
TRANSgenderist

Monthly Magazine of the Transgender Independence Club

November, 1999

Closet Available

We still have one closet available in the clubhouse. This allows you the maximum flexibility of having your clothes in a locked closet, free of all of the problems associated with keeping clothes in a suitcase. It includes a key to the clubhouse, permitting you 24-hour availability of your clothes. And it provides you a safe space to change and relax, any time you would like. This is a great bargain at \$40 a month; call the clubhouse to reserve it today.

Once this closet is gone, it's back into your suitcase for all of your wonderful clothes!

Excellent Teacher

ANTELOPE, Calif. -- By all accounts, David Warfield was an excellent teacher. He came to Center High School here in suburban Sacramento for his first teaching job nine years ago and soon made a name for himself, developing a program for unmotivated students that became the award-winning Media Communications Academy. Students routinely called him one of the best teachers they ever had or expected to have, the one most likely to be remembered as a major influence in their lives. He was awarded an \$80,000 grant for his program, won the school's "Stand and Deliver" award for the teacher who most inspires students and received a standing ovation from the district's staff at its annual meeting last September.

Given this backdrop, when David Warfield wrote a letter to colleagues in May explaining that he was undergoing a sex change and planned to return to school as Dana Rivers, shock quickly turned to sympathy. In June, after the school board sent a letter disclosing

Warfield's decision to all 1,500 families in the district, only four parents wrote back in protest.

But Dana Rivers has yet to walk through the doors of Center High. Weeks before classes started, the school board voted 3-to-2 to place her on paid administrative leave pending a formal dismissal, which is expected soon. What might have been a quiet if difficult adjustment at Center High to get to know the person some students once called "mountain man" for his love of macho sports has instead become the sole subject of school board meetings and a growing, rancorous debate in this ethnically diverse, middle-class town.

At its core lies the question: Why would Dana Rivers be fired? To her supporters, the answer is obvious.

"The board members didn't want a transsexual teacher," said Ray Bender, a board member who voted against dismissal proceedings. "They said they didn't want to create confusion for the students."

The Dana Rivers case, he said, has become a cause for religious conservatives assisted by the Pacific Justice Institute, a local conservative legal organization that demanded that the school board fire the teacher or face a lawsuit. "One board member," Bender said, "was heard telling a parent that this is a holy issue."

But board members who voted to begin dismissal proceedings say their position has nothing to do with transsexualism, the Pacific Justice Institute or religious conservatives.

"That is the furthest thing from the truth," said Scott Rodowick, the board president. "This is about parental rights. This is about issues that the board became aware of that have nothing to do with the teacher's being transgendered. There are things I know that I would love to talk about, but I have to respect the rights of an

employee. It's a personnel issue."

The majority on the board refused to discuss the case, but the board members who voted for Ms. Rivers said that the others wanted an excuse to fire her. They found it, the board members say, in a few parents who complained that the teacher had improperly discussed her condition, known as gender dysphoria, with their children.

"One parent stood up at a board meeting and said that her daughter was traumatized," said Bender. "But right after that, her daughter stood up and told the board that her mother was wrong."

But Donna Earnest, whose son is a junior at Center High School, said she was not the only one who believed her parental rights were taken from her. "My position is that this teacher acted totally unprofessionally," she said. "My child was not in the class, but kids talk all over the school, and according to the kids, he said he had been sodomized as a youth and that he always felt he was a woman trapped in a man's body and that he was going to be changing into a woman in the fall. He should have gotten permission from the parents to say this."

Brad Dacus, the founder of the Pacific Justice Institute, said he filed administrative complaints on behalf of more than a few parents who felt that their children had been traumatized. "One student had to be pulled from the school," he said, "and two children have had to be put in counseling."

Ms. Rivers, on the advice of the teachers union, would not discuss the details of the case. But her colleagues say that students learned of her plan when teachers read Ms. Rivers' letter to their classes. Ms. Rivers said that as rumors began circulating throughout the school and students began asking about them, she agreed to an interview with the school newspaper. The 2,600-word profile was printed the week before school ended in June.

"I didn't have to send a letter to everyone telling them what I was doing," Ms. Rivers said. "I could have just walked into school. But what confusion would that have led to?"

In a way, the debate is reminiscent of

arguments about gay and lesbian teachers who come out of the closet. But unlike gays or lesbians, Ms. Rivers said, there was no way she could hide as she underwent a gender transformation. Her hair is long and auburn now, with bangs. She wears eye shadow, pink nail polish and skirts. She has trained her vocal cords to deliver a soft, feminine tenor.

"If there was a way that I could have gone on the way I was, believe me, I would have, because this is the hardest thing I have ever done," she said.

Until age 44, David Warfield had been a Navy electronics expert, a political consultant and school board member in Huntington Beach in Orange County, a baseball coach and a white-water rafting instructor. Ms. Rivers says she is still proud of that resume, but is happier personally now. Like many people with gender dysphoria, which the International Center for Gender Education describes as extreme discomfort with one's sex, Ms. Rivers said her condition led her to alcoholism, thoughts of suicide and three failed marriages.

"I've been able to lead a successful life, but personally it's been a real struggle," she said. "Since I started taking hormones last January, I've been happier because I'm getting to be who I am for the first time. I'm going to be a better teacher for it. It's not about being a transsexual, it's about not always pretending and hiding." She stepped near the school for the first time this school year on Friday. Classes were not in session, but during an annual staff day 40 students and 200 teachers held a lunchtime rally for Ms. Rivers across the street from the school. Students chanted "Two, four, six, eight, we demand a reinstate."

Angela Duvane, 17, a senior in the Media Communications Academy, said students missed their teacher. "In her former state as Warfield, she was awesome," Miss Duvane said. "We all love her. Even students who never had her as a teacher."

+++ more +++

The three members of the Center Unified School District board who voted to fire a teacher who's changing gender reportedly took the action even though the district's legal counsel warned them they could not win and would spend a minimum of \$250,000 to fight a losing battle.

"They see this as a principle to stand up for," said trustee Raymond F. Bender of fellow board members Scott Rodowick, Dan Reason and Ronald E. Hodges and their vote in June to fire teacher Dana Rivers. "They'll say things about parental rights and all that, but what this amounts to is: No way will they allow a transgender teacher to teach in the Center district," Bender said.

For her part, Rivers, visiting family in the Bay Area, said she wants only to return to teaching.

Bender and trustee Nancy Anderson were opposed to firing Rivers, who as a man named David Warfield was for eight years a popular, award-winning broadcast journalism and history teacher at Center High School.

At the end of the last school year, Warfield announced that he would be returning as Rivers, which was followed by the June vote to fire her, Bender said.

Since state law requires that teachers be served with such news only between Sept. 15 and the middle of May, he said, "they waited to mail out the news and actually put it in the mail on the Friday after a district staff day to avoid the danger of a teacher strike or something." Board president Rodowick, however, said the action was merely to reinforce parental rights regarding sex education.

"We have a policy that requires parental notification of content and intention before any family life or sex education material is presented to students. She discussed her situation with students without that notification. That's a violation of policy and that's why we're taking the action," he said.

Specifically, the board alleges that Rivers shows an "evident unfitness for service," and it has served her with a notice of intent to dismiss,

placing her on administrative leave with pay. She has filed a complaint with the state labor commissioner to get her job back and will request a hearing.

The board has chosen a difficult path, said Beverly Tucker, chief counsel for the California Teachers Association. "The district is going to have to prove that the teacher has a character defect -- unchangeable," Tucker said.

Tucker said this is the first such case she has heard of, and it is not known how many transgender teachers there are in the state. "I know them everywhere -- Sacramento, Santa Cruz, San Jose. That's what's so surprising here," Rivers said.

In Red Bluff last year, a music teacher returned from summer vacation as a woman after having worked a dozen years as a man.

The district trustees downplayed any controversy, received a few complaints from parents at board meetings, "and now it's all blown over. There were no problems at all," said Red Bluff Joint Union High School District Superintendent Kathy Wheeler.

Pat Robertson

Pat Robertson (you know 700 Club... hater of all things T*) replied to a question as follows:

Terry Meeuwsen: Well here's the last one and this is a tough one.

Letter Writer: I'm 40 years old and have had a sex change. I've been watching your program and was wondering if God forgave me. Should I live as I am now or go back to my birth gender?

Pat Robertson: This is a very serious question and I appreciate it. There are people who are born with various types of hormonal activity in their bodies and they feel more male than female and more female than male. I know a plastic surgeon here, in this area who indeed does that sort of thing and uh, to accommodate what is going on in peoples lives.

Terry Meeuwsen: This is a very legitimate hormonal thing happening.

Pat Robertson: Exactly. So, it is not a sin. So you don't need to feel guilty. But know also if

you want to go back to where you were, uh...this man could get very graphic. His name is Dr. Charles Horton and he is one of the most distinguished plastic surgeon's and he specializes in urinary type activities, genital, uh deformities and he was telling me two twins, there were two boys and the surgeon when they were doing circumcision, um, burned off the male organ of one of these little boys so they made him into a girl. I mean the surgeon's actually fixed him up so he had now, uh, (fumbling over words) so when he got to be 21 years old he was a cheerleader and all that kinda stuff and (fumbling over words) and said "I'm a boy". He started feeling these things so they were able to reverse this and Horton has techniques to restore, its amazing, he has pioneered, it's the most incredible thing. There are many people who have been in battle who have had the genitals actually blown off and he can restore these. It's remarkable what he can do. So you say, will God forgive me. Of course He will, He does. This isn't something that you have sinned and if you wish to get back and your 40 years old, it's not exactly too late. I know as I say, one man who can do a sex change reversal.

Terry Meeuwssen: God is interested in what his heart, attitude is, speaking spiritually.

Pat Robertson: God does not care what your external organs are. The question is whether you are living for God or not. Yes, He loves you. Yes, He forgives you and He understands what is going on in your body. [Well, I guess that about clears that up!]

News Briefs

Congradulations are in order to Bethann and Dasha. Beth is now officially the legal mother of a new daughter -- Dasha. **Beth, a 50 something pre-op TS, was awarded full parental rights to Dasha, a 20 something pre-op TS,** in a District court in Salt Lake, Utah on Sept 27th, 1999. What's more, the court order makes reference to Dasha as a daughter, and makes provisions for the amendment of her birth certificate. It appears that Dasha has a legal standing as a

female without the operation, as Title 26 of the Utah Code only requires a court order to change the name and sex on the birth certificate. To my knowledge, there is no other case like this one on the books, so it may very well set a precedent.

"Defining Male and Female: Intersexuality and the Collision Between Law and Biology," published in the Arizona Law Review's Summer 1999 number, is a **broad examination of the law's treatment of persons of ambiguous sex.** Author Julie Greenberg, of San Diego's Thomas Jefferson School of Law, examines binary assumptions in the law and offers a brief discussion of how biology confounds those assumptions.

ERIE LAKESIDE GALA. The Erie Sisters Transgender Support Group is having a **4 day convention in Erie PA. November 18th to 21st.** For more information, <http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/1614/elg99>

Sen. Orrin Hatch hinted at the **world coming to an end with the millennium,** citing Hal Lindsay and the movie "The Late Great Planet Earth" and listing harbingers of doom such as the weather, the rapid advance in technology and homosexuality. [Gee, I thought that has been around a lot longer than that! At TGIC we are hedging our millennium bets by not having a house party in December, instead going with our own Christmas Party. We need volunteers for a house party for January and February, however, assuming we're all still around.]

Three Italian doctors warn in a letter published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine that **glycyrrhizic acid, the active ingredient in licorice, suppressed sex hormone levels in seven men** in their 20s. Just 7 grams (0.25 ounces) of licorice a day over four days was enough to reduce the amount of testosterone by an average of 44 percent. Hormone levels returned to normal after four days of abstinence, said the team led by Dr. Decio Armanini of the University of Padua. Extracts of licorice root are a widely used flavoring agents found in breath fresheners and candy.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

Your presence is requested at next week's TGIC meeting, scheduled for Thursday, November 11th from 7:30-11:00 PM at the clubhouse which, as some of you may have forgotten, is located in Albany at [redacted] [redacted] al [redacted], on the third floor. We have recently completed our first meeting with Senator Tom Duane, held at the legislative office building in downtown Albany. It started at 5:30 PM and lasted until about 7, Mon., Nov. 1. Nine members of TGIC attended; more could've, if they had time to get away and sufficient interest. We're asking you in advance to make the time for our own meeting on the 11th and help decide what position and action(s) the club will be taking in the future.

The Senator and his counsel, attorney Mark Furnish, actively participated throughout, listening to our grievances, offering suggestions, and relating experiences of their own. They were authentically interested in being of help and working with us; f'instance, several members attending the meeting voiced concern over specific work- and/or family-related issues. The Senator promised to look into them and, wherever possible, use his influence, specialized knowledge, and/or other resources to help so far as he could. I know politicians typically do this, but the man seems very honest and concerned. He never promised to resolve any of these situations -- where, f'instance, someone may have not been given all the pertinent data about work-related matter and her job/settlement was jeopardized; rather, he offered to provide whatever assistance he could to improve the particular individual's position (in each case, on a case-by-case basis). At this point, we can't ask for much more.

Besides, the Senator can't do it all; mostly, he can only offer support and suggestions. In this respect, the TGIC membership is woefully under-organized and perhaps less committed that it could be. If we want to improve the quality of our lives, and our access to civil rights -- especially as they relate to our individual and collective trans-lives -- we're going to have to make an effort ourselves.

Now, some of you might be thinking: "I'm a member of TGIC primarily for social and support reasons. I want to party, dance until dawn & never again think about tomorrow." Or maybe you're thinking: "TGIC is a place I go to be my woman-self, to unburden myself from the stress and fatigue so often attendant with masculinity and supporting a family." And these are good reasons to be a member. Or perhaps you think: "Who is this bitch to be telling me what my priorities should be? Look what happened last time she opened her mouth; I want the club to be the way it was." And you might be right about the first part. but why go backwards? I mean, consider the traveler/tourist conundrum so generously offered in a recent newsletter.

Participating in some kind of positive activism doesn't mean the club is going to put an end to its valuable social and support functions; these traditionally have been, and will remain (far as I know) at the heart of TGIC. We currently sponsor more social events than we have in years, and are looking for new ways to

partake of the world. But what happens to you one day if (f'instance), your wife gets tired of (or finds about) your cross-dressing, leaves you, takes you to court & denies you access to your children. Or your trans-ways are revealed at work to a less-than-understanding, possibly homophobic boss, and your job is jeopardized? Or something worse. God forbid any of these things should happen to any of you but, as things stand now, you'd have a very small legal leg to stand on if they did.

Your participation can help us decide upon ways to improve our ability to retain the basic rights non-trans people seldom fear losing. Participation need not mean exposure; it can remain as anonymous as your membership with the club has been. Remember, TGIC is a support group; right now, TGIC needs your support. Please come to the meeting next Thursday (11/11), and find out what you can do to help us serve ourselves better. Opinions of other TGIC members follow -- Karen

Open Letter to TGIC Membership

I regret that I cannot attend the meeting this Thursday. I'm just too far behind in all I must do before I can leave on my research trip on Saturday.

I do have a couple of suggestions, however.

First, I believe a nucleus of enthusiastic, committed and politically unafraid TGIC members should be molded into a "task force" or some such entity, which would lead the efforts we began with the meeting with Senator Duane. The task force should be a separate organization, but within the confines of TGIC.

I personally will volunteer to be involved. In my opinion, each of the members of this task force should be connected to every other member of the task force by phone, mailing address, and by email. If that is not totally possible, corrective measures should be introduced to facilitate interaction.

Officers of the task force should be selected and voted upon. I believe that a committee system should be attempted, each committee headed by a task force member. Staffing of each committee would be done through volunteers from the general membership of TGIC, and used as deemed necessary. But these volunteers would not be required to do anything more than what they feel safe in doing. Too, they wouldn't have to feel pressure to be more involved than just that particular committee or specific chore.

Various short term and long term goals of the task force should be identified, and committees set up to have jurisdiction over them.

Finally, I believe we need a specific issue with which to begin reaching out to the LBG communities and to the general public. Personally, I like the issue of custody. The issue touches TGIC very heavily, and it touches the other communities as well, including also the straight community.

If we could then set a date for a conference, panel discussion, or demonstration with enough time between now and then to get it organized, then we would have something to aim for.

The above are suggestions only, but ones that I believe will

work. I expect to be away for two or three weeks, and apologize for not being available. On my return, however, I will try to catch up quickly to what has been accomplished in my absence.

I wish you good luck in the meantime, and do count me in.

My best regards to all,
Katherine

Another Open Letter

Its difficult to express how complex these times are and how important it is that we continue to move forward with the times. TGIC has always stood for freedom of expression for both the individual and the community of all our brothers and sisters of all races.

We must all work together in the next four months and focus all of our positive attention so that we can approach our Senators with a plan to fight for our rights and freedom of expression. Please make it a priority to attend the meetings so that we can work together for our future.

Carol & April

Directions to Susan's Saturday party,
the latest of TGIC's monthly potluck suppers.

She is::

Susan [redacted]

Hudson, NY 12534

(518) 671-6252

5-12PM; come earlier if you like; bring dish.

[redacted]

Hope you can make it.

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RULES FOR BETTER WRITING

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
5. Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat)



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<http://members.aol.com/tgicalbany.html>

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

President	Tina [REDACTED]
Vice President	Raechel [REDACTED]
Secretary	Karen [REDACTED]
Treasurer	Cheryl [REDACTED]
Den Mother	Denise [REDACTED]
Newsletter	Vicky [REDACTED]
House Parties	Leslie [REDACTED]
TGIC On-Line/Web	Raechel [REDACTED]/Petula

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Readers are invited to submit articles relevant to the Transgendered Community for consideration. You may bring or mail typed pages for publication to the TGIC clubroom. Format should follow that shown in the current newsletter. You may also e-mail the articles to [REDACTED]. The article should be part of the body of the e-mail.

Regular Meetings are held every Thursday at the TGIC Club Room on Central Avenue in Albany, 7:30 PM to 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 local night spots after the meetings.

BECOME AN IFGE MEMBER

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

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)

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

TGIC On-Line

All transgendered people are invited to join TGIC On-Line, an informal e-mail network sponsored by Transgenderist Independence Club (TGIC). Messages exchanged on TGIC On-Line focus on events of interest to transgendered people in a region from Lake Placid to Newburg. If you are interested in joining the network, or want more information about TGIC, send an e mail message to: TGIC-request@hartebeest.com with any subject line and in the message body, the text:

JOIN TGIC
STOP

(Please note: JOIN TGIC must be on line 1. STOP must be on line 2) You will receive an automated acknowledgment (Journal) of your request, which must be approved with the list moderator.

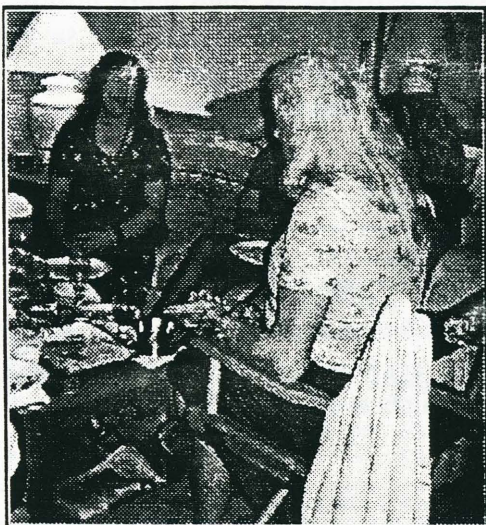
Calendar and Events

TGIC meetings are held every Thursday from 7:30 to 10:00 in the clubhouse. *See explanation in this issue.

- November 4-7 Paradise in the Poconos
King of Prussia, PA
- November 6, 5-12 Susan & Spouse TGIC
House Party, Hudson
(10/99 TGist)
- November 13, 2-5 Twenty Club, TS Support
Hartford, CT
- November 13, 8 Capital Pride Fall
Concert, Page Hall, Albany
- November 20, 9 on Tri-Ess at Yours, Barrett
Street, Schenectady
- November 27, 2-5 Twenty Club, TS Support
Hartford, CT

Time to chat about a Christmas party. How about it? Won't you come and help?

- December 2 Newsletter Printed
- December 11, 2-5 Twenty Club, TS Support
Hartford, CT,
Xmas Party
- December 11, 7:30-11 Gender-Free Contradance,
Unitarian Church, Albany
- December 18, 8-11 GF Contradance,
Greenfield, MA
- December 18, 9 on Tri-Ess at Yours, Barrett
Street, Schenectady



Tina in the director's chair;
Karen on the casting couch.

Tracy Oppelt

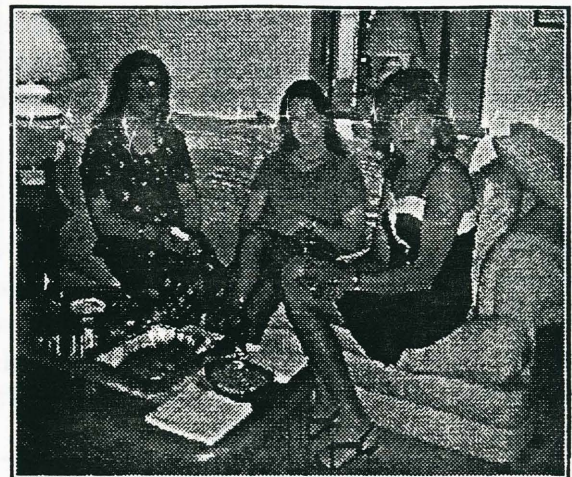
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Gender-Free Contradance

The Unitarian Church in Albany sponsors a wonderful program for GLBT people. It is a gender-free contradance, essentially a social gathering and dance for people of all sexual preferences. Hey, even heteros are accepted! <ggg> There is a caller who instructs people on how to dance the particular dance, and occasionally a live orchestra as well. I attended three of these dances and enjoyed them a lot, dancing with both men and women. It is a high-energy affair, water is served (you will drink plenty!), and the cost is usually in the \$10 range, sliding scale usually. If you would like to explore that side of yourself and have a knockout social evening, I recommend it highly!!! --Vix

Comments? Vicky Steele, vicky_s@juno.com, or
c/o TGIC, PO Box 13604, Albany, NY 12212
All the news that fits.



Karen, Rachel and Denise smile pretty for the camera.