PM
January 10	Social Meeting at: Michelle Myers' @ 3:00 PM
January 24	Un-Meeting at Vanessa Edwards-Foster's @ 7:00 PM

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**Jessica Wicks**

## **EDITOR'S RANT**

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

**H**oliday season is upon us again. Thanksgiving has just passed, and Christmas is fast approaching. I hope y'all forgive me for being out of sorts. I'm in seasonal shock. This year has gone by so fast, I'm having difficulty actually believing it's December. Actually, I'm trying to work up a good batch of denial to feed people when they ask if I've done my shopping and prepared myself for the holidays, requiring my response to the negative (with accompanying excuses, of course). I'm so hopelessly far behind, I'm still in denial of needing denial!

Regardless of the denials, it is Christmas -- the season of giving. Less than a month after Thanksgiving (the day we give thanks for all of our blessings) we get to show how sincere our gratitude was by our actions. This we do on Christmas -- the day we give of ourselves, prove our gratitude. Considering our shortened memory spans due to the advent of technological advancement, it's good fortune that it occurs so soon after our day of thanks. It doesn't give us the time to bury those sentiments with our ever-multiplying daily problems. It almost begs, "Prove that you're thankful...."

Giving is active proof of our gratitude. There are many ways to give of ourselves, and many choices as to whom we give. Presents to loved ones and friends are obvious choices. Some folks choose to give to charitable donations to organizations -- a very favorable decision. Frequently these days, many are choosing to pass up the clearinghouse type of charity fundraisers and donate directly to a cause of their choosing. These 'direct' donations are an effective way to circumvent the administrative fees deducted from the gross donation by these fundraisers. But how about those who would like to give, but have little to spend? There are other ways of making 'direct' gifts or contributions.

The most easy and inexpensive way is to show compassion for each other. (It certainly speaks to my budget!) Being generous of your time and spirit to others is one little, but certainly not an insignificant, gift. When it's something that the receiver needed at just that time, the value of the gift is much greater than something merely purchased. Gifts are not always measured in monetary value. A good example is the gift of friendship. Having a friend -- especially to someone in need -- has worth that is immeasurable.



Friends and acquaintances are not the only ones to whom we might limit our gifts. Charitable organizations can also use more than monetary contributions. If you can't afford to write a check, you can always give them some of your time. Many people find the holiday season the perfect time to help feed the homeless, or donate time to other worthy causes like the Women's Crisis Center or Casa De Esperanza (a local residence for orphaned children with AIDS). Any group that serves those less fortunate can make good use of your talents. It doesn't cost a lot -- all it takes is a little of your time.

Elsewhere in this issue we mention community. Our 'community' is comprised of more than transgendered folk; it encompasses straights, gays, rich, poor, male and female, minority or not. I've mentioned it before: if we hope to be taken seriously by society at large, then we need to participate in more than just issues pertaining to transgenders. We need to participate in issues that effect the *human* community, and this is a perfect opportunity to do just that. Just giving of your time to someone who truly needs it can really make a difference...for them, and indirectly maybe even for us too.

Now don't get me wrong, finding time to do this isn't easy. Demands on our time, just like budgetary demands, require some sacrifice. While we all want 'our time for ourselves,' is that desire so strong as to outweigh the helping of those in need? Making excuses takes much less effort. It's far too easy for us to become self-absorbed. Try to find some time to give this holiday season. Though it may not be convenient and the task itself may be demanding, helping out someone in need pays dividends of the spirit. You can't put a price on that.

Prove that you're thankful....



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

*for submitting articles*

**Crystal Club President, Cathy Platine**

**Jessica Wicks**

**Katrina C. Rose**

*for submitting humor*

**Mary Ann Harris, Crystal Club**

**Lauren Robison, suburban Baltimore MD**

**Holly Foster Wilson, Las Vegas NV**

*for submitting humor*

**Christine Fusco of Hubbard Financial Serv.**

*for submitting photos, scanning & miscellany*

**Katrina C. Rose, a great big thanks!!!**

## **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 (713) 827-5913 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**

To contact the board members, Email a message to: **tats@GenderWeb.org**

Also, visit our web page at:  
**http://www.GenderWeb.org/~tats/**



## TRANSGENDERED COMMUNITY By Cathy Platine (former President, Crystal Club of Columbus, OH)

Is there such a thing as a transgendered community? This question arises over and over. Many claim that a community including transvestites and transsexuals does exist and many support groups are of the "open" type which includes both. I was the president of such a group, I recently resigned. My experience was not uncommon among transsexuals working with transvestites. The level of understanding among the two groups is very limited, they are quite different. While referring to transsexuals, I

will be talking about male to female for few female to male transsexuals join support groups.

Transvestites usually start off as fetishistic. They don't like to admit it, they sometimes deny it, but it is the simple truth. Often the sexual component of their crossdressing fades to a lesser importance as they get older, but rarely does it go away completely. Recent studies seem to indicate that the behavior is more complicated than just this, that like transsexuality, seeds can be seen long before puberty. Trans-

sexuals would do well to remember this. The main friction between the two groups seems to stem from the sense of gender identity. Transvestites are men. Most of them are very happy to remain so and would not dream of giving up their male lives. Some may talk about the "inner woman," getting in touch with their feminine side or something like this, but the fact remains that the primary identity is male. Male to Female (MtF) transsexuals are women. Their identity is female, and only with rare exceptions, most eventually transition to the social role of woman that is much more fitting for them.

(Continued on Page 7)

## HIERARCHY AND FRAGMENTATION: THE DISMANTLING OF THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

Recently a few articles (including Cathy's article reprinted in this issue) and a question about the facilitator in another local group have brought to light a continuing problem in the Transgender Community -- exclusive or divisive attitudes. One article from Linda Phillips, editor of Boulton & Park Society's newsletter, reopened a persistent argument about the demise of the Gender Community. In it she mentioned Kimberleigh Richards (editor of the now-defunct Cross Talk) and her blast at the entire TG community.<sup>1</sup> She then remarked on "the selfishness of those [in] Genderworld," and a tendency to pursue our own dreams while leaving behind those remaining to have fulfilled theirs.<sup>2</sup> In another article Ms. Phillips pointed out the TS's reputation for "no sense of humor" in regards to taking personal criticism and their tendency to disappear after surgery, the trivial nature of crossdressers who focus wholly on their appearance and clothes, closeted folks who haven't found the courage to step out of the closet, and publicly outlandish fetishists who in her opinion should go back into the closet.<sup>3</sup>

From the Femme Forum, Jane Ellen Fairfax levelled a shot at the 'passable' crossdresser. In the article she described a case of an individual at a transgendered convention who demanded, "Keep the group away from me. They'll get me read!" (an insensitive comment and totally uncalled for, especially considering the situation.) She then goes on to claim that the "crossdresser intent on passing" does the cause of education and acceptance "real harm" and to attempt to

pass is "selfish and intellectually dishonest."<sup>4</sup> Later in the same newsletter, facilitator Brandi Welch brought up issues of contention concerning Tri-Ess's excluding others because of sexual orientation. In it she discusses her receiving numerous missives on the various reasons her group should remain exclusive as such, but doesn't understand the persistence of those arguments from within the group considering that nobody is picketing Tri-Ess meetings, or gate-crashing events. Later in the article she mentioned her hormone therapy, electrolysis, membership in TATS, and pursuit of living full time as female<sup>5</sup> -- likely an attempt to head off future arguments of her validity as facilitator for a heterosexual crossdressing chapter. Yet a firestorm may have just begun, as one 'friend of' Tri-Ess, a pre-op TS, has already questioned the criteria for exclusion of full membership to full-time TG's or eventual transsexuals in light of the same article.

Yet another article forwarded to me by Cathy Platine, which was subsequently withdrawn from an upcoming Crystal Chronicle newsletter, points out the lack of acceptance and sensitivity from the crossdressers in their group. The initial problem arose from the 'bathroom issue' but evolved into an argument, with the crossdressers stating that "until [she is] post-operative, [she is] a man and should be treated as one." and that regardless of her living full-time as female under the dictates of her RLT (Real Life Test), "[she has] no right to use a woman's restroom." She then surmises that the crossdresser, that their behavior is still primarily male, and that their relating to the "female within" is, in essence, fallacy.

(Continued on Page 6)

<sup>1</sup> Article by Kimberleigh Richards; from *Renaissance*, Sept. 1997

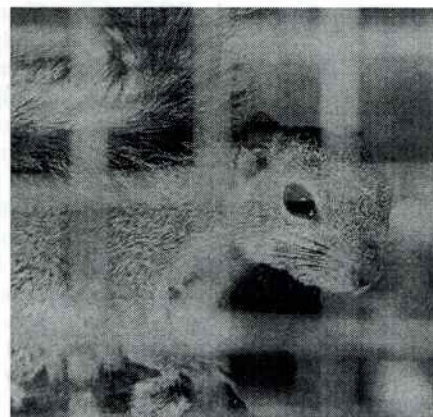
<sup>2</sup> Article: *The Demise of the Gender Community* by Linda Phillips; from *Gender Euphoria*, Nov. - Dec. 1997

<sup>3</sup> Article: *The Last Word...Critic* by Linda Phillips; from *Gender Euphoria*, Nov. - Dec. 1997

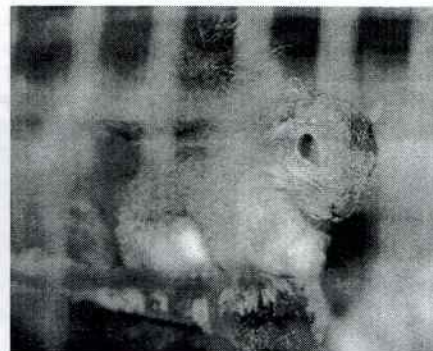
<sup>4</sup> Article: *Keep Away, Sister! You'll Get Me Read!* by Jane Ellen Fairfax; from *Femme Forum*, Nov. 1997

<sup>5</sup> Article: *What's Her Name's Thoughts* by Brandi Welch; from *Femme Forum*, Nov. 1997

## CAMPAIGN MASCOT UPDATE SQUIRRELS GROWING, THRIVING



Recent shots of Annise Parker's campaign mascots: Big Boy (above) and Dozer.



As you can see by the photo, our little campaign mascots have more than merely survived. Both Dozer and Big Boy have grown into rather healthy young squirrels. While the election campaign is nearing its fruition -- victory day -- the squirrels are similarly maturing and acting more like the adult squirrels they will eventually become. Both the squirrels and the campaign are robustly proceeding full speed ahead.

A correction from last issue: I was misinformed on the origin of the babies' names. Dozer was actually named for her bulldozer-like quality of running over her brother, and as for Big Boy's name...I'm still not sure....



## NORTHERN CALIF. PURPLES

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Melinda Whiteway and a rather successful LA TS MD (too many initials? she's a doctor in LA who's a TS) who, despite her tight schedule, was nice enough to be our taxi from LAX to the hotel. My dear friend K'Ailsa met me at the San Jose airport. This was not her first time to meet the real me but it was the first since I've gained confidence (a year ago I would not have even considered flying; actually, a bit over three years ago I wouldn't have considered flying at all - this kat prefers to drive.)

After a quick stop at her house (just quick enough to redo my makeup - it was pretty stale by now - and to meet up with her sweetie Monica) we went to a place called Hamburger Mary's. I'd been told that HM's was a TG restaurant/bar, so I expected a TG version of Charlie's. It wasn't quite that. It was certainly gay/TG-friendly, but nothing screamed 'TG' as we walked in. In fact, it appeared that the only TGs there were the ones at our table. We were there to meet up with a new friend - Anne (a.k.a. AnneMarie for AOLers.) She arrived with a GG friend and we had a very nice evening. Both K'Ailsa and Anne were at a loss as to why the place was as dead as it was that night. Part of it might have been that it was a Wednesday; part of it might have been the San Jose Sharks hockey game going on in the general vicinity. I can recommend the place - for the food if nothing else. Twas quite good.

Thursday - sightseeing in SF. K'Ailsa graciously allocated her entire day to getting me into and out of 'the city' as Bay Area folk call it. Ordinarily, I don't require a tour guide - I just hop in my car and fake it. But, I was wheel-less and the most sensible way from SJ to SF is via train. As I said when talking about my trip to the UK: public transportation that works is a WONDERFUL thing. The SJ train station is a neat old building about 100 yards from the San Jose Sharks' arena. The trip from SJ in to downtown SF was a little over an hour. K'Ailsa and I ate breakfast and took a quick nap on the way in (try doing that while you drive on 610; if you actually DO, please don't say so.)

After arriving in downtown SF, we caught a bus to Chinatown so I could be terminally touristy. After being touristy for a while - and climbing lots of hills - it was time for lunch. Old friends. We met up with Gwen Smith at the veritable zoo known as Market Street and set off to find a place to eat. We ended up eating at a lil ol' Italian restaurant which - surprise, surprise - had "I left My Heart in San Francisco" playing on its muzak system. Now, that wasn't why we chose that particular place. We simply settled on the first place we found

that was affordable. Downtown SF is NOT a cheap place.

After lunch - a bit of a pilgrimage. As I'm sure most of you have heard, Dee McKellar was quite a good photographer although she kept most of her work hidden away. Why? I dunno. But, she did.

I'm the informal custodian of most of her photographic output. Many of her photos are intriguing - not just because of their composition but, in many cases, because they have a mystery content: many of them are not labeled (although, thankfully, most are) as to where they were snapped. One box of slides was labeled 'San Francisco - 1977' but the individual slides weren't labeled. I was struck by a few of these slides which appeared to be of some strange Roman-ish, dome-type things in a rather pastoral setting, complete with foliage, water and waterfowl. Gwen had told me that it appeared to her to be a place near Golden Gate Park called the Palace of Fine Arts, a name which makes it sound like a museum. But, it's really a museum piece. As K'Ailsa's girlfriend explained it, the Palace is a replica of some plaster structures that



**Transgendered Panel at Lavender Law Conference:  
(From Left to Right) Spencer Bergstedt, Melinda Whiteway, Phyllis Frye and Joanne McNamara.**

had been built for the SF World's Fair around the turn of the century. But, the originals did not survive the 1906 earthquake. The current version was built out of sturdier stuff and has survived several earthquakes since.

I might not ordinarily have thought so much of Dee while I was there but in the rotunda was something that SF has a lot of: street musicians. Unlike the ones in downtown Houston, the ones in SF are quite good. This one was using an electric keyboard - to play a long, rather mournful piece of music. I couldn't help but get the weepies. My pix of the palace didn't turn out quite as good as Dee's 1977 photos, but I'm still glad I went. (An aside: its a freebie tourist site, so if you're on a budget while being a tourist in SF the Palace is a place to go.)

## ANNISE PARKER MAKES RUNOFFS....

*(Continued from Page 1)*

lackadaisical about the election. If anything, voting in the runoff race will be more crucial as she faces a formidable opponent in Fitch -- a former executive with Browning-Ferris who has deep pockets, and the backing of a lot of big business interests. You can be sure that when the conservative 'moral majority' types go out to vote, they will support Fitch for no other reason than what Annise is and what that represents to them.

Regardless of sexuality, Annise is the most qualified candidate in the race and has received the lion's share of the endorsements. Some of the more prominent endorsements are: the Houston Chronicle, the Houston Police Officers' Union, the AFL-CIO, the Jewish Herald Voice, the Houston Gay Lesbian Political Caucus, the Tejano Democrats, the Houston Assn. of Realtors, the Baptist Ministers Association. PAC, the Latino Political Caucus, the Log Cabin Republicans, and individuals such as US Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, State Reps. Garnet Coleman, Debra Danburg, Mario Gallegos and Diana Davila as well as former gubernatorial candidate, Sissy Farenthold. Over the years Annise has worked closely with H.P.D., including giving sensitivity seminars to the incoming police cadets. She's also been a neighborhood activist over the course of the past 20 years. On top of this, Annise is also a hometown girl, a graduate of Rice University, and a member of the MENSA society.

For those of you who wonder how any of this affects you -- Annise is very transgender-friendly. Lord knows we could use a friend on city council, and Annise would be the best friend we could hope for in city hall. I know you're probably tired of me ranting -- and I have gone on about this quite a while -- but if we want a city government responsive to our concerns, then we have to get politically active. We must vote! Early voting for the runoff started Nov. 19 and continues through Dec. 2, with the runoff election day being Sat. Dec. 6. If we don't turn out the vote, you can be sure the arch-conservative moralists (who perennially organize and turn out to vote) will not be nearly as transgender-friendly. And again, we'd have to wait for another year to hope for our rights. We stand on the cusp of helping make history. Don't let this golden opportunity pass us by. Remember the slogan on the front of the transgender contingent of the Pride Parade: "WE'RE TRANSGENDERED, AND WE VOTE!" Let's make that a reality!



## Southern California NLGLA-ness, Strange Happenings at Airports, and Other Assorted Phun

by Katrina C. Rose

Katrina flew to LA.

Yep. *Katrina* flew to LA.

Why?

A law conference. What else?

Phyllis Frye and I flew out to LA for the National Gay-Lesbian Law Association Conference - held in West Hollywood, October 23-25. This is a very T-inclusive organization (even though T-ness doesn't appear in the name; but we are now in their mission statement.)

I missed the first day of the conference due to a jaunt up to San Jose. The details of my fun in the Bay Area can be found elsewhere (in this newsletter hopefully.) Here, though, I will throw in a note about the flight. As I mentioned, Kat flew out to LA. I was worried because I don't yet have femme ID. As with many of my fears about my transition, this one was a bit more than I should have worried about. The ticket agent simply looked at my male ID and asked, "Is that you?" I said it was, but a long time ago. Phyllis added that I was in "beautification mode." Bottom line: no problems.

Now, on soapbox.

My flight from LA to San Jose was even smoother - and that's actually kind of scary. Why? No one asked to see *any* ID of *any* kind! I could have been using a stolen ticket and they wouldn't have had the slightest suspicion. I guess that they just assume that terrorists wouldn't bother with an in-state flight.

Off soapbox.

I'll avoid boring everyone with details of all of the legal panels that I attended. I can be long-winded without getting into legal stuff, so I won't tempt myself. I will say that I was quite pleased with the amount of TG-related programming. Additionally, I was impressed with the stature of participants on all of the panels and how accessible they were to the conference attendees. I guess that I'm still used to sci-fi conventions where the big-name guests are prima-donna actors or authors who really don't like to be bothered with the fans, but do when the money is there (not to slam all sci-fi con participants - sometimes they surprise you.) At this conference, of course, the guests were lawyers, law pros and the like. Not quite the same as Stephen King or even any of the Doctor Whos, but impressive nonetheless. The highlight of the conference for me though, was getting to chat briefly with Urvashi Vaid while snarfing catfish (good catfish, too) at the House of Blues on Saturday evening following the conclusion of the conference. For a Saturday night on the town, that beats the hell out of swilling diet coke at Cousin's.

Prior to that Saturday night shindig, some noteworthy things occurred. T folk gained representation at all levels of the NLGLA organization through various national and regional caucuses: Melinda Whiteway, JoAnna McNamara and Spencer Bergstedt (if I've left anyone out, I apologize) joining Phyllis in the "real lawyers" category

- and yours truly as an alternate for the Texas-Louisiana region in the law student category.

Of course, LA had its distractions. Good girl that I am (stop laughing), I refrained from most of them until Sunday, after the conference was over. Phyllis and I had some time to kill before an evening flight back to Houston. During the conference, she had met up with another T lawyer (SarahTS JD on AOL) who agreed to show us the town on Sunday. And show us the town she did.

We blew an hour or so trying to find the LA Zoo. On the way, we stumbled across Dodger Stadium - and a rather cool view of it from the hills beyond its outfield walls. Soon after that, we did find the zoo. Photographer-ess that I am, when I'm on the road I like to get to the local zoo and take pictures of the captives. Of course, I don't like getting gouged in the process. Suffice to say - the LA Zoo is more expensive than Houston's. After a bit of deliberation, we decided to go bop around the city looking for other things to see. We eventually wound up in her neighborhood, Marina Del Rey, where she treated us to lunch at the biggest buffet I've ever seen (between this and the catfish at the House of Blues I had to have gained ten pounds) which also had a waterside view that puts everything in Galveston County to shame.

Between the zoo and the marina was a bit of a treat for a child of the Johnny Carson-era Tonight Show - a trip around the LA freeway system. Hollywood. Ventura. Santa Monica. Of course, we avoided seeing any of the legendary LA traffic jams. We didn't want to soak up *too* much of the local culture.

Well, at least not the freeway culture. After lunch, Sarah decided to show us what she called a *real* zoo: Venice Beach. Her description was quite accurate. You may have seen this place in various TV shows and/or movies. It is just as crazy in person as it is in the shows I've seen.

Much too soon, it was time to fly home. I was sad to be leaving la-la land. Phyllis was sad that she would miss the seventh game of the world series, which was scheduled to start at almost the same time as our flight was scheduled to leave (the pilot kept us up to date on the score, but it's not quite the same as watching.)

Even after we heard that Florida had won, there was one surprise left in the weekend - Hobby Airport. As we were waiting for our baggage to come down the carousel, Phyllis ran into a buddy of hers from law school. Just as she did, I saw my luggage, so

off I ran. When I got back to where Phyllis was she was talking to a different woman - a lovely young lady we all know and love named Jennifer René who had just gotten in on a flight from the opposite coast.

For a weekend of killing time in creative ways, that beats the hell out of swilling diet coke at the South Texas law library.

Meow.

## An Expression of Love at the Holiday Season....

(Submitted off the net by Holly Foster Wilson)



*She laid there with her legs spread wide,*

*So white and clean and bare.*

*His forehead wet with beads of sweat*

*He rubbed her here and there.*

*He touched her neck and then her breast*

*And then drooling felt her thigh.*

*The slit was wet and all was set,*

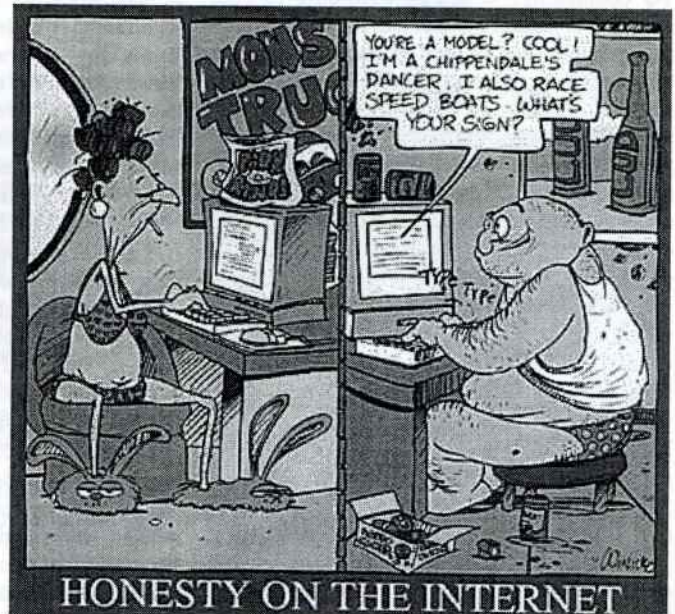
*He gave a joyous cry!*

*The hole was wide...he looked inside*

*All was dark and murky.*

*He rubbed his hands and stretched his arms...*

*And then he stuffed the turkey.*





## **HIERARCHY & FRAGMENTATION**

*(Continued on Page 7)*

It goes without saying that many, or all, of the above categories have made little secret of distancing themselves from gay transvestites and female impersonators. Their appearance and behavior are viewed as embarrassing caricatures of the stereotypes we all live down. Regardless of the circumstances that occurred previously which contributed to their being who they are, the tendency is to group them into one seamy amalgam with no desire of femininity whatsoever. In general they're looked upon as 'drag queens' -- dregs of the community whose entire *raison d'être* is to have sex with men.

There's a gulf that divides us when we separate ourselves into finely honed, or smaller, subgroups. Reasons vary regarding why this occurs. There are some who welcome a more exclusive approach to their circle of peers, choosing only to associate with those of similar mindsets. At other times there are miscommunications and misunderstandings that occur, and those words create unintended divisions within the community. Whatever the reason, divisiveness among our loose-knit community is what will eventually dissolve what community we have. Divisive or exclusionary attitudes can be boiled down to one component: hierarchical mentalities...the feeling that 'our group is better than theirs.' Hierarchies in the TG community was a topic on a recent Transgender Community Forum's Gazebo chat room on AOL. Unfortunately I was unable to log on and participate. The Email sent to me by TCF coordinator Gwen Smith did bring up some interesting questions which I'll attempt to address (with a little rearranging in the order of the questions).

Why is their a hierarchy mentality within the TG community? Grouping according to commonality is natural-instinct and is not peculiar to transgenders. We all tend to naturally gravitate to those with the same general cultural background, interests, or experiences. Further still we'll then seek out those of similar experience levels within the general groupings. The problems that arise are when these groups then become exclusive. Naturally, someone who's been excluded would feel hurt or offended. The problems are exacerbated when one group or subset develops a 'better than thou' attitude towards another. While it's true there are traits or talents that distinguish one from another, we shouldn't develop superior attitudes to trivialize others we deem lesser than ourselves. We all have different talents, different experiences and different views to contribute to the whole.

Is the competition inherent in some the root of this mentality, and does that act as a

negative influence on others in the community? Competing for attention is also natural. We all crave it as children. As we grow we tend

to develop our competitive urges differently: little girls pursue it in appearance, and/or more creative or artistic fashion; while little boys are societally and/or genetically programmed to compete more overtly -- to win games, battles, acclaim, etc. Friendly competition is positive and can keep one strong, but when its ultimate goal is for feeling superior or dominant over another, it becomes negative. Competing should be limited to appropriate situations. Competing amongst those in our own community is divisive, and only serves individual egos.

Are there any benefits to a certain level of hierarchy, or is it all a bad thing? A hierarchy by definition implies various levels subordinate to levels above. In an organization's administration it can benefit by setting a responsible party to guide the group, and responsible subordinates to help. This gives focus to the organization's individuals who otherwise would likely stagnate without some catalyst to initiate consensual direction. However hierarchies in a community of individuals, or a community of groups within the whole, imply superiority to others arbitrarily deemed below our level. This is where hierarchies fail. There's a tendency to consider neophytes beneath us, because of lack of experience. Another tendency is to consider those beyond our level, or those more zealous as extreme or even temerarious. There's also the chance that we categorize too broadly, potentially underestimating or dismissing those whose talents we don't appreciate or understand. Generally we view anyone not at our specific level as either suspect or unenlightened.

Does a hierarchy help or harm an individual's self-worth or self-esteem? The only individual helped by hierarchy is the one who, by virtue of feeling superior, can make another feel less worthy or devalued. Bringing others down to make yourself feel better never raises a community, it only lowers it. Eventually it even harms the arbitrarily superior individual by showing them to be self-centered, shallow and insensitive. As a result, their peers will consider them someone to avoid. Ultimately this attitude affects us all by affirming a negative image of transgenders in general.

Are there real differences between the ranks, and are there enough similarities to ease those differences? While we all share a commonality -- an attraction to the clothing, and/or the mannerisms, and/or the gender of the genetic sex we were not physically born to -- yet there are true distinguishing factors as well. Adopting a theory put forth by Martine Rothblatt, in general transgenderism is a continuum. With the ultimate terminus being post-surgical transsexuality, and the absolute beginning being the first flirtations with fetishism or novice crossdressing, there is a wide range of choices within transgender spectrum. Given that this is a continuum, most of us continue progressing through the various stages;

moving on once we've decided we comfortably passed a certain level. For many, this transition through the stages can be lengthy. Because of societal stigmas and a general lack of accessible information on transgenderism, many start off as crossdressers -- often quite closeted -- before discovering their true desires. Others find their true desire is to be nothing more than a crossdresser. Some individuals will even start out in gay drag or even prostitution under the guidance of society's stereotype of 'what a drag queen should be' before realizing that they feel out of place. Instead they discover, after finding information or groups of those that are their true peers, that they are in reality transgenderists or transsexuals. Tragic as that may sound, as long as the institutional stigmatization is in place, this scenario will continue. While it may seem to some of us that we share no common bond, there is one undeniable similarity: society views us all as one entity and will likewise discriminate against us in the same sweeping manner. The only way to win any rights and acceptance from the non-TG world is to unite and to educate them, as well as each other.

Which bring us to our final question: what do we stand to lose by perpetuating a hierarchy? Judging other individuals or groups tends to divide. Dividing then dissolves to 'rock throwing' -- launching epithets or worse -- which causes a similar response from the other side. A by-product of our divisiveness is that we give arch-conservative moralists half a victory resulting from our lack of focus caused by the fragmentation. It plays right into the old strategy of divide and conquer. If we fragment as a community, we will become an even smaller minority than we already are as a whole. Moreover our disarray will erode any credibility we've built to this point, further jeopardizing our position regarding our rights. The dismissive attitudes and the firing of salvos at one another must stop if we hope to keep our community from completely dissolving. If we fragment our community we stand to lose all progress made to date, as well as losing any real chance of winning rights or respect and acceptance from society at large. We need to stop spending so much energy pointing fingers at each other, and spend more time educating ourselves on and understanding each other. Quoting Abraham Lincoln (a paraphrase from Mark 3:25), "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

### ***Pinocchio Meets Snow White***

*(Submitted off the net by Holly Foster Wilson)*

*Snow White saw Pinocchio walking through the woods so she ran up behind him, knocked him flat on his back, and then sat on his face crying,*

*"Lie to me! Lie to me!"*







## TRANSGENDERED COMMUNITY

(Continued from Page 3)

Just as in the larger society, the same misunderstandings that are found between men and women are found between transvestites and transsexuals. Just as in relationships between men and women, the two groups can work together and support each other. Just like relationships between men and women, they rarely really understand each other. Understanding between the two groups is further complicated by several factors. From the outside, there appears little difference between transvestites and transsexuals. They both consist of biological males who dress in women's clothing and this crossdressing behavior is the thing that is most noticeable about both groups. It is this common behavior that joins them together in open support groups. It is this common behavior that tricks so many into thinking that this behavior is part of a continuum with fetishistic transvestites on one end and fully female identified, surgery tracked transsexuals on the other end. This thinking is false and leads to the misunderstanding between the two groups. The difference is basic and mental. A transvestite brain is male, a transsexual brain is female.

As is true among most men, the penis is central to the transvestite's sense of maleness. Just as is true among most men, this colors much of how they see the world. While a pre-operative transsexual may still have a penis, it is not only not a part of their identity, it is a painful reminder of the gap between themselves and other women. Our society, being male dominated, places far greater importance on penises than such a relatively simple piece of skin warrants. Transsexuals are often cruelly denied their identity as female by the state and by the rest of society because of the presence of this "male marker." It is little wonder that so many single-mindedly pursue surgery to correct what is to them, a birth defect. Among a support group they, not unreasonably, expect that the presence of this defect should not be the basis of denying their identity, but sadly, all too often this proves wrong. This is what I found as well. Being men, transvestites place the penis on the pedestal of identity and being men, they sometimes cruelly use the presence of one to deny a transsexual woman's identity. I have been told that until I am post-operative, I am a man and should be treated as one by several transvestite "sisters." I have been told that even though I live my life as a woman 100% of the time, I have no right to use a woman's restroom because I might upset someone with the presence of a penis that no one ever sees! They would doom me to never using a public restroom or placing myself in the path of ridicule or even possible physical harm by using men's restrooms.

I was unable to change the mind of these transvestites. The penis is so important to them that they can overlook the reality of my life, my hormonally changed body, my entire sense of who I am and not see anything wrong with this. Small wonder that after exposure to this type of "support" so many transsexuals want absolutely nothing to do with

transvestites. Just as is true with most men, far too many transvestites simply cannot understand the female mind.

When I first attended a meeting of the support group I eventually became president of, I was struck by one main impression. It was a Christmas party and a dinner was prepared and served as part of the meeting. The people preparing the meal and who did the vast majority of the cleaning up were the wives of the crossdressers. The transvestite males, as is true of men the world over, ate the meal and afterwards gathered in knots and talked about sports and cars and other male activities. I found myself drawn too [sic] and identified with two of the spouses and a female visitor from a local women's shelter. I still joined the group because at that point in my life I had been unable to express the essential woman I was anywhere else and I did find afterwards several transsexual sisters I did identify with.

This support was vital to my dealing with my transsexuality and my being able to assume the role of a woman that was my proper place. Although my need for the group quickly faded as I became more comfortable with myself, I saw the importance of this to those like me who followed and so I was willing to take on the responsibility of being an officer of the group. I believed that my presence would help my fellow members who were transvestites understand the differences between us and we would be able to work together. While this seemed to be true with some, far too many transvestites were still willing to deny my identity. After cruelly being attacked by a founder of the group, a transvestite, I resigned.

Can the two groups work together? I still believe they can but only if the transvestites learn that to a transsexual woman, any denial of their identity is going to be met with shock, horror and pain. Only if transvestites somehow learn that transsexual women are women and not full time crossdressers. Only if transvestites can rid themselves of the penis-centric view of the world that far too many of them carry around as part of their male baggage.

Communities consist of individuals. Individuals are, well, individual. Men and women work together all the time for the common good, transvestites and transsexuals should be able to as well, but like men and women, the two groups are vastly different. Celebrate and acknowledge the difference and much can be done. Fail to see the difference and some will be hurt quite badly.

## Crotchless Panties

(Submitted off the net by Holly Foster Wilson)

Christmas was coming up and the wife wanted to do something extra nice for her husband for the occasion. She went to Fredrick's of Hollywood and bought a very sexy pair of crotchless panties.

That night, she was waiting for him on the bed when he came home, and she was wearing nothing but the new panties. She leaned back and said "How would you like some of this?"

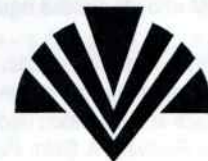
Her husband looked at her and said "Well, after what it did to those panties, I'm not too sure!!!"

## NEW SUPPORT GROUP FOR TRANSGENDERS

By Jessica Wicks

A new support group for transgendered men and women has been formed at MCCR church located in the old Sixth Ward historical district at 1910 Decatur just south of Washington Ave. Originally established as a ministry for HIV and AIDS, Empowerment for Living is a weekly program which features pot luck dinners and guest speakers. Because of the success of the program, it was decided that on the third Tuesday of each month, support groups would be established for the various communities within the larger MCCR community. One of these support groups is for transgendered persons interested in meeting with other transgendered people for the support of its membership. It is not necessary to be a member of the church to attend the group, and the group is not a religious support group. It is open to all transgendered people and their supporters. The topics for conversation are established within the group. If the group wishes to do so, it may bring its own guest speakers as well. Participation is encouraged for all who wish to participate.

The church is very supportive of transgendered men and women, and welcome participation of all within the community, at these programs or in the church itself. MCCR was originally formed to meet the spiritual needs of gay and lesbian people, but has since been expanded to be open and supportive of all groups, including transgendered individuals.



## a TATS Turkey Day Trio...



An SO, an F2M & an M2F. (L-R) Paula Schiesler, R.J. Schoubroek & Alison Kubota





## TATS Tidbits

By Vanessa Edwards-Foster

• Just a note of reminder, the December 27 meeting will not be held at the usual spot (my home), it will be at Stephanie Brooks' place. Her place is located at 3131 Southwest Frwy, Apt. 15 (on the inbound side, just towards downtown from the Summit-Greenway Plaza area. It's between Buffalo Speedway & Kirby next door to the Best Western.)

• Transgender pioneer Virginia Prince turned 85 on November 22. Virginia, for those of you who don't know, instrumental in getting the idea of transgenderism as a community out to the public back in the 1950's. She founded FPE (Foundation for Personality Expression) which later merged with another group in L.A. to become Society for the Second Self, now known as Tri-Ess. Over the years she has published periodicals and books on the subject of crossdressing, as well as speaking extensively to help educate the public. Like Christine Jorgensen, Virginia was integral in getting transgenderism into the public consciousness, especially at a time when it was somewhat dangerous to do so. Whether directly or indirectly, we all owe Virginia a debt of gratitude.

• The organizing committee of True Spirit Conference '98 invites all gender variant people on the F2M spectrum, and our significant others, friends, families, and allies to come celebrate the spirit within. American Boyz will sponsor the event being held at the Best Western-Maryland Inn, Laurel, Maryland, February 20-22, 1998. Featured speakers will be Yoseño Lewis, a black Latino F2M who will speak on inclusion and diversity issues, and attorney Spencer Bergstedt, an F2M who will discuss legal and political issues.

The three-day event will include: "Workshops with panelists reknowned in the gender community, \*A Latin/Club Dance with DJ Calico Rechy, \*Peacock Pageant, \*A Film Festival, \*A Swim Party, \*Informal Caucuses, \*Health screening and information, and \*Transgendered readings by authors and playwrights (last year's speakers were Leslie Feinberg, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Laura Antoniou, Cecilia Tan, Gary Bowen, among others.) It will also be a great chance to network and meet new (and old) friends.

For hotel registration: call 301-776-5300 for reservations. Rates (until January 31, 1998) are: Single/Double: \$75; Triple/Quad: \$85. Price includes a complimentary lunch on Saturday to all registered guests of the hotel. To get conference rates and complimentary Saturday lunch, you must mention True Spirit Conference when registering. Conference registration: \$45 until December 31, 1997. \$65 thereafter. For registration, contact Justin Alexander here in town for a copy of the registration form, or write to: The American Boyz/True Spirit Conference 98, P O Box 1118, Elkton, MD, 21922-1118 or Email transman@netgsi.com.

• While on the subject of conventions, the tenth annual Texas "T" Party will be taking place February

26 through March 1, 1998. This year's "T" Party will return to its birthplace -- San Antonio -- and will be at a familiar venue as well -- the Airport-Hilton. The conference will feature workshops by Jon 'Beth' Davis, and Joan Bray. There will also be a hospitality suite featuring free drinks and snacks, and will play gender movies all day long. For registration information, write the Texas "T" Party, P O Box 17, Bulverde, TX 78163, or Email: TXTParty@aol.com. Don't forget to remember the Alamo....

• First it was fetishism and a some overly raucous sex, now.... According to a story first reported in the New York Post, Marv Albert allegedly had a long-term 'affair' with a M2F transvestite. According to the interview, a friend of the transvestite stated they had a rather ordinary relationship without the rough-stuff attributed to his more publicized affair. The interviewee stated, "It was just straight transvestite sex." I'm unsure exactly what that meant. Either they mutually masturbated themselves while looking at each other, or there was intercourse or copulation of some type -- which sorta contradicts the phrase 'straight transvestite sex.'

Albert all but confirmed as much publicly on the November 11 Late Show with David Letterman. While being pressed by Letterman on the question, Albert admitted, "I know a transvestite." Biblically, perhaps? For television, that's as close to a confession as you get -- obviously he wasn't gonna provide specific details. I admit I was impressed that he took the opportunity to go on national TV (no pun, honest) and be as forthcoming as he was, toned-down be it may. By the end of the interview with Letterman, I actually felt some sympathy for him. Watching him stiffly sitting there, knowing he's pretty much shot his career in the butt, answering admittedly softball but nonetheless uncomfortable questions about his sexual tastes before a snickering audience, left me squirming in my seat. I'm not sure if he identifies as a fetishist, a closet crossdresser, or a gynandromorphophile (T\* admirer); or a combination of those. Regardless, this'll just become another bizarre aberration of the Trans Community.

• Speaking of bizarre aberrations ... in Columbus, OH, Peter 'Commander Pedro' Langan was convicted back in Sept. for a 1996 shootout with police, among other charges. Besides 2 convictions for bank robberies, he faces trial for four more as leader of a neo-Nazi gang that funded themselves with the robberies. At his trial, his lawyer (in an attempt to show Langan's gentler side) brought in a man and woman who described their romances with him. Both witnesses were pre-op transsexuals. Apparently Langan was dating both of them around the time of the bank robberies while dressing exclusively as a woman himself. The lovers were known as Langan's 'business partners' because neo-nazis are not fond of such sexual lifestyles. DUH! My question is how the neo-nazis allowed him into their fold in the first place? If I may speak for the TG community, we certainly don't want him! Crossdressing Nazis? That's nearly an oxymoron!...or at least a moron!

• What recent movie has a real-life TG in it? Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil. Savannah female impersonator Lady Chablis plays herself in this tale about eccentric Savannah high society.

• Forwarded by Katrina Rose ... A committee from the Israel Broadcasting Authority recently chose M2F transsexual Dana International to represent the nation at the 1998 Eurovision Song Contest to the dismay of Orthodox Jewish leaders of the far-right. The Israeli trans-diva is her country's entry in a Euro song contest, but Shas Party leaders find her too unorthodox.

Selection Committee Chair Gil Samsonov said that Dana's song "Diva" was "far and away the best" of 33 entries considered, and believes her TS status might even be an edge in the upcoming contest. He said the choice should be made, "on their merits, not on the basis of the body of the man or woman." Nonetheless the Shas Party's representative, Gaby Butbul, said that he'll try to intervene to change the selection to a "consensus" candidate. Dana's manager, Health Minister Rabbi Shlomo Ben-Izri believes that SRS is "worse than an act of sodomy," and that the choice, "is disgraceful for me as a Jew."

Dana has been performing for seven years. Born Yaron Cohen in Tel Aviv to a working-class Yemenite-Jewish family, she underwent gender reassignment in 1993. Dana has performed for seven years and sings in Arabic, as well as Hebrew, French and English. Her manager claims her albums have sold a half-million copies in Cairo alone. She told the *Jerusalem Post* that, "People in Israel don't know what drag is, they don't know how to appreciate it -- it is a very primitive country sometimes."

Losing the Eurovision contest might not be so bad: the Eurovision 'winner's curse' is somewhat legendary. The only act ever to have won at Eurovision and go on to a successful career is ABBA.

## NORTHERN CALIF. PURPLES

(Continued from Page 4)

After wandering around the Palace for a while, Gwen went on back to work (twas just her lunch hour) and K'Ailsa and I headed back to San Jose so I could catch my flight back to la-la land. San Francisco is NOT a town to try to do in one day. Had I just been there to take as many pictures as possible I might have been frustrated, but being able to chill out by spending time with friends - both old and new, as well as remembering those who couldn't be there - made the jaunt worthwhile.

Oh....What the hell does the title mean? Well, I left most of my luggage in LA - I didn't take a coat with me to SF. I had to borrow a warm, but very purple sweater - from K'Ailsa. Together with my red jeans and pink t-shirt I looked, well, kinda average for SF. But, one AOL buddy said she had to put on sunglasses to look at the pix of me. So, I guess we should be glad that the newsletter is in B&W.

Meow.



## HOLIDAY RECIPES FROM THE EXPERTS by Mrs. Geraghty's Kindergarten Class

**\*\*\* NOTE:** Mrs. Geraghty will not be responsible for medical bills resulting from use of her cookbook.

**RUSSELL -- Turkey:** You cut the turkey up and put it in the oven for ten minutes and 300 degrees. You put Gravy on it and eat it.

**IVETTE -- Banana Pie:** You buy some bananas and crust. Then you mash them up and put them in the pie. Then you eat it.

**BERNIE -- Turkey:** You buy the turkey and take the paper off. Then you put it in the refrigerator and take it back out and cut it with a knife and make sure all the wires are out and take out the neck and heart. Then you put it in a big pan and cook it for half an hour at 30 degrees. Then you invite people over and eat.

**ANDREW -- Pizza:** Buy some dough, some cheese and pepperoni. Then you cook it for 10 hours at 5 degrees. Then you eat it.

**SHELBY -- Applesauce:** Go to the store and buy some apples, and then you squish them up. Then you put them in a jar that says, "Applesauce." Then you eat it.

**MEGHAN H. -- Turkey:** You cut it into 16 pieces and then you leave it in the oven for 15 minutes and 4 degrees. You take it out and let it cool and then after 5 minutes, then you eat it.

**DANNY -- Turkey:** You put some salt on it to make it taste good. Then you put it in the oven. Then you cook it for an hour at 5 degrees. Then you eat it.

**BRANDON -- Turkey:** First you buy it at Fred Meyer. Then you cut it up and cook it for 15 hours at 200 degrees. Then you take it out and eat it.

**MEGAN K -- Chicken:** You put it in the oven for 25 minutes and 25 degrees and put Gravy on it and eat it.

**TOMMY -- Pumpkin:** Cook the pumpkin. Then get ready to eat the pumpkin.

**CHRISTA -- Cookies:** Buy some dough and smash it and cut them out. Then put them in the oven for 2 hours at 100 degrees. Then take them out and dry them off. Then it's time to eat them.

**IRENE -- Turkey:** Put it on a plate and put it in the oven with Gravy. You cook it for 1 minute and for 100 degrees. Then it's all cooked. Your mom or dad cuts it and then eat.

**MORTAH -- Turkey:** First you cut the bones out. Then you put it in the oven for 10 hours at 600 degrees. Then you put it on the table and eat it.

**JORDYN -- Turkey:** First you have to cut it up and put it on a plate in the oven for 9 minutes and 18 degrees. Then you dig it out of the oven and eat it.

**GRACE -- Turkey:** First you add some salt. Then you put it in a bowl. Then you put brown sugar on it. Then you mix it all together with a spoon and then you add some milk and mix it again. And then you put it in a pan. Then you put it in the oven for 15 minutes and 16 degrees. Then you take it out of the oven and then you eat it.

**ALAN -- Turkey:** First you shoot it and then you cut it. And then you put it in the oven and cook it for 10 minutes and 20 degrees. You put it on plates and then you eat it.

**JORDAN SIMONS -- Chocolate Pudding:** Buy some chocolate pudding mix. Then you add the milk. Then you add the pudding mix. Then you stir it. Then you put it in the refrigerator and wait for it to get hard. Then you eat it.

**JASON -- Chicken Pie:** Put the chicken in the pot and put the salad and cheese and mustard and then you mix it all together. Then put chicken sauce and stir it all around again. Then you cook it for 5 minutes at 9 degrees. Then you eat it.

**JENNIE -- Corn:** My mom buys it. Then you throw it. Then you cook it.

**CHRISTOPHER -- Pumpkin Pie:** First you buy a pumpkin and smash it. Then it is all done. And you cook it in the oven for 12 minutes and 4 degrees. Then you eat it.

**JORDAN -- Cranberry Pie:** Put cranberry juice in it. Then you put berries in it. Then you put dough in it. Then you bake it. Then you eat it.

**ADAM -- Pumpkin Pie:** First you put pumpkin seeds in it. Put it in a pan and bake it at 5 degrees for 6 minutes. Then take it out and eat it.

**JARRYD -- Deer Jerky:** Put it in the oven overnight at 20 degrees. Then you go hunting and bring it with you. Then you eat it.

**JOPLYN -- Apple Pie:** Take some apples, mash them up. Take some bread and make a pie with it. Get some dough and squish it. Shape the dough into a pie shape. Put the apples in it. Then bake it at 9 degrees for 15 minutes.

**ISABELLE -- Spaghetti:** Put those red things in it. Then put the spaghetti in it. Then cook it in the oven for 2 minutes at 8 degrees.

**NICHOLAS -- White and Brown Pudding:** First you read the wrapper. Get a piece of water. Stir. Then you eat it.

**LAUREN -- Turkey:** First you find a turkey and kill it. Cut it open. Put it in a pan. Pour milk in the pan. Put a little chicken with it. Put salsa on it. Take out of pan. Put it on the board. Cut into little pieces. Put on a rack. Put in the oven for 5 minutes at 10 degrees. Take out of the oven and put eensy weensy bit of sugar on it. Put a little more salsa on it. Then you eat it.

**SIFRA -- Pumpkin Pie:** Get some pumpkin and dough for the crust. Get pumpkin pie cinnamon. Cook it for 20 minutes at 10 degrees.

**NAJ -- Pumpkin Pie:** Get a pumpkin. Cook it. Eat it.



## The Similarities of Jesus and Elvis

By Matthew Hahne

Jesus said: "Love thy neighbor." (Matthew 22:39)  
Elvis said: "Don't be cruel." (RCA, 1956)

Jesus is the Lord's shepherd.  
Elvis dated Cybill Shepherd.

Jesus was part of the Trinity.  
Elvis' first band was a trio.

Jesus walked on water. (Matthew 14:25)  
Elvis surfed. (Blue Hawaii, Paramount, 1965)

Jesus' entourage, the Apostles, had 12 members.  
Elvis' entourage, the Memphis Mafia, had 12 members.

Jesus was resurrected.  
Elvis had the famous 1968 "comeback" TV special.

Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." (John 7:37)  
Elvis said, "Drinks on me!" (Jailhouse Rock, MGM, 1957)

Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights.  
Elvis had irregular eating habits. (e.g. 5 banana splits for breakfast)

Jesus is a Capricorn. (December 25)  
Elvis is a Capricorn. (January 8)

Matthew was one of Jesus' many biographers. (The Gospel According to Matthew)  
Neil Matthews was one of Elvis' many biographers. (Elvis: A Golden Tribute)

"[Jesus'] countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." (Matthew 28:3)  
Elvis wore snow-white jumpsuits with lightening bolts.

Jesus lived in state of grace in a Near Eastern land.  
Elvis lived in Graceland in a nearly eastern state.

Mary, an important woman in Jesus' life, had an Immaculate Conception.  
Priscilla, an important woman in Elvis' life, went to Immaculate Conception High School.

Jesus was first and foremost the Son of God.  
Elvis first recorded with Sun Studios, which today are still considered to be his foremost recordings.

Jesus was the lamb of God.  
Elvis had lamb chop sideburns.

Jesus' Father is everywhere.  
Elvis' father was a drifter, and moved around quite a bit.

Jesus was a carpenter.  
Elvis' favorite high school class was wood shop.

Jesus wore a crown of thorns.  
Elvis wore Royal Crown hair styler.

Jesus H. Christ has 12 letters.  
Elvis Presley has 12 letters.

No one knows what the "H" in "Jesus H. Christ" stood for.

No one was really sure if Elvis' middle name was "Aron" or "Aaron".

Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone."  
Elvis liked his sandwiches with peanut butter and bananas.

## The Perfect Woman, The Perfect Man And Santa Claus

By Jim Hein

(Submitted off the net by Mary Ann Harris from the Crystal Club of Ohio)

There was a perfect man who met a perfect woman. After a perfect courtship, they had a perfect wedding. Their life together was, of course, perfect. One snowy, stormy Christmas Eve this perfect couple was driving along a winding road when they noticed someone at the roadside in distress.

Being the perfect couple, they stopped to help. There stood Santa Claus with a huge bundle of toys. Not wanting to disappoint any children on the eve of Christmas, the perfect couple loaded Santa and his toys into their vehicle. Soon they were driving along delivering the toys. Unfortunately, the driving conditions deteriorated and the perfect couple and Santa Claus had an accident.

Only one of them survived the accident. Who was the survivor?

*The perfect woman.*

Everyone knows there is no Santa Claus and no such thing as a perfect man.

~~~ A Male's Response: ~~~

So, if there is no perfect man and no Santa Claus, the perfect woman must have been driving. This explains why there was a car accident.

Over the years, the Butterball Turkey Talk-Line staff have had their share of memorable calls -- inquiries that stand out from the crowd because they're heartwarming or amusing. We asked some of the veteran staff members to tell us their favorites; plus, we rounded up a bunch of our own personal favorites from the Talk-Line archives. Its hard to beat the call from a trucker who planned to cook his Thanksgiving turkey on the engine of his truck ("Will it cook faster if I drive faster?"), but some of these come pretty close. Warning: do not attempt to adjust your screen -- these are real incidents, true stories -- from the front lines!

\* **Taking turkey preparation an extra step**, a Virginian wondered, "How do you thaw a fresh turkey?" The Talk-Line staffer explained that fresh turkeys aren't frozen and don't need to be thawed.

\* **Birdie, eagle and turkey?** Roasting a turkey doesn't have to interfere with the daily routine, so said a retired Floridian. He called "Turkey Central" for turkey grilling tips while waiting to tee off from the 14th hole.

\* **Don't wait until the last minute!** On Thanksgiving Day, a Georgian woman took the "Be prepared" motto to heart. She'd just agreed to host Thanksgiving Dinner and called the Talk-Line a year ahead of time for turkey tips.

\* **Happy Thanksgiving, President Clinton!** A Southern woman called to comment, "On Thanksgiving Day, the Butterball Turkey Talk-Line is more important than the President. He can take the day off, but the Talk-Line staff can't." (The Butterball Turkey Talk-Line is open Thanksgiving Day, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., CST)

\* **Mama's little helper.** A young girl called on behalf of her mother who needed roasting advice. To provide approximate roasting times, the home economist asked what size the turkey was. Without asking her mother the little girl paused, then replied, "Medium."

\* **Tofu turkey?** No matter how you slice it, Thanksgiving just isn't Thanksgiving without turkey. A restaurant owner in California wanted to know how to roast a turkey for a vegetarian menu.

\* **Thanksgiving Dinner on the run.** A woman called 1-800-323-4848 to find out how long it would take to roast her turkey. To answer the question, the Talk-Line home economist asked how much the bird weighed. The woman responded, "I don't know, it's still running around outside."

\* **White meat, anyone?** A West Coast woman took turkey preparation to extremes by scrubbing her bird with bleach. Afterward, she called the Talk-Line to find out how to clean off the bleach. To her dismay, she was advised to dispose of the turkey.

\* **A Kentucky woman was in the doghouse** when she called the Butterball Turkey Talk-Line. While preparing the turkey, her Chihuahua jumped into the bird's body cavity and couldn't get out. She tried pulling the dog and shaking the bird, but nothing worked. She and the dog became more and more distraught. After calming the woman down, the Talk-Line home economist suggested carefully cutting the opening in the cavity of the turkey wider. It worked and Fido was freed!

\* **Net Results.** A novice turkey-cooking chef wanted to know if the yellow netting and wrapper around the turkey should be removed before roasting. Envisioning a melted plastic turkey blob, the home economist responded, "Yes," then offered complete roasting directions.





~~~ Thank You for the Twelve Days of Christmas ~~~

December 14, 1972

My dearest darling John:

Who ever in the whole world would dream of getting a real Partridge in a Pear Tree? How can I ever express my pleasure. Thank you a hundred times for thinking of me this way.

My love always.  
Agnes

December 19, 1972

Dear John:

When I opened the door today there were actually six geese laying on my front steps. So you're back to the birds again huh? These geese are huge. Where will I ever keep them? The neighbors are complaining and I can't sleep through the racket. Please stop.

Cordially,  
Agnes

December 23, 1972

You rotten prick!!!

Now there's ten ladies dancing. I don't know why I call those sluts ladies. They've been balling those pipers all night long. Now the cows can't sleep and they've got diarrhea. My living room is a river of shit. The Commissioner of Buildings has subpoenaed me to give cause why the building shouldn't be condemned. I'm calling the police on you!

Agnes

December 15, 1972

Dearest John:

Today the postman brought your very sweet gift. Just imagine two turtle doves. I'm just delighted at your very thoughtful gift. They are just adorable.

All my love.  
Agnes

December 20, 1972

John:

What's with you and those freaking birds? Seven swans a swimming?? What kind of damn joke is this? There's bird poop all over the house and they never stop the racket. I can't sleep at night and I'm a nervous wreck. It's not funny. So stop those freaking birds!

Sincerely,  
Agnes

December 24, 1972

LISTEN FUCKHEAD!

What's with those eleven lords a leaping on those maid and ladies? Some of those broads will never walk again! Those pipers ran through the maids and have been committing SODOMY with the cows! All twenty-three of the birds are DEAD!!! They've been trampled to death in the orgy! I hope you're satisfied, you ROTTEN VICIOUS SWINE!!!

Your sworn ENEMY,  
Agnes

December 16, 1972

Dear John:

Oh! Aren't you the extravagant one. Now I must protest. I don't deserve such generosity, three French hens. They are just darling but I must insist, you've been too kind.

All my love.  
Agnes

December 21, 1972

O.K. Buster:

I think I prefer the birds. What the hell am I going to do with 8 maids a milking? It's not enough with all those birds and 8 maids a milking, but they had to bring their damn cows. There is manure all over the lawn and I can't move in my own house! Just lay off me, smartass!

Agnes

December 17, 1972

Dear John:

Today the postman delivered four calling birds. Now really, they are beautiful, but don't you think enough is enough? You are being too romantic.

Affectionately,  
Agnes

December 22, 1972

Hey Shithead.

What are you.....some kind of sadist??? Now there's nine pipers playing! And Christ do they play! They've never stopped chasing those maids since they got here yesterday morning! The cows are getting upset and they're stepping all over those screaming birds. What am I going to do? The neighbors have started a petition to evict me!

You'll get yours!  
Agnes

December 18, 1972

Dearest John:

What a surprise. Today the postman delivered five golden rings, one for every finger. You're just impossible, but I love it. Frankly, all those birds squawking were beginning to get on my nerves.

All my love.  
Agnes

Law Offices of Badger, Bender and Chole

December 25, 1972

Dear Sir:


This is to acknowledge your latest gift of twelve fiddlers fiddling which you have seen fit to inflict on our client, Miss Agnes McHolstein. The destruction, of course, was total. All correspondence should come to our attention. If you should attempt to reach Miss McHolstein at Happy Dale Sanitarium, the attendants have been instructed to shoot you on sight. With this letter please find attached a warrant for your arrest.

Cordially,  
*I. Will Badger*  
I. Will Badger, Esq.





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