

A Publication of Transgenderist's Independence Club, Albany, NY

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - Winnie [redacted]

DINNER PARTY AFTER WORKSHOP

Our first dinner party of the Fall season was switched to *Dorato's Restaurant* in Guilderland, and drew five members. Unfortunately, Tri-Ess switched their meeting to the same date, September 23, so there was a conflict after all. They have also switched their second meeting to October 21, again conflicting with the TGIC dinner date announced in the last issue. Therefore, we have decided to change our dinner date, time, and place to follow the *Transgressing Gender* workshop on Saturday, **October 14**, scheduled for 1-5 pm (see p. 9).

The idea is to encourage you to attend the workshop (it's free) and meet others there, then invite them to join us for dinner and social discourse. Tentatively, the time is set for 6 pm at a location still to be determined. Please sign up at the club room or call 436-4513 and leave a message for Joan by Thursday, October 12, or call Joan at [redacted] 6. Indicate whether you will also be attending the workshop and leave your number so we can confirm details.

RECLAIM YOUR INNER DRAG QUEEN!

Halloween, the time to set your spirit free, is coming up at the end of the month. To get you in the mood and help with your presentation, Callan and Jennifer will hostess a *Glamour Party* at the **Club Room** one week before, on Tuesday, **October 24**. Callan says: "This is safe and sacred space to bring all of the joy and pain of feminine expression that must be muted in this world. Bring poetry, dance, scents, paints, talismans, emblems, vestments, shoes, hair, flowers, pictures, laughter and anything that helps express the feminine in you, the

connection to all things. Don't bring masculine energy, butch or otherwise, that wants to judge and pigeon hole others or get stuck in keeping up macho and dominant exteriors. This is space for tapping into the feminine in all of us, not for learning how to "do drag"; a space for dropping barriers to reclaim the feminine child, not for trying to learn a set of rules".

CANDIDATES WANTED -

TGIC ELECTIONS COMING IN JANUARY

The TGIC Constitution (yes, we have one, even though we haven't been following it to the letter) provides for election of officers and directors every three years, and the term of the present incumbents (see list p.4) ends this year. We are looking for "new blood" to revitalize our organization and move it forward over the next three years. In particular, I wish to hand over the Presidency. If you can bring new ideas and energy to the Club, please consider becoming a candidate. Officers should be able to attend meetings regularly, at least every other week on average, and perform the necessary chores to keep the Club running smoothly. More on this topic next month. Ballots will be sent to members with the January newsletter.

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Discrimination & Passing:

Letter to The Editor

14 September, 1995

Winnie,

In your "President's Column" of the September *Transgenderist*, while discussing ENDA you finish by noting that "*And there will be no precedent, so we will likely be dumped from any future anti-discrimination legislation to make it passable. To avoid discrimination, we must be passable.*"

While this may have simply been a turn of phrase, no transgendered person passes as being born in the traditional sex for their chosen gender 100% of the time. If they did, there might be no need for protection for transgendered people. Even those of us who blend in perfectly have the potential of being outed by a medical issue, someone we knew in the past or by a range of other possibilities. We also often do not pass while transitioning. At this point, we each need protection.

While I understand that gender cues are about our personal power to influence people, and that there are advantages to blending in, to offering a reasonably constant and appropriate gender expression, no one deserves to be discriminated against because they fit in a certain class. Rights are not someone the people in Washington D.C. choose to give us, rather they are enshrined in the constitution "for all," not just the ones of us who are "passable."

Without ENDA protection, you can be fired just because your boss finds out that you are a crossdresser, no matter how much you "pass" as a man at work.

The notion that we must be "passable" to avoid discrimination, as you state, is a contradiction. Feeling we are only protected when we are passing means that we can never be open and honest about who we are, and we must always live in fear of being outed, however we choose to live. This is an assimilationist attitude that limits all of us to a life of fear and lies, and does not allow us to open up and thrive.

Your open support of ENDA is laudable. I hope that support is for all transgendered people, not merely the ones who are perfectly "passable" -- which, in the long run, is none of us.

Callan

Yes, Callan - There's a little irony linking two meanings of "passable". --- Winnie

Don't Look Back By Mary Engelbreit

As you travel through life there are always those times when decisions just have to be made... when choices are hard and solutions seem scarce and the rain seems to soak your parade!

There are some situations where all you can do is to simply let go and move on... gather courage together and choose a direction that carries you toward a new dawn.

So pack up your troubles and take a step forward -- the process of change can be tough... but think about all the excitement ahead if you can be stalwart enough!

There could be adventures you never imagined just waiting around the next bend... and wishes and dreams just about to come true in ways you can't yet comprehend!

Perhaps you'll find friendships that spring from new interests as you challenge the old status quo... and learn there are so many options in life and so many ways you can grow!

Perhaps you'll go places you never expected and see things that you've never seen... or travel to fabulous, faraway worlds and the wonderful spots in between!

Perhaps you'll find warmth and affection and caring -- a "somebody special" who's there... to help you stay centered and listen with interest to those stories and feelings you share.

Perhaps you'll find comfort in knowing your friends are supportive of all that you do... and believe that whatever decisions you make, they'll be the right choices for you!

So keep putting one foot in front of the other and taking your life day by day. There's a brighter tomorrow that's just down the road. Don't Look Back -- You're Not Going That Way!

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THE VIRGINIA PRINCE & TRINITY AWARDS
- Winnie ██████

*(Chair of the IFGE Nominations & Awards
Committee)*

One of the primary purposes for which Merissa Sherrill Lynn founded IFGE was to encourage cooperation for mutual benefit between the many different groups and organizations in the transgender community, some of which are dedicated to serve the needs of a limited segment. The name of the annual "Coming Together - Working Together" Convention stresses this objective.

The beginning of organized transgender groups can be traced back to Virginia Prince in 1960. She was soon followed by others brave enough to stick their necks out of the closet and seek like-minded friends. Soon after its conception, it seemed that the Coming Together Convention would be a suitable forum at which to recognize these pioneers who have led us to where we are today. To this end, the Virginia Prince Lifetime Contribution Award was instituted in 1987 and first given to Virginia herself. This Award is recognized as the transgender community's highest award, and honors a member of the transgender community who has been a leader instrumental in the development of the community, and has served actively for at least ten years. To date, nine Virginia Prince Awards have been given, one each year.

There are many others who have followed in the path laid down by these leaders and given of themselves to further the cause of transgendered people. Some have been active only in their local region and are not widely known elsewhere. Some have been particularly courageous in undertaking one specific deed. Some are not transgendered themselves, but have lent their professional skills to support transgendered people and assist us in achieving our goals. Others are the spouses or partners of transgendered people. And many have taken personal or professional risks to do this. It was to recognize such

people who have performed extraordinary acts of love and courage that the Trinity Award was established.

The Trinity Award is a finely crafted bronze statuette of clasped hands - one masculine, one feminine - clutching a rose, familiar as a logo of IFGE and the Tiffany Club. The statuette is also presented to recipients of the Virginia Prince Award. Since the first were awarded in 1991, 30 Trinity Awards have been given, six each year, in an evening of ceremonies which are a highlight of the Annual Convention. This award is recognized as second only to the Virginia Prince Award in prestige.

The recipients of these transgender community awards are decided after a carefully considered procedure, and not by a small group in a closed room. The task of seeking nominations for these awards and conducting elections is given to the IFGE Nominations & Awards Committee. Besides Merissa, the late Ellen Summers (then Chair of the Committee), Virginia Prince, Janice Rupard and other committee members contributed in establishing the criteria for eligibility and details of the election procedure for the awards.

While the awards are presented at a convention sponsored by IFGE, are coordinated by a committee of IFGE, and their cost is borne by IFGE, they should not be regarded as IFGE awards, but as awards from the entire transgender community. Nomination of candidates is open to any member or friend of the transgender community, including the CTO as well as IFGE. The duty of the N&A Committee is limited to a preliminary screening of the nominees, preparation of the ballots, and counting the returns. Voting for the recipients among the candidates is passed to the Selections Academy, a group of 24-36 experienced and respected members and friends of the transgender community, who are not necessarily members of IFGE. To minimize potential bias, current members of the IFGE Board and the N&A Committee are excluded from the Academy.

Bailey's Crowns Noted Drag Queen as Pitch Person for New Campaign

by Kevin [REDACTED]

Yum!

With this common expression, Baileys Irish Cream is about to introduce a singularly uncommon spokesman, er, spokesperson: RuPaul, the blond-wigged, African-American drag queen.

Is America ready for what is believed to be the first cross-dresser to promote a mainstream brand? Marketing experts think so, but Paddington, the importer of Baileys, is clearly taking a chance.

RuPaul (full name: RuPaul Andre Charles) will be seen in a provocative pose in print ads for Baileys, beginning in the October issues of magazines, such as Rolling Stone, Entertainment Weekly, InStyle, Out and New York. The ads are the creation of Interpublic Group's Lowe & Partners/SMS, which has been Baileys agency since late 1993.

The association with Baileys is the second endorsement deal for the 35-year-old RuPaul. He is also pitching the M.A.C. Cosmetics brand marketed by Make-up Art Cosmetics in Toronto. Whereas M.A.C. appeals to a young, hip audience, Baileys's consumers tend to be older and more conservative.

And that is precisely why Paddington is using RuPaul in mainstream advertising, including bus shelters, kiosks and perhaps eventually point-of-purchase and on billboards (maybe in New York's Times Square). There is even a possibility RuPaul might make some personal appearances in bars, although executives overseeing the campaign stress such strategy in the earliest planning stages.

RuPaul "represents freedom, acceptance to be yourself as long as you don't hurt anyone," says Scott Green, group brand director at Paddington. "The objective with the ads is to get in people's faces and be more provocative, sensual and relevant to today."

Marketing experts say America appears ready to accept a female impersonator who has crossed over, so to speak, to appear in the mainstream media, including the part of a guidance counselor in "The Brady Bunch Movie" and now ads. "RuPaul has managed to create a hip, yet clean image for himself," says Carol Moog, a psychologist and head of Creative Focus, an advertising consulting company in Bala Cynwyd, Pa. "This is a way for mainstream Americans to experience the outlandish and do it safely and in a nonthreatening way."

It certainly is hip for a he to dress like a she these days. In July, New York magazine published a cover story, "Every Man a Queen," with a cover photograph of three drag queens.

And perhaps the biggest splash is about to arrive: "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar," a \$30 million feature film from Universal Pictures scheduled to open next Friday. It stars Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes and John Leguizamo, who all wear dresses, wigs, and makeup.

Marketers feel that if this trend is appealing to young people, perhaps they should capitalize on it. Mr. Green says once consumers see the ad, "it is our hope that people will start to think of Baileys in a different way, or think of the brand at all in the first place."

All too often, Baileys is only brought out in the winter and for special occasions, says Mr. Green. And it is frequently given as a present. But Paddington wants consumers to sip the liquor anytime.

Baileys's sales are slowly growing after a few years of decline, according to Paddington. The brand, introduced internationally in 1974 (it became available in the U.S. in 1979), is projected to sell four million cases world-wide this year.

Who's next in Baileys's ad campaign? Mr. Green isn't saying, although he isn't ruling out the possibility that Lowe will once again push the envelope with an out-of-the-ordinary selection.

Hmm!

Wall Street Journal, September 1, page B7

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"Ru Paul was a boy that never got noticed. He resorted to a gimmick and has become legendary. I think he's fabulous. He's found his image, and he performs it beautifully."

--Fashion critic Mr. Blackwell in Genre.

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"I don't mind playing offensive stereotypes, but I *won't* play American."

--Scott "Kids In The Hall" Thompson on his new role as a gay Canadian on HBO's "The Larry Sanders Show."

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"I think what [advertisers have] realized is if there's an entertaining character, a character reflective of society, that they don't have to run and hide from that. We've kind of gotten past that."

--NBC Entertainment President Warren Littlefield on the surge in gay TV characters.

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TGIC

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Transgenderist's Independence Club (TGIC) is a nonprofit, educational, non-sexual social support group for persons wishing to explore beyond the conventional boundaries of gender, including crossdressers, transsexuals and their friends.

TGIC Officers & Directors

- President Winnie [REDACTED]
- Vice President Joan [REDACTED]
- Secretary Joyce [REDACTED]
- Treasurer Winnie [REDACTED]
- Director Tina [REDACTED]
- Director Edie [REDACTED]
- Director Callan [REDACTED]
- Director Sue [REDACTED]
- Newsletter Editor Winnie [REDACTED]

The Transgenderist is the newsletter of TGIC, published monthly and mailed First Class to members, prospective members, friends, professionals, and exchange publications.

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TGIC General Membership Dues: \$40/yr

MORE ON THE MURDER OF DEBORAH FORTE. . .

(New York City - September 12, 1995) Mr. Michael J. Thompson of Haverhill MA has pleaded non-guilty in Haverhill District Court to the charge of murder. He was ordered held without bail.

Mr. Thompson was charged with the stabbing death of Deborah Forte, who was discovered by her roommate at 9:20am on the morning of May 15. Ms. Forte suffered three stab wounds to the chest, each half a foot deep, and in addition a number of slash wounds across her chest, a smashed nose, multiple severe blows to her head and face, and signs on her throat of partial strangulation.

Mr. Thompson allegedly confessed to a coworker that he killed Ms. Forte, after they went to her residence, began "messaging around," and he discovered that she had a penis.

As they did with the brutal murder of Brandon Teena in Falls City NB, The Transexual Menace is planning a peaceful Memorial Vigil for the opening day of the trial -- both to honor the memory of Ms. Forte, and to protest yet another bloody and violent gender-based murder.

As of yet, no trial date has been set. Persons interested in participating in the Vigil should contact The Transexual Menace, c/o Riki Anne Wilchins, Riki@Pipeline.Com or call (212)645-1753.

ICTLEP Invited to White House

11 Sep 95

ICTLEP Executive Director, Phyllis Randolph Frye, announces that she received an invitation to meet with Presidential Assistant, Marsha Scott, at the White House during the upcoming "National Transgender Lobby Days" of 2-3 October. Ms. Scott serves the President as liaison to minority interests which include lesbian, gay, bisexual AND TRANSGENDER concerns.

ICTLEP'S goal is to educate everyone about just how bad the employment situation is for ALL transgenders -- from cross dressers and drags who simply want to keep their jobs if it becomes known, through women who can still get fired if they wear pants to work, and to transsexuals who are transitioning on the job or seeking new employment.

ICTLEP wants to insure that those folks on the "hill" and in the White House understand that Title VII's "sex" protection does not cover transgenders and that the current, Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) sponsored Employment Non-Discrimination Act's (ENDA, House 1863 and Senate 932) "sexual orientation" protection will not cover transgenders either.

The language needed deals with the area of "gender identification" and appearance.

Frye hopes to be allowed to extend the invitation to include others from ICTLEP, and also representatives from the TG Men's community, It's Time America, and Transexual Menace.

FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE FIRST INTERDISCIPLINARY TRANSGENDER STUDIES CONFERENCE

Through informal discussions between Susan Stryker, Sandy Stone, Judith Halberstam, and other members of the Transgender Academic Network, planning has begun for a professional academic transgender studies conference to be held in October 1997. Goals of the conference are: To announce the emergence of a new interdisciplinary field;

create a space where interactions across discourses and disciplinary specializations will be necessary; bring together the rapidly growing number of people who have been working in transgender studies for the last several years; alert individuals working in narrower specialties to the kinds of cross-disciplinary work being done; support and encourage new work; help shift the academic discourses around gender identification, embodiment, desire, and sexuality; and make a political intervention into the way systems of gender and sexuality are currently maintained.

An initial steering committee is in the process of forming. All interested persons are encouraged to participate. The first planning meeting for this conference will be held October 7-8, 1995, in New York City, in conjunction with the conference "Lesbian and Gay History: defining a field," sponsored by CUNY Graduate School-History Program. Sunday, October 8, we will meet 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.; we may need to meet on Saturday, October 7, as well. Nan Boyd is working to secure a meeting room at CUNY.

For a more extensive memo about conference planning to date, which includes the proposed agenda for the first steering committee meeting, email me at jacob.hale@huey.csun.edu.

For more information about "Lesbian and Gay History: defining a field," call CUNY Graduate School-History Program at (212)-642-2110; they advise advance registration, as seating is limited.

Jacob Hale, Assistant Professor
Department of Philosophy, California State University, Northridge
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Pop Quiz

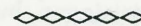
From lesbian columnist Deb Price's new book, *And Say Hi To Joyce*, thanks to Rex Wockner's "Quote/Unquote" column of August 8, 1995

An engineering professor is treating her husband, a loan officer, to dinner for finally giving in to her pleas to shave off the scraggly beard he grew on vacation. His favorite restaurant is a casual place where they both feel comfortable in slacks and cotton/polyester-blend golf shirts. But, as always, she wears the gold and pearl pendant he gave her the day her divorce decree was final. They're laughing over their menus because they know he always ends up diving into a giant plate of ribs but she won't be talked into anything more fattening than shrimp.

Quiz: *How many biblical prohibitions are they violating?*

Well, wives are supposed to be 'submissive' to their husbands (I Peter 3:1). And all women are forbidden to teach men (I Timothy 2:12), wear gold or pearls (I Timothy 2:9) or dress in clothing that 'pertains to a man' (Deuteronomy 22:5). Shellfish and pork are definitely out (Leviticus 11:7, 10) as are usury (Deuteronomy 23:19), shaving (Leviticus 19:27) and clothes of more than one fabric (Leviticus 19:19). And since the Bible rarely recognizes divorce, they're committing adultery, which carries the rather harsh penalty of death by stoning (Deuteronomy 22:22).

So why are they having such a good time? Probably because they wouldn't think of worrying about rules that seem absurd, anachronistic or—at best—unrealistic. Yet this same modern-day couple could easily be among the millions of Americans who never hesitate to lean on the Bible to justify their own anti-gay attitudes."



"You always have to remember -- no matter what you're told -- that God loves all the flowers, even the wild ones that grow on the side of the highway."

—Cyndi "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" Lauper when asked about her gay fans by the Reuter news service.

Doubts, Fear & Courage

Callan ██████ Copyright © 1995

Do I have doubts about transgender? Everyday.

The essential aspects of humanity are the challenge between wild and tame, between culture and the individual.

Every individual piece of me says that I should be able to live my life as I am called to, and for me the call of transgressive gender behavior has been long and loud. From the age of five I have been called to crossdress, to know that I was not simply one of the boys.

But my cultural side says that is wrong. I have been trained to believe that transgressing gender will lead me to humiliation and separation, to the loss of all the tame world has to offer me -- family, warmth, comfort, love.

I spent years being afraid of the slippery slope of gender, that somehow I would, taking one step at a time, end up at a destination where I had no desire to go. I did not want to end up at gender shift, but rather to find a way to satisfy my deep need to transgress gender within an acceptable context.

What I have ended up having to do is to retrace my journey down another slippery slope, one that I was not so conscious of going down because it was a well worn path. That slope is the slope of fear, the slope of socialization that teaches us the fear that this culture uses to control.

I have gone back and looked at lots of teachings about fear, everything from A Course In Miracles to the story of Donald Trump. What I have learned is that it is the fear itself that cuts us off from the things we desire in culture, not the desire to be ourselves. Following the rules only leads to mediocrity, not to fulfillment. Look at, for example, Donald Trump, Mother Theresa and Madonna -- they didn't win big by following the rules -- they won by overcoming their own fear and following their own mission.

I just read a great quote from Erica Jong:

"Everyone has a talent. What is rare is the courage to follow that talent to the dark places where it leads."

I have doubts everyday. Big, chomping doubts with giant razor-sharp teeth that feed my fears, my fears of separation, poverty, discomfort. I look ahead to a life as a big transgendered gay woman, and I can see all the reasons to be afraid, all the pain and abuse and hell...

Wynonna Judd was on Oprah. An audience member said "I want to be a country singer, but as a black woman I have two strikes against me.." and Wynonna spun and said "DO NOT DO THAT TO YOURSELF! Once you decide how many strikes you have against you, you are setting yourself up for failure. You have your challenges -- and your benefits -- just like any other person." Oprah

even noted that she has advantages as a black woman because there was space for her.

To have the courage to follow your own convictions, to believe in what you need to do, even if it flies in the face of what everybody else says, this is the challenge. Facing fear.

Everybody has to find their own way to face fear, to be aware enough of the pitfalls to avoid them, yet to be focused enough to follow their heart, moving forward. Zig Ziglar has called this a state of "intelligent ignorance," knowing what you can ignore.

Phyllis Frye handles fear by eating it up, others by simple inertia. Femmes tend to deal with it inside of a network, being strong for the other women -- or for the kids. I need to believe that what I am doing is part of some larger context, to trust in my godself and my connection to the universe, which is VERY hard for a child of Vietnam & Watergate. I doubt everyone's intentions -- especially mine.

I know that, as Joseph Campbell says, "the reward of a lifetime is becoming who you are." I know intellectually that it is my courage that can give me comfort, and it is only my comfort that will let me be effective with other people. Robert Frost: There's nothing I'm afraid of like scared people.

I have my doubts, everyday. They generate an awful lot of fear. And I have not yet transcended that fear, no doubt.

But to never face your fear is to never be free, to be a prisoner to the people and culture that laid that fear in you for so many years. I know that I have to do it, find my own voice, sing in my own way.

I can see a hundred things to be afraid of in that last sentence -- my voice is flat, people will humiliate me, I have nothing to say, I will starve, they will hurt me.

I had a friend who said "You seem to worry about being unhappy if you gendershift. But you're very unhappy now. What do you have to lose?"

Exactly. It's just that sometimes I wish I was more shallow -- or that the support systems were designed to support success not dysfunction. All these boys who were taught to put down, not build up.

We all have doubts. It's the courage to face them that determines our eventual happiness. And as for me, I'm so used to the pain that I'm afraid I will miss it. Heck, I have even used the pain to control my ADD.

But you? You should be courageous. Cast off the fear and the pain and get on with your life. I'll just be over in the corner there....

Callan

If it's wrong to fake orgasm

is it right to fake community ?

~ by Anne Droid ~

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"[The bisexual rights movement] is on par with the White Power or Men's Rights movements..."

—Ara Wilson
{Lesbian anthropologist}

"Knee-jerk etiquette demanded that I humor this gross parody of my sex [a male-to-female transsexual] by accepting him as female..."

—Germaine Greer

Gentle readers, your guardian of objectivity, Anne Droid, has noticed a big to-do in several of the communities to which she belongs, specifically in regard to the ethics of choosing our friends and our foes; the setting of standards for what constitutes "progress" in gaining acceptance of difference and diversity for sexual and gender expression, not to mention legal protections; and the moral implications of the strategies we adopt in arriving at these ends.

Ms. Droid will have you know that she does have standards. And morals. And ethics. She likes to be around polite, friendly people; similarly, she prefers acting in a polite and friendly manner. She doesn't think conflict for its own sake is a Good Thing, much less a sound philosophy, and she also thinks that negative energy and feelings be best directed at one's foes rather than one's (presumed) allies.

However, sometimes in this difficult world she does find it necessary to draw the line someplace, sometime. She doesn't think that this constitutes *waging war* nor does she think that calling this "male-identified" behavior comes from a space originating in conventional feminist thought. Honey may catch more flies than vinegar, but who wants a handful of sticky flies? It may make sense to play nicely with other groups and communities if we want to persuade them to accept and include us — but it makes NO sense to couch our language in platitudes or water down our

demands when they are trying to subsume us! Why should we suddenly forget how we were left out in the past, or forget the nasty things said about us?

Ms. Droid is stubborn, and she has a long memory. She cannot help but to wonder why some groups are rushing to be inclusive of us, when such a task was impossible even a year ago. However, she doesn't have to wonder — she knows. And she will tell you (in person, off the record) all the Whys and Wherefores of these changes and all the Players involved. However, in print, you're just going to have to take her word for it; our local, friendly, inclusive, oh-so-polite Community has adopted a litigious mood, and Ms. Droid knows that a hefty lawsuit would curtail her fashion budget. She can, though, share some of her theories on why, in the light of past history. For, you see, it's just like buying fashion— It's All in the Label.

"You may look like we do / talk like we do / but you know how it is: You're Not One Of Us"

— Peter Gabriel

Ms. Droid admits disquiet about the tendency to build comfy boxes, labels, categories, walls, and other barriers to free expression of identity in the Gay and Lesbian (and tentatively Bisexual) community, moreso because of an uncanny and unnerving parallel in our Transgendered community and its seeming fixation on labeling M2F's and F2M's, pre-ops and post-, strictly straight crossdressers versus gay drag queens, et cetera.

I am also unhappy that many of our members of our Transgendered community express sentiments that might be construed as sexist, anti-women, homophobic, or insensitive and unenlightened in general. Rest assured that Ms. Droid does empathetically comment on such unfriendly thoughts expressed in her presence, whether they arise from

definite malice or mere lack of thought. However, she doesn't consider such expressions as worthy of immediate purge from the Transgendered community and exile to heterosexist Siberia for the culprit; let the punishment fit the crime! It serves no purpose to label one member of the community as too outrè or strident or berate another for being "misogynist" for "objectifying women". It doesn't help keep our tenuous community together, and it certainly doesn't cause the offender to become contrite and change their unenlightened ways. I would also argue that such actions are shaming and serve to internalize, in each of us, negative feelings expressed by our adversaries towards our community (internalized transphobia?). Better to hope that each of us can come to our own realization of our stereotypical attitudes; better to broaden and strengthen our community by accepting difference, whether it be in expression of gender identity and sexual orientation or in strategy for defending our civil rights.

"We have met the enemy, and they is us"

— Pogo Possum

We all know that a lady doesn't discuss her age. However, Ms. Droid will have to risk dating herself just to present some of her qualifications and reasoning for adopting some opinions, in regards to what the Gay (+Lesbian+Bi) Rights Movement has done in the past and what it plans for the future.

Now, admittedly, Ms. Droid has identified as Bisexual for much longer than she identified as Transgendered. However she has always found this distinction to be confusing, since, to her, one has always seemed to be an inseparable part of the other. She learned that, to many people, that the two were separable, and that, to some, such distinctions did matter a great deal. She also learned that there are some things that

Community continues...

Community continues...

just aren't discussed in polite queer company, and that not making a choice is not an acceptable decision (*Are you bisexual or transgendered — you can't be both. If you're not 100% gay, you're either straight or a pervert.*)

In hindsight, she realizes that it shouldn't have been a surprise. She had learned a few years ago that attractions to the opposite (*opposite to what?*) gender as well as the same gender made a Bi rather than a Gay, and this mattered, and not just to gay-fearing heterosexuals and radical rightists, but to Gays and Lesbians, too. During the Eighties, such distinctions between Bi and Gay were usually made for a negative purpose: some said that you were a "fence sitter" who couldn't make up their mind who to sleep with, others said that you were "in denial" about your Gayness and just in the process of coming out, others said you weren't real and didn't exist, and still others hated and feared you for no specific reason whatever and just used it as an excuse to not invite you to their posh parties or their Rights Movement.

After lingering about on the fringes for many years Ms. Droid decided to Step Out. Even though she had to wade through a lot of negativity and a dearth of acceptance, she persisted in identifying as a Persecuted Minority, and as she did so, she learned something. She learned about assimilationism: a philosophy held by many of those in power in the Gay Rights movement that, to achieve protections and acceptance it was best to maximize our similarities to the Straight community and minimize our difference by hiding all things exotic or perverse, such as non-monogamy, S/M, camp/dragqueens/bulldykes, and so on. Whether this attitude actually is productive is arguable, but it does serve to effectively exclude Bisexuals and Transgendered as well as marginalizing Gays and Lesbians who don't embody an acceptable norm.

She was in on the beginning of the formation of Queer Nation locally; here was a movement that allowed her to express Pride and work for Queer Rights that encouraged her to explore, rather than to hide, the parts of her that were Bisexual and Transgendered. She remembers all too well her first Gay Pride march

— many people were accepting, but some people didn't like Bis; others didn't like crossdressers; others expected you to be one or the other, but not both; and quite a few wished she'd just stayed home.

As she spent more time Out, she watched some victories and some losses. It was great when the March on Washington organizing committee added Bis to the title, but it was sad that Transgendered were dropped. Some organizations adopted a live and let live attitude and encouraged diversity, many others mouthed platitudes about *diversity* and *multiculturalism* but did little to encourage it. Quite a few leaders spoke about "gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people" in public, but uttered hateful and uninformed opinions in private; fortunately, Ms. Droid has some Friends in High Places who like to share the dish on these hypocrites. Some were even bold enough to be critical upfront of bisexuals and transgendered; let it stand in silent testament for a community consensus on dis-inclusion with the dearth of non-Bi and Trans voices raised in dissent.

Ms. Droid must also present some qualifications and history about the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the fight against it. She remembers AIDS before it was called AIDS, when she heard about something called GRID (*Gay Related Immune Disorder*) during the years when she entering adolescence. It is notable that in the history of the struggle against HIV, there has been an intra-community bickering between the factions of radical/street action and entrenched bureaucracies, not unlike the similar debate regarding *queers* versus *assimilationists*, even to the point of involving some of the same personalities. AIDS was particularly devastating to the Bisexual community, since the virus slew many of our community's leaders and stigmatized others as "carriers" or "vectors" of the disease to the straight and lesbian communities. Although it may have caused many to re-enter The Closet, the crisis did mobilize a few — indeed, a San Francisco bi organization (*BiPOL*) was one of the earliest groups to devise safer-sex education and practices and bring them to the affected population.

In the time that Ms. Droid has spent in the movement, she has come to some conclusions. Established political

organizations talk about diversity; street activists believe in it and sometimes actually achieve it. Some street urchins and political hacks despise each other but many on both sides grudgingly admit that there is a need for the other — but the *radicals* are more likely to admit it publicly and on the record. Street activists may lack nuance, but they can do some things that no amount of fundraising or political backroom deals can accomplish. Both make mistakes, and both have successes that they can claim as their own.

"Hate is not a family value"

—Political button

"Conformity is not a family value"

—Me

Ms. Droid is going to (futilely) endeavor to collect her concluding thoughts. You can be sure that the Republican campaign of '96 is going to be a redux of the Family Values Hatefest of Houston '92. You can be sure that Bisexuals have a slim chance, and Transgendered have a slimmer one, of fitting in the rubric of Family in a nation gone Rampantly Right. You can also be sure that our community is going to have to pull together to stand a chance since we are so greatly outnumbered. Ms. Droid would argue that embracing diversity and tolerance for difference can earn us common ground with the majority of Americans, not trying to hide our weirdness from them! People fail all the time to achieve the impossible standard imposed by the religious fundamentalists, from the woman seeking a safe abortion or birth control, to the straight couple who "lives in sin" without benefit from the vows of marriage; this Silent Majority has more in common with a broad queer/sexual liberation movement than one whose few empowered spokespeople embody a narrow and separate sexual identity which demands "special rights" which seem alien to them. Also we must resist running away from sticky issues and letting the Right dictate the terms of our fight, or else we are going to have more defeats, such as the Gays in the Military fiasco.

With love and napalm,

Anne

xaxaxa

Who transgresses gender and why?
What is transgender?

Transgressing Gender:

An Introduction

As part of the *Building Bridges* series, this workshop is for all who want to work with the transgendered, or who simply have an interest in transgender, drag, butch, crossdressing, femme, transsexuality, gender play and free gender expression.

Facilitated by: Arlene Istar (Choices), Hawk Stone (Connections), Callan Williams (TGIC)

All are welcome, and there is no fee.

Saturday, Oct. 14, 1-5 PM, at Council Of Community Services Building, 200 Henry Johnson Avenue, Floor 2

Info? Call the CDG&LCC at 462-6138

Transgressing Gender: An Introduction

Who transgresses gender roles and why? Who are the transgendered and what do they want? Is transgender just about crossdressing and transsexuality? These questions, and many more, will be addressed on October 14, from 1-5 PM as local people active in transgender issues present a workshop called *Transgressing Gender: An Introduction*. Held at the second floor meeting room in the Council of Community Services Building, 200 Henry Johnson Boulevard in Albany, under the auspices of the Capital District Gay & Lesbian Community Center (CDG&LCC), TransGenderists Independence Club (TGIC), The Women's Building, Choices Counseling Associates and Connections Psychotherapy Associates, this workshop is designed to speak to those in the gay, lesbian & bisexual community who have questions about transgender and about the transgendered.

"We grow up in a system of gender where we are taught that there are things that boys don't do and others that girls don't do. We are afraid that if we don't act in the proper way we will be stigmatized and humiliated for being a sissy or a tomboy, and this limits all of us," said Arlene Istar from Choices Counseling Associates, who is facilitating the workshop. "This workshop is about the range of transgression of those cultural and shifting gender roles. We will talk about everyone from the profoundly transgendered who choose to live in a gender role other than the one they were socialized in, to those

who only want to break some boundaries in order to feel more whole and full in their life."

"The Capital District Gay & Lesbian Community Council (CDG&LCC) is in the process of adding bisexuality and transgender to its mission, and this means that we need to help educate our current members. This workshop, part of our Building Bridges series, will help everyone, from our staff and officers, to clinical professionals, to those who are simply curious about transgender, to get a basic understanding of the issues and concerns about transgender today," said Simone Irizarry, program chair of the CDG&LCC. "We are especially pleased to be working with other local organizations that have a long history of being active in transgender issues."

"This is an important time for the transgendered," said Hawk Stone, from Connections Psychotherapy Associates. "The old medical models of transgender, which were based on the differences between the roles and choices of men and women are falling to new models that focus on our continuous common humanity, our fundamental interconnectedness. Today, people are working to create gender expression that is authentic, whole and natural, not simply running from a box marked men to a box marked women, or vice versa. Transgender is about finding a way to be that opens up all the possibilities of an individual without being focused on what has traditionally been labeled masculine or feminine. This workshop will focus on that change."

"There have always been transgendered people in the world," notes Callan [redacted], a representative of TransGenderists Independence Club (TGIC), an Albany based social and support group for transgendered people that traces its history back almost 30 years. "In many cultures, these 'two-spirit people' were seen as having a special gift, one that connected masculine and feminine, and they were revered as sages or shamans. Today, when we think of transgender we tend to think of talk shows and dysfunctional people, crippled by living with the stigma of growing up as a crossdresser or a transsexual. Transgendered people are beginning to reclaim their pride by coming to an understanding that people are all born with a mix of feminine and masculine aspects, but that in some of us that mix is simply more profound."

Williams notes, "Education is the only way we can build bridges between the gay and lesbian and transgendered community, to be able to understand each other's issues and work to find common ground and common goals without making assumptions."

"Our goal is to make these four hours both an enlightening and a enjoyable experience," notes Istar. Stone concurs, saying "Rituals of gender transgression, including drag shows and other camp entertainments, have always been part of the gay and lesbian experience and we intend to honor that sense of fun and play also."

Those who have questions can call the CDG&LCC at 462-6138.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRI-ESS MEETINGS IN SCHENECTADY

The Lambda Chi Lambda Chapter of Tri-Ess is planning to continue monthly Saturday meetings in Schenectady. For the rest of 1995, the tentative schedule is:

Oct. 21, Nov. 18, Dec. 9

GLBT RECOVERY GROUP STARTING

The Equinox Counseling Center announces the start of a 16-week group therapy program for the entire Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender community. This group will deal with our unique substance abuse, addiction and sobriety needs. The sponsor is a not for profit provider licensed by the NY State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS). To join, contact one of the counselors:

Ganesh Durgadas, M.A.

Karen Schwarz, M.A.

Equinox Counseling Center

306 Central Ave.

Albany, NY 12206-2522

(518) 434-6135

BECOME AN IFGE MEMBER

The International Foundation for Gender Education is now a membership 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Basic membership is \$25. Subscriptions to *Tapestry* are \$40. Brochures and forms are available in the Club Room. Please contact TGIC, or write to: IFGE, PO Box 229, Waltham, MA 02154-0229, (617) 899-2212

ANONYMOUS HIV ANTIBODY TESTING

Your regional HIV Counseling and Testing Program provides free HIV counseling and antibody testing, support and referral.

No names will be asked.

(NYS Health Department) **Albany Area:**

(518) 486-1595 or 1-800-962-5065.



Connections

Psychotherapy Associates

MOONHAWK RIVER STONE, B.S.

PH.D. CANDIDATE

(518) 446-1261 10 Colvin Avenue • Albany, NY 12206

The Transgenderist

CALENDAR

Regular Meetings are held every Thursday at the TGIC Club Room on Central Avenue in Albany, 7:30 - 10 pm. Some come earlier and stay later, but it is wise to call if you are not a Keyholder or if it is your first visit. Come dressed either way, meet and talk with friends. Many continue to socialize at one of the Central Ave. night spots after the meetings.

OCTOBER 1995

Oct 5 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

Oct 12 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

Oct 14 **Transgressing Gender: An Introduction**, Saturday, 1-5 pm.
Workshop in Albany. Details on p.9
TGIC Dinner Party, 6:00 pm

Oct 19 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

Oct 24 **Tuesday - Club Room, 7:00 pm**

Pre-Halloween Glamour Party

Oct 26 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

Oct 31 **Halloween - Do Your Thing!**

NOVEMBER 1995

Nov 2 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

Nov 9 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

Nov 16 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

Nov 23 **Thanksgiving - NO MEETING**

Nov 30 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

MAJOR COMING EVENTS

- Contact TGIC for more information.

Oct 5-9 **TCNE Fall Fling**, P-town, MA

Oct 15-22 **Fantasia Fair**, P-town, MA

Oct 26-29 **Fall Harvest**, St. Louis, MO

Nov 10-12 **Riverside Gala**, Erie, PA

Nov 15-19 **Tri-Ess Holiday En Femme**,
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Jan 24-28 **TCNE First Event**, Woburn, MA

Feb 22-25 **Texas T-Party**, Dallas, TX

Mar 24-31 **IFGE Convention**, Minneapolis-
St. Paul, MN

Apr 20-23 **California Dreamin'**, Burbank

Albany Gender Project

Education, Information, Consultation
Referrals, Publications, Seminars

Jennifer Wells
Coordinator

518-432-7092