

## ETVC Saddened By Death of Ginny Knuth

By Erin Souza, ETVC President

Ginny Knuth passed away quietly in her sleep early on the morning of November 23, 1997. She was sixty-two.

Ginny was the beloved partner of Nancy Ann Martine and a cherished friend to many of us within ETVC, the gender community and the gay and lesbian community.

So much of the respect ETVC now commands is the result of Ginny's tireless work. Together with Nancy Ann, she served as social co-chair for the executive committee in ETVC's early years.

She continued to serve as advisor and assistant to the executive committee for many years thereafter, as well as initiating and volunteering for countless special projects such as the the Cotillion, the gender fair and the newsletter.

Ginny was instrumental in the development of the significant others support group and the education library, to which she devoted much of her time.

With Nancy Ann, she initiated and maintained ETVC's connection to the gay community. For many years she was the initial contact for newcomers to ETVC, answering our inquiries on the hot line or welcoming us at the door at socials.

Declining health in recent years did not deter her dedication to our group. Within days of major surgery in 1992, Ginny was addressing hundreds of Cotillion invitations by hand in her hospital bed. Such was the level of her dedication. She was a three time recipient of the member of the year award, during the last time which, 1992, the award was permanently named in her honor.

Above all else she was a warm and supportive friend who took delight in the beauty, joy and creativity displayed by this community, and did all she could to make sure all could share in those things.

A celebration of her life was held on December 3, 1997 at Marlena's. Our sincere condolences go out to Nancy Ann and her family. Ginny will be deeply missed by us all.



Ginny

## Debut in Style: Cotillion '98

By Elizabeth Walters

During the fourteen years since it was first created, ETVC's Cotillion has evolved into one of the premiere events of Northern California's gender scene — an evening of glamor, glitz and giggles rivaled only by San Francisco's "Closet Ball" and Imperial Court galas. If you spend only one evening out in face in 1998, this is the fete to attend.

Over the years the Cotillion has graced a number of venues, including the California Club, the Russian Center and this year's spot, the elegant San Francisco Design Center Galleria. It has hosted special award recipients who have given extraordinary service to the transgendered community,

including former Supervisor (now District Attorney) Terence Hallinan, city hall gadfly and lobbyist Shelly Salieri, human rights activist Kiki Whitlock, and State Senator Milton Marks and his wife, Carolene.

The Cotillion has offered entertainment organized and directed by some of our community's most creative members, including Jacqui Jewels, Billie Jean Jones (Miss ETVC 1992), Tiffany Woods (Miss ETVC 1990), Trauma Flintstone and our own Lulu Blau, and has featured some of the area's most talented performers, such as Tommi Rose, Irene Soderberg, Donna Sachet and the dozens of ETVC members who have vied for the title, Miss ETVC.

But most importantly, it has offered an elegant backdrop for

*Continued – See "French Kiss" on pg 6*

# THE CHANNEL

ETVC Inc., a non-profit corporation, is a non-sexual, membership based organization serving the educational, social, and recreational needs of gender-challenged people, their spouses, significant others, family members, friends, and professionals in the helping services. For details about ETVC programs, membership, article submission guidelines and classified ads, please write to: ETVC Secretary, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486. Minutes of all ETVC committee meetings are available to members on request.

## OFFICERS

|                |                                   |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| President      | Erin Souza                        |
| Vice-President | Leslie Bailey                     |
| Secretary      | Veronica Smith                    |
| Treasurer      | Lisa Ronald                       |
| Education      | Nancy Cupps, Juana Smith          |
| Outreach       | Telzey Adams, Sandra Brewer       |
| Social         | Darcy Leopard, Evette RoqueLaurie |

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Membership (as of 11/09/97) | 294 |
| Total 1996 Membership       | 391 |
| New Memberships this year   | 55  |

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Account Balance as of 9/30/97 \$5,458.51

The "Home for ETVC" fund is now \$2017.50

ETVC is a non-profit corporation.

*Donations to ETVC are TAX DEDUCTIBLE on both Federal and California income tax returns Talk to your tax advisor for details.*

Channel, the ETVC Newsletter, is published the last week of February, April, June, August, October and December. Submissions should arrive at ETVC by the 20th day of the previous month. Contents reflect the opinions of the contributors and the editor, and are not necessarily those of ETVC. Other organizations may reprint or reproduce uncopyrighted portions of the newsletter for their members, provided ETVC is acknowledged. Copyrighted materials may be reproduced only with written permission of ETVC.

## NEWSLETTER STAFF

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Editor            | Elizabeth Walters   |
| Associate Editors | S. Brewer, D. Leopard,<br>E. Souza<br>A. Drane, J. & V. Smith |
| Advertising       | <i>Please Volunteer</i>                                       |
| Photographer      | J. Fenton and T. Adams  |
| Layout & Design   | Kevin Anderson  |
| Printing          | Your Place Graphics   |

## AD RATES

|               |           |          |
|---------------|-----------|----------|
|               | Per issue | Per year |
| Business Card | \$25      | \$125    |
| 4" X 5"       | \$60      | \$300    |

Personal ads from ETVC members: \$3 for up to 40 words. We will *not* accept ads with a sexual objective. Ad deadlines are the 20th of May, July, September, November, January and March. Send ad copy and check or money order to: ETVC, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486

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# Letter from Elizabeth

## Some Transitions and a Transition

By Elizabeth Walters



First of all, my apologies for the scattered content and unusual appearance of this edition of the Channel. The fact is, until a week before press time, I wasn't sure whether we would be publishing this bimonthly issue at all.

You see, ETVC has not exactly shared in the current U.S. economic boom. A serious and continuing slippage in membership has severely cut our dues income, the financial mainstay of our organization. In addition, some of our most important annual events — including, most recently, our Halloween Party — have left us deeply in the red.

As you all know, no organization can live beyond its income — at least, not for long. ETVC is no exception. As a consequence, our group's executive board is being forced to take a critical look at our finances and find ways to cut costs until our fiscal picture improves. At the same time, we hope to continue serving our membership with the kinds of programs and events you have all come to expect.

The result is that the Channel, one of our group's largest continuing expenses, will be undergoing a series of changes in coming months. We will be moving to a less costly format while trying to maintain — and, hopefully, improve — our communication with our membership. We are not sure precisely what the new Channel will look like at this point, but we pledge to continue doing our best to inform, entertain and serve you, our members.

\* \* \* \* \*

On a sadder note, I want to bid goodbye to my friend and colleague, Ginny Knuth, who passed away November 23. In this short space, I will not even try to recap Ginny's years of service to ETVC, or her many contributions to the transgendered community. For a complete tribute, please see the memorial to Ginny by ETVC President Erin Souza on page one.

On a personal note, however, I want to say that Ginny helped me enormously and showed me many personal kindnesses during the brief period I have been an ETVC member and Channel editor. Even when we disagreed about some issue, her careful arguments, backed by years of hard-won experience, forced me to consider my position very carefully and helped to keep my thinking honest.

My deepest sympathy goes out to Nancy Ann Martine, Ginny's beloved. To Ginny, herself, I can only say "farewell:" honey, you will be impossible to replace.



## Da' Prez' Box

ETVC President Erin Souza

### Continuing The Legacy

The loss of our dear friend and stalwart volunteer Ginny Knuth tempers the excitement that would otherwise accompany the start of a new year. The level of service she exemplified is difficult to duplicate, though attempting to do so may be the most fitting tribute we could pay to her memory.

We should not be afraid to try new things. Whether that means exploration of our issues on an individual level, or as a group trying new approaches to events and services during a challenging time of reduced membership, attendance and revenue.

To that end, the executive committee will explore ways to reduce the cost of this newsletter, which consumes over a third of our annual budget. We will also explore and entertain suggestions for new ways to generate revenue.

Thanks to the work of social co-chairs Darcy and Evette, we have been fortunate enough to find two locations for monthly socials that are both readily accessible and enthusiastically amenable to our attendance. With the exception of

this month's pre-cotillion social on a Thursday, we will host our end of the month socials at Cyberworld on Saturdays.

This will allow members with great travel distances and/or demanding work weeks the opportunity to get to an event while still allowing three and a half weekends out of the month to be free for family activities. For those who still desire to socialize during the week, alternating mid-month socials at Cafe Mars and the Lilo Lounge have become increasingly popular.

Nothing is etched in stone, of course, and should there be a huge demand for the return of Thursday end of month events, Thursday socials will return.

But I urge you to give this new format a try. The Saturday events will be a little more structured, like the Thursdays of old, with an activity or entertainment designed to help newcomers emerge from their shells. The mid-month events will be more along the lines of your good old fashioned casual "schmooze fest."

Along with our socials, our education seminars will aspire to provide information useful to both novice and veteran alike. Many of the seminars have turned into mini-socials with dinner or coffee outings following the speaker, giving sisters a chance to network and share experience.

For those wishing to share experience with others beyond one on one conversation, the newsletter and speakers' bureau are always welcome to new voices and ideas. Or perhaps you even have ideas on a new direction this club should be taking. I hope so.

Nominations for all offices will take place at our March social. Please give all of these opportunities some thought.

## Permanent Hair Removal

by *Guy E. Campo, R.E.*



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# • • • • • Special Events • • • • •

## Out of This World!

Wednesday, January 14th

Join us for another stellar evening at one of our newest venues, the Cafe Mars. Nearly 40 members and guests showed up for our November 20th gathering there. Don't get left out this time. 8 p.m., 7th & Brannan streets, San Francisco. Free!

## Female Mimicry

Thursday, January 22th

"Lady Like" columnists Bob Davis and Carol Kleinmaier will present a slide show about the magazine, "Female Mimics" and its relationship to our transgender community. Considering how we love pictures, it's hard to believe there wasn't a drag photo magazine until 1963, but it's true. Didn't the porn publishers know their market? Did we embarrass them? Was everyone too closeted to have their pictures taken? No matter. When "Female Mimics" appeared in 1963 it was the first. Originally published in "Ssshhh!: Newsletter of National Transgender Library and Archive," this talk was presented at the "2nd International Congress on Sex & Gender Issues" last June. First there was HIStory, then HERstory. Now hear HERMstory for the rest of us! Upstairs at Kimo's, Polk and Pine Streets, San Francisco, 7:30 p.m. \$3 donation. Smoking downstairs.

## Cherchez La Femme

Thursday, January 29th

Feeling a little like Simone Signoret or Jean Moreau? How about the bewitching Miou-Miou or Bulle Ogier? Get into the mood for this year's Cotillion theme, "French Kiss." Get yourself up as your favorite "French Femme." Raspberry berets are strictly optional. CyberWorld, 528 Folsom between 1st and 2nd Street, San Francisco, 8 p.m. Members \$3, Guests \$5.

## "French Kiss" Cotillion 1998

Saturday, January 31st

This is it: Cotillion '98, the signal event of the year for San Francisco's transgendered community. Join us for a flawless evening of entertainment at Northern California's greatest coming out party as we select Miss ETVC 1998 and celebrate the debut of the Bay Area's latest newcomers to the gender scene. Fun, fashion and folly are guaranteed. If you aren't there, you're simply nowhere, darling! SF Design Center Galleria, #101 Henry Adams, San Francisco. 6 p.m., cocktails and light meal; 8 p.m. showtime. Tickets: \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door and for premium seating. For tickets call (415) 731-7032.

## Sex Reassignment Surgery and Breast Augmentation.

Sunday, February 8th

Dr. Eugene A. Schrang, MD, one of the top SRS surgeons in the country, will have a slide presentation followed by a question and answer session to explain his male to female sex reassignment surgery procedure. The slides include step-by-step photos of sex reassignment and breast augmentation surgeries, as well as information about the hospital and a special post-surgery

recovery facility. His SRS technique focuses on preserving sensitive nerve tissue, and creating genitalia that is outwardly indistinguishable from that of a genetic woman. Several ETVC members have traveled to Dr. Schrang's office in Neenah, Wisconsin, and are very satisfied with the results. This is a unique opportunity for our TS members in Northern California who are planning to have these types of surgeries because it will be the first time Dr. Schrang has delivered this presentation in California. Smoking will not be permitted at this seminar. Kimo's, Pine and Polk streets, 1-3 PM.

## Mid-Month Madness

Wednesday, February 11th

Itching for an opportunity to dish who wore what at Cotillion '98? Just want to relax after a furious round of last minute Valentine's shopping? Dying to take some of the big bucks you won betting on the Superbowl and spend them on drinks for your girlfriends? Join us as we check out a flawless new venue on fashionable Potrero Hill. Lilo Lounge, 18th & Connecticut Streets, San Francisco. 8 p.m. Free!

## A Long Goodbye for the Shortest Month of the Year

Saturday, February 28th

Join us at SOMA's own Cafe Mars — where the elite meet just down the street from the flat of feet (the nearby San Francisco Hall of Justice). There's no theme planned for this end-of-month social — just an opportunity to get out of the house and meet with friends. Cafe Mars, 7th & Brannan, San Francisco. 8 p.m. Members \$3, Guests \$5.

## From the Ground Up

Wednesday, January 28th

Just in time for the Cotillion, Kimberly Blake will be demonstrating make-up techniques and skin care. Kimberly, an ETVC member, knows the masculine face and how to work wonders with it. To demonstrate her style and techniques, she will ask an audience member to join her on stage. Ms. Blake will use the model to demonstrate how to do it from beginning to finished end. Please join us - you may be the one selected as our model. Kimo's at Pine and Polk Streets, 7:30-9:30. \$3.00 donation to cover cost of room. Smoking downstairs.

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# TV/TS/TG GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

# OTHER GROUPS

## January

|    |             |                              |                          |                      |                       |
|----|-------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1  | DVG         | RCC Rap Group                | Meets at 7 PM            | Pleasant Hill        | (510) 937-8432        |
| 2  | RGA         | Social                       | Starts at 8 PM           | San Jose             | (408) 984-4044        |
| 2  | Pac Ctr     | TV/TS Rap                    | Meets 8-10 PM            | Berkeley             | (510) 841-6224        |
| 5  | DVG         | Social                       | Starts at 8 PM           | Walnut Creek         | (510) 937-8432        |
| 8  | <b>ETVC</b> | <b>Newsletter Committee.</b> | <b>7:30 p.m.</b>         | <b>San Francisco</b> | <b>(415) 337-5409</b> |
| 9  | Pac Ctr     | TV/TS Rap                    | Meets 8-10 PM            | Berkeley             | (510) 841-6224        |
| 9  | SVGA        | Support Group                | Meets at 7 PM            | San Jose             | (408) 293-2429        |
| 10 | SGA         | Social                       | Starts at 7:30 PM        | Sacramento           | (916) 482-7742        |
| 11 | FTM         | Informational Meeting        | Meets at 2 PM            | San Francisco        | (415) 553-5987        |
| 14 | <b>ETVC</b> | <b>Mid-Month Social</b>      | <b>Starts at 8 PM</b>    | <b>Cafe Mars, SF</b> | <b>(415) 641-8169</b> |
| 15 | DVG         | RCC Rap Group                | Meets at 7 PM            | Pleasant Hill        | (510) 937-8432        |
| 16 | Pac Ctr     | TV/TS Rap                    | Meets 8-10 PM            | Berkeley             | (510) 841-6224        |
| 16 | RGA         | Social                       | Starts at 8 PM           | San Jose             | (408) 984-4044        |
| 19 | DVG         | Social                       | Starts at 8 PM           | Walnut Creek         | (510) 937-8432        |
| 22 | <b>ETVC</b> | <b>"Female Mimics"</b>       | <b>Starts at 7:30 PM</b> | <b>Kimo's SF</b>     | <b>(415) 337-5409</b> |
| 23 | Pac Ctr     | TV/TS Rap                    | Meets 8-10 PM            | Berkeley             | (510) 841-6224        |
| 23 | SVGA        | Support Group                | Meets at 7 PM            | San Jose             | (408) 293-2429        |
| 24 | SGA         | Social                       | Starts at 7:30 PM        | Sacramento           | (916) 482-7742        |
| 28 | <b>ETVC</b> | <b>Appearance Seminar</b>    | <b>Starts at 7:30 PM</b> | <b>Kimo's, SF</b>    | <b>(415) 337-5409</b> |
| 29 | <b>ETVC</b> | <b>End of Month Social</b>   | <b>Starts at 8 PM</b>    | <b>CyberWorld SF</b> | <b>(415) 641-8169</b> |
| 30 | Pac Ctr     | TV/TS Rap                    | Meets 8-10 PM            | Berkeley             | (510) 841-6224        |
| 31 | <b>ETVC</b> | <b>Cotillion</b>             | <b>Starts at 6 PM</b>    | <b>SF Design Ctr</b> | <b>(510) 527-5398</b> |

## February

|    |             |                               |                        |                      |                       |
|----|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2  | DVG         | Social                        | Starts at 8 PM         | Walnut Creek         | (510) 937-8432        |
| 5  | DVG         | RCC Rap Group                 | Meets at 7 PM          | Pleasant Hill        | (510) 937-8432        |
| 6  | RGA         | Social                        | Starts at 8 PM         | San Jose             | (408) 984-4044        |
| 6  | Pac Ctr     | TV/TS Rap                     | Meets 8-10 PM          | Berkeley             | (510) 841-6224        |
| 8  | FTM         | Informational Meeting         | Meets at 2 PM          | San Francisco        | (415) 553-5987        |
| 8  | <b>ETVC</b> | <b>SRS and breast surgery</b> | <b>Starts at 1 PM</b>  | <b>Kimo's SF</b>     | <b>(415) 337-5409</b> |
| 11 | <b>ETVC</b> | <b>Mid-Month Social</b>       | <b>8PM</b>             | <b>Cafe Mars, SF</b> | <b>(415) 641-8169</b> |
| 13 | Pac Ctr     | TV/TS Rap                     | Meets 8-10 PM          | Berkeley             | (510) 841-6224        |
| 13 | SVGA        | Support Group                 | Meets at 7 PM          | San Jose             | (408) 293-2429        |
| 14 | SGA         | Social                        | Starts at 7:30 PM      | Sacramento           | (916) 482-7742        |
| 16 | DVG         | Social                        | Starts at 8 PM         | Walnut Creek         | (510) 937-8432        |
| 19 | DVG         | RCC Rap Group                 | Meets at 7 PM          | Pleasant Hill        | (510) 937-8432        |
| 20 | RGA         | Social                        | Starts at 8 PM         | San Jose             | (408) 984-4044        |
| 20 | Pac Ctr     | TV/TS Rap                     | Meets 8-10 PM          | Berkeley             | (510) 841-6224        |
| 27 | Pac Ctr     | TV/TS Rap                     | Meets 8-10 PM          | Berkeley             | (510) 841-6224        |
| 28 | <b>ETVC</b> | <b>End of Month Social</b>    | <b>Starts at 8 PM,</b> | <b>Cafe Mars, SF</b> | <b>(415) 641-8169</b> |
| 28 | SGA         | Social                        | Starts at 7:30 PM      | Sacramento           | (916) 482-7742        |

**Pacific Center for Human Growth**, a counseling oriented growth center, sponsors all-inclusive gender support groups on every Friday at 8:00 PM. 2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, Call: (510) 841-6224.

**Rainbow Gender Association (RGA)** meets 1st and 3rd Friday of the month 8:00 PM at the New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Drive, San Jose. Write: RGA, PO Box 700730, San Jose, CA 95170. Call: (408) 984-4044

**Sacramento Gender Association (SGA)** Blue Rose Chapter meets 8 PM the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month in Sacramento. Write: PO Box 215456. Sacramento, CA 95821-1456. Call: (916) 482-7SGA for meeting locations.

**Diablo Valley Girls (DVG)** Meets first and third Monday of every month. 8 PM at Just Rewards Nightclub, 2520 Camino Diablo in Walnut Creek. Write: DVG, PO Box 272885. Concord, CA 94527-2885. Call: (510) 937-8432.

**DVG Rap Group (RCC)** meets first and third Thursday of every month, 7 PM at Rainbow Community Center, 2637 Pleasant Hill Rd. at Taylor Blvd. in Pleasant Hill. For more info, call (510) 937-8432.

**FTM**, a support group for Female-to-Male crossdressers & transsexuals, holds open Informational Meetings and closed Support Meetings. Write: FTM International, Inc., 1360 Mission St., Suite 200, SF 94103 or call Voice Mail (415) 553-5987.

**TGIF (TransGenderism Is Fun)**, a social group for transgenders, meets one Saturday each month at a private home in Santa Rosa for a potluck social from 4 PM until early evening. For dates, location and reservations, call Diane or Anne at (707) [REDACTED]

**Silicon Valley Gender Association (SVGA)**, a new transgenders support group, meets at the Billy DeFrank Community Center in San Jose on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month from 7PM to 9PM. For more info, call (408) 293-2429.

Please Print

## ETVC Membership Application

Mailing Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Family Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ New Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about ETVC? \_\_\_\_\_

**Full year membership June 1 - May 31 is \$25.00 (Family - \$35.00).**

Please remit by check or money order to:  
**ETVC, P.O. Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486**

## Sandra Reaches Out

by Sandra Brewer



When this issue goes to press we will have finished another busy year. In the closing months of the year we were represented at the GLSEN gay/lesbian educators conference where we made more contacts including PFLAG parents groups that are taking an increased interest in the needs of families with transgendered members. We were well represented at the Mr/Miss Gay Event in San Francisco, and once again we (wo)manned the phone lines for the KQED pledge drive in December. Our own Cotillion will take center stage as the new year begins.

Sharing speaking assignments with the Pacific Center, we have continued to make our outreach presence at Bay Area colleges. Although our pool of speakers has grown, some requests for speakers have gone unfilled. Like most people working for a living, our speakers can't always get the necessary time off, and many of the requests are for daytime classes over fifty miles from most of our homes. We're always looking for more speakers, especially for daytime engagements. Another speaker training session is still planned, but this is looking more like a spring event now.

Outreach is wherever we share any of our transgendered life with people outside our own community. Many of us have discussed our crossdressing exploits with friends and colleagues at large and lived to tell about it. Those of us who have gone through transitions on the job have certainly shared our lives with the outside world and given each other inner strength in the process. The transsexual phenomenon is no longer the most unheard of thing ever heard of.

Some recent reports deserve to be mentioned. The September

21st Examiner/Chronicle ran a multi-page article on James Green's experiences as a female-to-male transsexual. The article was very favorable to James, and to the transsexual condition. It described James' childhood as a girl, early adult life as a lesbian, and his subsequent transition to manhood. Dr. Gail Lebovic, featured in the article, may be the first female surgeon to perform sex reassignment surgery; this constitutes 15% of her practice.

On October 24th, several local television stations reported Marcia (formerly Marc) Chapdelaine's very public male-to-female transition as San Mateo County Convention and Visitors Bureau President; the story appeared in most Bay Area newspapers the following day. Millie Brown, Marcia's therapist was present at the press conference. The response so far has been very positive. The October 11th Des Moines Register reported the male-to-female transition of University of Iowa professor Deirdre (formerly Donald) McClosky. Deirdre was pleased with local support, but dismayed that her formerly all-boys alma mater Harvard refused to change her 33 year-old degree to the all-girls Radcliffe.

Also in October, the NBC program Union Square featured a cross dresser depicted as a responsible member of society. When a woman even pointed out that he wasn't gay, he responded "You see, I'm normal." Despite her witty reply "I didn't say that," the spirit was one of public acceptance slowly replacing the ridicule we've endured for so long.

Mixed reviews go to a Drew Carey show during the November sweeps month. The show presents Drew's brother as a heterosexual crossdresser typical of many of us although his passion to work in drag at a high class cosmetics counter does seem a little far-fetched. And I doubt that an androgyne introduced at the end of the show will leave the public with a favorable image of our community. This show immediately precedes Ellen, a show that week after week continues to thrive with new episodes dealing with lesbian issues. This has to help pave the way for public acceptance of all of our alternative lifestyles.

### *French Kiss, continued from page 1*

scores of lovely and charming debutantes who have selected this annual evening of enchantment and elegance to make their official debut as members of our community.

This year's Cotillion promises to outdo all that have gone before. For one thing, the annual ETVC coming out party will have a new home - the fabulous SF Design Center Galleria at #101 Henry Adams at the foot of Potrero Hill, a stunningly modern venue that has never before served as the site for one of our group's events!

In addition to the posh new digs, Lulu Blau, who co-directed last year's stunning gala with Trauma Flintstone, will be working on this year's Cotillion with veteran showman Mark Kleim. The producers promise that Cotillion 1998 will be "the best show ever produced in San Francisco!"

ETVC Education Co-Secretary Juana Smith has put together an excellent list of inexpensive San Francisco hotels and motels (under \$100 per night) where transgendered guests can stay during their extended visit to the city: The Beresford, Best Western Americana, Broadway Manor, Central Travel Lodge, Commodore, The Leland and The Vagabond Inn. To it I would add three others that I have used myself: the Travel Lodge at Civic Center, the Bay Bridge Inn and the Rodeway Inn at Ninth and Mission Streets.

Advance tickets are \$30 (premium seating) or \$25 (regular seating), and may be purchased at Kimo's, Marlena's, Romantasy, Piedmont Boutique, Rosalie's New Looks and Foxy Lady Boutique in San



PHOTO BY TELZEY ADAMS

*Miss ETVC Candidates, 1997, from left: Tierra del Fuego, Jennifer, Elaine Sagant, Dianna, Miss ETVC Dale Carlson, Sephanie Summers, Sandra Brewer*

Francisco; at Continental Wig in San Rafael, Just Rewards in Walnut Creek and Carla's Salon and Boutique in San Jose.

Tickets also may be purchased by phone by calling (415) 731-7032, and will be available at the door for \$30. In addition to buying you an evening of splendid entertainment and a lifetime of wonderful memories, part of the money you pay for admission will go to support Project Open Hand. What could be more perfect? See you at the party!

## If Wigs Could Sing

By Vera Sepulveda

On a recent and rainy Thursday evening, Rosalie's New Looks at 782 Columbus hosted a special ETVc preview of their new collection of vintage fashions.

If you've never been to Rosalie's, or haven't been lately, then you haven't seen the new Rosalie's. Racks of dresses and outfits from past decades crowd the little shop, while hats, shoes, purses, and assorted accessories peek out of every corner.

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For those of us who are still searching for our own signature style, Rosalie's New Looks can be a wealth of new ideas and helpful advice. And even if you've polished your look to perfection, Rosalie can still show you things you probably never thought of. One look at her window display is enough to see that if wigs could sing, these would be heard around the world.

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# Finding Our Best Feminine Voice

by Sandra Brewer

About thirty of us came to Kimos on Saturday, October 18th to learn what we can do to make our voices produce their most feminine sounds. Our coach was Maureen O'Connor who has been teaching speech-improvement techniques in the Bay Area since 1973. In this capacity, she worked with the Stanford Gender Identity Clinic for several years.

Most of Maureen's work with the transgendered community is with those of us living full time as women. She started by indicating her preference for a feminine speaking style that is flowing as characterized by Audrey Hepburn. She then played a tape of several male voices in various stages of learning to project a feminine-sounding voice. She outlined four areas of communication differences usually noticed between men and women. These include differences in the pitch and inflection, voice quality, use of language, and nonverbal communication.

Probably the hardest task most of us face when projecting a feminine voice is learning to control the pitch. Maureen indicated most men speak in a range of 100 Hz to 150 Hz, while most women are in the range 175 Hz to 250 Hz. Using piano keys to illustrate the range of vocal frequency, she demonstrated this places the female range at the four notes just below middle C, and the male range almost an octave lower. The frequency at which the vocal chords vibrate is determined by their thickness. The air that causes the vibration always comes from the lungs, but it can be focused in the throat to change its emphasis.

To project a voice that is perceived as female, we need to extend our male speaking range, but not to the point it breaks into a falsetto and sounds unnatural. Maureen offered some encouragement by pointing out that two-thirds of the (male) tenor range overlaps the (female) alto range. These overlap half the Bass and Soprano ranges at the other ends. Women also tend to use more pitch variability or inflection in their speech patterns than men. Women's voice quality is softer, has less intensity, and fewer low harmonic overtones than that of men. She gave several examples of these qualities, as well as of the differences in language patterns and nonverbal communication used by men and women.

Maureen offered several excellent suggestions of techniques to enhance our ability to perfect a feminine speaking style. First, adopt a habit of using an internal feminine voice to coin our thoughts. Practice sessions should be short but frequent, and on a regular schedule. Each session should be directed to specific concepts so we avoid trying to deal with too much at the same time. Use a tape recorder to monitor and analyze our progress. Find a TV (television) character to emulate; soap operas provide some good models, but avoid newscasters as they tend to speak very much like men. Get feedback from a partner; this can be a trusted friend, or a speech therapist.

Finally, practicing a feminine pitch projection should be performed in steps. First identify your comfortable pitch, then practice single words, then short phrases, longer sentences, and paragraphs; and finally work up to spontaneous conversational speaking. This requires determination and hard work, but it can be done and the rewards are well worth it.



## On the Road

with Debra  
by Debra Darling

(Editor's note: Last issue's installment of our popular column, "On The Road By Debra Darling" was inadvertently lost on its way to the newsletter. This issue has a special bonus: two of Debra's useful and informative columns served up, seamlessly, as one.)

## Waltzing With Matilda

I write this column with a certain amount of trepidation. I know, deep down inside of me, that these words may stop some of you from taking that next big step out into the real world, but the information is, I feel, so valuable to others that it is worth the risk. As you read what follows, remember: no matter how traumatic the events may seem, no one was injured or otherwise hurt, except for a little loss of dignity. And even that lasted only a few moments and was quickly recovered.

As many of you know, when I am in San Francisco I often visit a bar on Union Square called the Gold Dust. I go because it is the last place in SF to find good Dixieland jazz, and I know the band members and waitress from the days of Turk Murphy and Earthquake McGoon's. I stopped by after a seminar at Kimo's and the place was jumping.

There was a line out the door, but I was spotted right away. There was a group of guys at the end of the bar who whistled and let everyone know I was there. They turned out to be an Australian soccer team. I ignored them, and quickly found my regular place at the front of the band, and was greeted warmly. The band leader did offer a bit of advice I should have heeded. "The tourists are really pretty rowdy tonight," he said.

After a while, the boys from "down under" decided to go the men's room en masse. I should have been more alert, but the band was playing a song for me, and I was not watching. One of them jostled me and I felt a tug on my hair. Only a quick sweep of my arm to the back of my neck saved the wig.

I heard a whispered apology, which turned out to be a distraction, as one of them blind sided me and snatched my hair. These guys were good, but then it was probably a standard soccer play.

A lot of things happened very quickly. Some of them did not really register until later. First the band actually missed a beat. I saw the banjo player lip read the expletive which I uttered and straighten up to get ready for trouble. I was trying to figure out how to react when I realized the bar had gone silent. No one laughed. They were all holding their collective breath, as if they had witnessed something totally unwarranted.

I did not want to cause any trouble here, they have always treated me with respect. Even though I was the innocent party, it still seemed wise not to let this get out of hand. I chose instead to make an exaggerated and somewhat insulting bow to my



erstwhile tormentors, and at the same time retrieve my wig. I then calmly, and I think this was the key to my success, slowly combed out the tangles, put it back on and brushed the bangs into place. I then put a dollar in the tip jar and asked the band to play *Waltzing Matilda*. The place came back to life, and I got a lot of smiles and nods from the regulars. The cocktail waitress came up to make sure I was all right and one woman came over and gave me a hug.

Sometime later, one of the Aussies came up to me and apologized. He said that were only joking and that where they came from their behavior was accepted. The couple to my right interrupted and said that in most of the civilized world it was considered assault, and to leave me alone. (I found out later these two were from London. We had a great discussion about the London stage, and traded information about current shows we had seen.)

Apparently the soccer boys gathered that they were not welcome anymore, for they soon organized themselves out the door. When I left, about an hour later, I received a great many smiles, a few hugs and even a kiss along with an invitation to return soon.

The message from all this? Remember, I go out hundreds of times each year, and have for many years. This is the first time I have ever been embarrassed, and even here I was not threatened.

Pay attention to what is going on around you. As the piano player said to me later, "There is always one a—h— in the crowd." Don't lose your cool. If you react with pride the people around you will respect you and most often take your side. If you panic, they will sense it, and things may escalate. Finally, don't start something you can't finish. The fight scenes in "Priscilla" and "To Wong Fu" look great, but six on one doesn't work out that way very often.

## A Return Visit — With no Surprises

It was certainly fun seeing so many of you at the November social at Cafe Mars. It was a lot of fun and Autumn, the bartender, certainly worked hard to keep up with all of us. I heard that the place becomes a yuppie meat market on Friday evenings after work, so I guess I'll just have to return. Sounds like a groovin' place.

This trip was quiet, except for a moment when a very nice, (and very inebriated) gentleman tried to pick me up at the Gold Dust, after the Cafe Mars experience. He was so polite, and so nice, I

almost decided to go with him when he invited me to his room. Good sense prevailed, and I told him I had to go home to the wife and kiddies instead. This always gets the strangest look for some reason.

After he went on his way, the lady next to me, who had heard the pickup try and watched it all with avid interest struck up a conversation with me. She was part of a foursome from London.

Her husband owned part of a race horse (I did not ask what part!) and they were over here for some races. I told her that I thought her husband was cute, but funny. He obviously liked to sing along with the band, but every time I looked at him and started to join in, he would stop singing and look away.

Eventually, she warmed him up to me and we had a good time talking about London and the current crop of plays. I think she told him about my goodbye line to my would be admirer, because he suddenly took a much greater interest in the interest I was showing to his wife.

Things should be quiet for a while as I intend to stay close to home during Christmas (if you can call Sacramento, LA & Las Vegas staying home!).

Since my last column got lost in the mail, I wanted to get this off to our faithful editor, Elizabeth, as soon as I got home. She caught up with me at the Queen Mary in Los Angeles. That was kind of fun, as some guy was trying to snow another girl (Jackie) over how worldly both he and the Queen Mary were. He became upset when I started talking to her, since I knew her from Seattle, her home. I then introduced him to Raquel, who had just wandered in from her home on the water up here and wanted to dance. When he heard Elizabeth mention she had just been to Seattle, and then get on my case about the newsletter article (in S.F.), he gave up - muttering his disbelief that no one from LA seemed to be near the place that night.

According to a recent story up here, cross dressing can be dangerous. A hunter recently called for help from the Department of Natural Resources. He had just shot a handsome, eight point buck (that is a male deer with a large set of antlers) and when he began to clean it he discovered it was a doe. Apparently cross dressing goes deeper than we knew.

Next month I'll try to share with you the adventures of the singing TV's of Seattle. We are going to join the Christmas cruise this year. Imagine, a boat load of girls in their finest gowns, out on the lake in the rain, singing Christmas carols with all the other decorated boats. It is enough to astound the mind.

Have fun, enjoy the holidays, and I hope to see you all at the Cotillion.

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## Out on the Town ...with Darcy Leopard

### New Horizons

Pushing the envelope in venturing to new venues as a cross-dresser sometimes needs to be redefined. When Bree and I leapt from the relative safety of San Francisco's South-of-Market clubs to more mainstream establishments such as

the Fairmont Hotel, we felt we had really found new horizons. A few months ago, when Bree and Nancy Cupps took me out for my birthday, we visited The Top of the Mark, The Grand Hyatt, GirlSpot at The Endup, and a lesbian club on Valencia Street.

We had a wonderful time; yet in terms of breaking barriers, it wasn't anything new. The Top of the Mark and The Grand Hyatt are similar to the Fairmont, all being well known places that easily accommodate a mix of tourists, business travelers and locals, casually or well-dressed. Our original venture into GirlSpot was our entry into the lesbian clubs. Bree and I were looking for a new challenge this time. We decided to try classy places known primarily by San Francisco locals. Would we be welcome in their select enclaves, or cast cold shoulders? We decided to find out!

The first place we visited was Stars, well established as a gathering place for the city's movers and shakers, located at Golden Gate Ave and Laguna. We entered to find a huge, wide-open, well-lit room with very high ceilings, telling us this was designed as a place to see and be seen. Sophisticated diners were socializing over white tablecloths as we made our way to the very long bar on the opposite side of the room, receiving glances that were really rather ordinary. I was wearing my black, off the shoulder pleated dress with silver stars on it, and a fitted, black jacket Bree had loaned me. Bree wore her classic navy blue nautical suit. I guess we fit in just fine!

We found seats at the bar and ordered martinis. Our bartender was cordial, and seemed genuinely pleased when we complimented the establishment. Bree chatted with a lady sitting next to her while I scoped out the decor of the room. Most notable were the art nouveau posters promoting food products in French, while featuring drawings of colorfully clad jester-like characters. After sipping our drinks and sinking into the low-key atmosphere for awhile, we asked our bartender to snap a picture of us. Just after I took a picture of Bree standing next to the bar, one of the establishment's staff came up to us. He told us about their lounge called the Red Room, which had a great setting for taking pictures.

We decided to check it out, finding a tiny loft up a small flight of stairs that ended up being a cigar-smoking lounge. We declined the attendant's offer of cigars, yet took advantage of the red leather couches for photo backdrops. Bree insisted on sitting between two cigar-inhaling gentlemen for her photo.

They were more confused than enthused with the situation!

Our next venue on the list was the Farallon restaurant, located just off Union Square on Post Street. As Bree and I approached the entrance, several well-dressed couples were socializing just outside, perhaps from the theatre crowd. Their eyes lit up when they saw us, and they smiled broadly. It looked as if they would have something to tell their friends the next day besides how they liked the theatre!

Whereas my silver-starred dress was right in theme with Stars, Bree's nautical suit fit in perfectly at the Farallon, which appeared to be Captain Nemo's dream restaurant and cocktail bar. The walls, iron railings and walkways were traced in flowing, curvilinear lines, adding to the liquid feel of the place. Lighted columns textured with a seaweed pattern were built into the walls. Faux portholes permitted gazes to a variety of scenes like windows to other worlds. Yet most impressive were the chandeliers, shaped like huge jellyfish! Intricately crafted and suspended from the ceiling at various heights, they seemed to float about the room.

Bree and I found a table in the middle of the bar area. When our waiter arrived, I told Bree I was sure I recognized him from somewhere. Then it hit me. When he returned with our drinks, I asked him, "Do you ever go to Cafe Mars?"

"Oh my gosh!" he answered. "Are you the two who put a picture of me in that newsletter?"

Sure enough, this is the guy (and that's his name), who was in the picture with Bree and me in the Cafe Mars article I wrote in an earlier edition of The Channel.

"I was a bit drunk that night," he added with a sheepish grin.

After enlisting Guy to take a picture of us, we eventually explored the rest of the place. Up a winding stairway was a balcony dining area, while the rear of the main level had restaurant seating with booths shaped like clamshells. All in all, it's a wonderfully creative, beautiful nightspot.

The last stop of our evening was The Coco Club, located in our comfortable South of Market stomping grounds at Eight Street and Minna. It is essentially a basement bar lesbian club, which often features live performances. Such was the case on this evening, as we noticed a young Irish woman on stage playing guitar while singing her heart out. While I secured our cocktails, Bree managed to find a cozy couch off in a corner for us to enjoy the show from.

As we relaxed and settled into the show, I mentioned to Bree that this was the first time we had seen live music together en femme. We both agreed it was very enjoyable, and that we should try it again sometime. So even though the Coco Club did not fit our theme of visiting different types of people in different styles of venues, it was still a new experience.

Perhaps breaking barriers is sometimes more a shifting of perspective, as opposed to trying something perceived as risky.

# Greetings from Arizona

By Toni Genalo

(Editor's note: Valerie is, of course, our own Miss ETVC 1996. Toni is her delightful life companion — and the chef who created the wonderful dinner we enjoyed at Cotillion 1997!)

We wanted to give all of our 'trans' friends a special update on Valerie and our life with her — after all, we know how curious you all must be about whether or not she is behaving! (She is such a brat!!!)

It probably is no small surprise that Arizona is not as open, friendly or accepting of folks like us. (Did you know that GUNS are legal here — and so unladylike! When we first got here we were shocked to see motorcycle riders next to us on the freeway with six-shooters on their hips — move over Lane Ranger!) This lack of freedom prevents Valerie from being in full view very often. She is so disappointed, as she has many cute outfits that hang bringingly in the closet!

We joined Alpha-Zeta, a chapter of Tri-Ess, and went to a meeting within a week of arriving here. Within a month, we were appointed (I believe this is called self-selection) as education/outreach chairs. There are about 50 members, and 20 or so go to the monthly meeting which is held at the local Gay and Lesbian Center. Afterward, we go out en masse to one of the two local restaurants where customers and staff do not gawk, stare or act rude. Alpha-Zeta, as is common, does not sponsor any major events. There are few volunteers, and everyone here is quite busy. Thus far we have held a training seminar for speakers from the group, have contacted local colleges and psychologists' groups to offer guest panels to classes or meetings. We've had four requests and they have been fairly positive. There are nine or ten of the sisters who are willing to speak, which isn't a bad start. We have also conducted a survey of members to evaluate the group and its future direction (they've had a few problems in past years). Today we are hosting an SO's group at our place, as there are some wives who have never talked to anybody about this.

I write a column for the monthly newsletter and have been doing personality profiles of members so that everyone can get to know each other better. Valerie is 'Miss October,' so if you get the newsletter (ETVC and RGA members) you can see her on page 3!! The newsletter is pink and is named The Cactus Flower.

This summer we had to be much more sedate as Kristen and Dan were very present. Dan continues to live with us on a full time basis, and we have Kristen every other weekend, so Valerie is limited in how frequently she can express herself. We've done the getting dressed in the car routine — make-up in 115 degree heat is a challenge!

The group here is not linked to the Gay community, therefore there are fewer places to go. And Valerie's formals will probably be out of date by the time she dons them again. Faberge made her a gorgeous black number that she has not even worn yet. Faberge (Bill Rolls) is wonderful if you want something custom made.

We miss the monthly socials, the Santa Rosa get togethers, the RGA meetings hanging out at Andy's store in San Jose, going out to the Mint to sing karaoke, and all of you! You are our very special friends and we long for those good ole days, but we are called to be here for reasons we don't fully understand. We plan to be back for the Cotillion and will see you then. In the meantime, give each other lots of hugs for us, keep in touch, stay safe, enjoy life and be full of joy!

Love and kisses from The Girls!

# ETVC Members Haunt Burlingame's Doubletree for Halloween Gala

By Elizabeth Walters

Ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties — some of whom wore thigh-high boots that made their legs look even longer — were bumping in the night at ETVC's splendid Halloween Party at the Doubletree Hotel in Burlingame on October 25.

This year's party — which featured a scrumptious buffet, a delightful costume competition and a really hot disc jockey who played everything from retro-Seventies boogie music to the occasional waltz — was booked into the Doubletree because the Dunfey, our long-time venue — was closed for renovation.

Although our club had not previously used this facility, the staff was warm and wonderful, and really seemed to get into the spirit of our party. Because the area we had booked was at the rear of the building, ETVC members and guests were able to enjoy wowing the Doubletree's other, more staid customers by sweeping

through the hotel's large lobby area on their way to the festivities.

More than a few hotel patrons took the opportunity to snap photos of our girls and boys — and what photos they must have been, since the costumes worn by revelers ran the gamut from animal (a Playboy bunny) to vegetable (Batman villainess "Poison Ivy"), and included French maids, witches, vamps and vampiresses, Cruella DeVille and Dorothy and her little dog, Toto.



Halloween 1997 Costume Winners: (from left) Veronica (scariest), Georgia (sweetest), Suzie, (silliest); sexiest runner-up Di Di Mau; sexiest runner-up Lu Lu Blau, and Camille (sexiest). PHOTO BY TELZEY ADAMS

The party was a fabric fetishist's fantasy: outfits came in several shades of shiny, including latex and leather for the naughty and silks and satins for the nice. At one point, the dance area room had enough vinyl costumes bobbing around on it to reupholster Bob Guccione's bedroom. Several of the girls wore elaborate outfits that included complicated masks (including yours truly, who had to strip out of her homemade latex creation after only fifteen minutes to prevent a total thermal meltdown!), while others — including the inimitable Di Di Mau — wore as little as they could and still remain street legal!

Costume competition winners were:

- \* Scariest: Veronica as Cruella (complete with two-tone hairdo and little disemboweled dalmations hanging all over her dress);
- \* Sweetest: Georgia as a darling M&M that looked good enough to eat;
- \* Silliest: Suzie, who, as "Cape Cod," topped her outfit with a fish chapeau that gave new meaning to the term, "Cod Piece;"
- \* Sexiest: Camille, whose tightly-laced scarlet satin waist cincher literally took our — and probably her — breath away.

Congratulations, girls! And to all the other contestants — you looked FABulous, darlings — simply FABulous!!



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## BOOK REVIEW

Sharon Diane Rose

### Reverse Sex

by Mario A. Costa

Written in 1962, this is the story of Coccinelle, a French TS who became a woman through surgery. The book has some very funny side stories — one is about “her” army examination when drafted into the French Army — an exam the doctor will never forget, I’m sure.

She also talks of her life as a stripper in the Clubs of France where she became world famous and became close friends with Bob Hope, Marlene Dietrich and Aristotle Onassis.

There are also about sixty pages of photographs — even one of her wedding. She talks openly about the surgery and sex afterward. One hopes that techniques have improved over the last several years.

An interesting read for any of us, wherever we are on the feminine path.



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# Confessions of a Straight Girl

## Chapter 5: Leaving the Nest

By Andrea Drane

From time to time, we all need to move on with our lives, and this often involves finding new employment. Entering a work environment where we are known only as our true, female selves not only represents one of the most important and exciting steps in the transition process, but also serves as an important measure of the success of our transition. If air travel is the mid-term, then this is certainly one of the final exams!

Transitioning on the job has its advantages. It provides a stable and familiar environment when virtually every other aspect of our lives is undergoing drastic changes. Our co-workers know our status, our presentation does not have to be immediately "perfect," and we have the opportunity to polish our skills in a real world setting. Sooner or later, though, we tire of our training wheels, and need to move on to where we stand or fall based solely upon who we are now, rather than partly upon who we were then. Still, losing this safety net can be a source of anxiety, despite our knowing that we have outgrown our need for one.

Interviewing en femme requires a certain amount of preparation and rehearsal, not to mention careful editing of our resume. Since former employers cannot disclose much beyond the fact that we were actually employed there between certain dates, it's best to cultivate supportive references who can personally attest to our job proficiency and accomplishments. If the interviewer seems a bit patronizing or doesn't give your accomplishments the weight you

think they deserve, don't be too surprised - get used to it! As women, we still face obstacles in the business world despite the advances over the past 30 years. This can be especially true in the traditionally male occupations many of us held prior to our transition, so it's important to do our homework and be even better prepared than we might think necessary. Finally, don't be discouraged if they don't extend an offer, and don't automatically assume that it's because you were read.

Starting the new job requires its own preparation, and it's normal to have some anxiety that we will be read or otherwise have our backgrounds questioned. While we do need to be careful of what we say about our pasts, extending how we present ourselves in public and social settings to now include the workplace is mostly what's required. Still, there is a definite adjustment period. On the plus side, we no longer need to be concerned about the tiresome "bathroom issue" unless we go out of our way to sabotage ourselves. On the minus side, though, we no longer have the luxury of our colleagues being part of our support system, and it's difficult not to want someone close at hand to confide in when we stumble, or to share our joy when everything goes right. Although we are sure to make new friends, they aren't likely to be as close as those who saw us break free of cocoons, and spread our wings to the world.

The shift in relations with our co-workers is only part of this new experience - the rest involves finding out just how much confidence we have in ourselves. Unlike the transitory and somewhat anonymous nature of public and social settings, the workplace involves close, continuous contact with the same people on a day to day basis. In conversations with my new co-workers, I have noticed them glancing at my hands from time to time, as well as other signs that they aren't quite sure about me.

Confirming their suspicions would probably erase the underlying tension, but what would that say about my self-comfort level? Am I the only one who feels this tension? Do I want to risk being treated differently? As one of my "big sisters" recently told me, "People will wonder about you, and most will eventually figure you out. Deal with it. It's not your job to make them comfortable." She went on to assure me that it gets better with time, just as it did with the public and social settings, but that it depends more on our confidence, our carriage, and our demeanor than on our appearance.

Interviewing and working where we are known only as our true, female selves significantly enhances the "real life test" experience, and gives us a more complete picture of life as a woman. While this can be quite demanding and does require an adjustment period, it nonetheless provides a measure of our progress and how comfortable we are with ourselves. Remember, transition is after all an ongoing process.

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# Are You Being Served? Well, Why Not?!

## The TG Consumer: Rights and Expectations

By Barbara F. Anderson, Ph.D., LCSW

You as a transgendered individual are a consumer like any other. You have money to spend and needs to be met. Do you approach such interactions with an expectation of respect and appreciation for your business? Or does the memory of past transactions contaminated by ridicule and frustration inhibit you with regard to examining products for quality, and holding service providers to a standard of courtesy?

A satisfactory consumer interaction begins with the expectation of quality products and service. To the extent that you are informed about the product or service you seek, you will be able to express your expectation in an unambiguous manner. However, if you are hobbled by anxiety, fear of others' judgment, or personal insecurity, all the product information in the world will do you little good. You will be treated with the respect you show for yourself and will be presented with the products that the sales person has been instructed to "move."

And do not think that over-compensating for insecurity or developing an "attitude" to ward off insensitive treatment will be effective. By acting arrogant and demanding you are more likely to elicit the very behavior you are trying to avoid. Efforts to intimidate others breed resentment rather than respect, and retaliation soon follows.

Given that you are able to present yourself confidently and are well-informed about your objective, you may still find the shopping experience an unpleasant one. You may be identified as TG by the service provider and either treated disrespectfully or denied service. No one will come to your rescue. This is where Assertiveness 101 will pay for itself. Inquire of the provider if your request was understood and offer to repeat it. If appropriate, ask if it is the store's policy for personnel to whisper, giggle, point at, or laugh at its customers. Offer to overlook the offense if the person will get on with serving you. If further disrespect occurs, request the person's name and that of the manager.

If you are denied service, insist on being given a reason. If you are insulted by a derogatory term referring to your TG status (such as "you people," or worse) you have several options: identify yourself with pride as TG, entitled to and able to pay for the requested product or service. If reconsideration does not occur, state that you will file a complaint of discrimination with the Human Rights organization of that county, as well as with the professional association(s) monitoring the industry involved. It behooves any consumer to be prepared in such an event, but it is incumbent upon you as a TG individual or anyone belonging to a vulnerable minority group, to be explicitly armed with solid information about how to exercise your rights as a consumer.

If you choose not to identify yourself as a TG individual and the provider of services does not identify you as being of a minority status, you cannot raise the issue of discrimination. Then the best strategy is to behave as an aggrieved consumer who will relentlessly seek satisfaction at levels above the service person. Sources tell me that service providers would rather serve someone with two heads than have to explain to their bosses why they have allowed a scene to occur. Implementing this strategy implies a willingness on your part to state your dissatisfaction audibly and unequivocally and perhaps draw attention to yourself.

The pursuit of professional services such as medical, psychological or legal present a special challenge for the consumer. The challenge comes in the difficulty of evaluating the quality of services offered as well as in dealing with providers who are generally endowed with higher status than the consumers of their services. TG consumers often feel even more vulnerable than the average client because of the myths about the TGED that still pervade the thinking of professionals. The belief that TGism is a mental disorder and therefore one will be dealing with a deranged, delusional person puts many professionals off. There is also the belief that one's other clients will be discouraged if they observe TG individuals being served in the same setting. The best way to avoid approaching the uninformed professional, who is also incompetent to serve you, is to utilize a resource list compiled by your local TG community organizations or by national associations devoted to serving TG consumers and setting standards for competent professional care.

Being a consumer is a difficult business. But that's what it is all about: business! As a consumer, you have something of value. Respect your power but don't flaunt it. Hold yourself in high regard and you maximize the chance that others will. Be prepared to go to bat for your right to be served; you may be paving the way for another consumer more vulnerable than you.

*Comments, questions, rebuttals, or arguments are welcomed by the author, as well as suggestions for future articles.*

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